



Project Steno
9 Hammond Street
Worcester, MA 01610
508-438-0314
Info@ProjectSteno.org
www.ProjectSteno.org

Project Steno Year-End Report – Our First Year

December 2018

What a year! Project Steno hit the ground running in early 2018 and to date has raised almost \$300,000 in pledges and contributions. Highlights of our year:

- Project Steno launches in January 2018.
- Website created and continually updated.
- 501(c)(3) status as a charitable organization is conferred by the IRS (so your donations are tax-deductible). Our financial statement (Form 990) is publicly available on our website.
- Two videos produced to promote court reporting and captioning.
- Numerous presentations made at national and state association conventions.
- Several interviews (television, podcasts, webcasts) where we promoted court reporting and captioning as a career, NCRA's A to Z program, and the Project Steno tuition assistance program.
- Expanded our Board (Jim DeCrescenzo, Bill Weber, Glyn Poage, Ed Varallo, and Tiva Wood), added an Advisory Council (Kathy Silva, Rick Levy, Doreen Sutton, and Camille Duffy) and appointed Nancy Varallo as our Executive Director.
- Shepherded through to reality a court reporting program in a San Antonio TX high school (a template for high school rollout nationwide!)
- Met at the Pentagon with high-ranking officials to promote Project Steno's Cover Your Bases Program™ for the military. (There are 510,000 military spouses in the Army alone, two-thirds of them under the age of 32. An ideal target audience!)
- Enrolled 37 students from 16 states into eight of our partner programs. (This is a real success. See below.)

The plan is working! With your continued support, we can accomplish our goal to revitalize the stenographic reporting profession.

Donors have been generous in our startup year and we thank them, one and all. (See our website, the Support Us tab, for donor names.) Project Steno is happy to accept checks, credit card donations, monthly contributions. All Project Steno board members and advisory council members are unpaid volunteers. We're working to save the profession – and with your continued support, we'll succeed!

You wouldn't believe the amount of work involved in getting a project like this off the ground! Just ask our Executive Director, Nancy Varallo: "A journey of a thousand miles.... We're just getting started, but people are enthusiastic; eager students are coming to us; schools are signing on to become partner programs; and high schools in several states are interested in starting classes."

We're making a difference!

There are not enough stenographic reporters to serve the market. We have a four-pronged plan to solve the shortage.

I. Tuition Assistance/School Partner Program

Thirteen court reporting and captioning schools/programs have signed on as Project Steno Partner Programs, which means they have a program designed to graduate students in two years and they will allow us to monitor student progress so that we can step in and help a faltering student. These are the elements of the Project Steno plan: recruit students who are most likely to succeed, let them select a partner program to attend, give them ongoing financial assistance predicated on meeting educational milestones in school, monitor them monthly for progress, and offer coaching/mentoring when needed. We believe that gives “our” students the best chance of graduating in two years. It’s a good program, and it’s working! Find our Partner Programs here: <https://projectsteno.org/court-reporting-schools/>

The 37 students we enrolled this year represent those who passed our vetting process, thus are the most likely to succeed. To get those 37, we fielded more than 400 queries from young people who heard about court reporting through our outreach efforts. We processed 80 applications for tuition assistance, interviewing all 80 of them. From that pool we accepted 44 students; 37 of them enrolled in a partner program. We have accepted applications only from students who successfully completed an NCRA A to Z Program. There are many such programs run by volunteers around the country. A to Z is also offered online. We had one student drop out after the first month for personal reasons, and one student’s tuition assistance was ended due to lack of performance. We anticipate a 50% (or better) graduation rate for our enrollees. Think about it: If we graduate 18 students from this initial enrollment, that’s a number that would traditionally require almost 200 enrolled students, given the graduation rates of schools nowadays. That’s the importance of our vetting process! ***The 35 are meeting their benchmarks!***

How can you help? Well, we need money to offer tuition assistance. Donor info can be found at <https://projectsteno.org/support-us/>. Donate online at <https://projectsteno.org/donate-online/>.

We encourage you to copy/post/distribute our *Imagine* video, promoting awareness of the stenographic reporting and captioning professions. We thank Veritext for helping us create it. Thanks too to Jen Schuck and the video team at The Varallo Group for getting it captioned. View it on our homepage or here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=0QkBATw4r74.

II. Project Steno’s Cover Your Bases Program™

Cover Your Bases will deliver Nancy Varallo’s Basic Steno Training™ program (Basic Training, for short) to military members transitioning to the civilian workforce. In mid-October, Ed and Nancy Varallo traveled to the Pentagon to meet with Command Sergeant Major Donald Rose and four other high-ranking officials. We discussed the high demand for reporters and the looming shortage. Ed demo’d realtime. That meeting generated real interest and has led to several more as we work toward the “yes” – as one official put it – to bring Basic Training to military bases nationwide. We offer just what the military is looking for: a two-year curriculum that can be taught anywhere (including online), available to both men and women, that prepares a graduate for a job in a high-demand field that pays well, with easy job portability – you can work anywhere in the country. The military is a huge opportunity for us!

Later in the month Nancy met by phone with the head of the Military Spouses JD Network (lawyers) who expressed support for delivery of Nancy's Basic Training to their members. Nancy and Jim DeCrescenzo had a phone meeting with the manager of the Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse team at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington. On both calls, our plan was met with real enthusiasm. Follow-up meetings are scheduled with both groups.

III. Vocational High Schools/Career Education Programs

Project Steno is working with six vocational high schools to launch court reporting and captioning programs in those schools (TX, MA, PA, VT). The machine shorthand curriculum is an ideal fit for a vocational school's mission to educate students for a career in public service, criminal justice, law enforcement, computer science, etc. Courses may be offered as part of a Career and Technical Education pathway (CTE) or in a related practicum designed to meet state or federal mandates/guidelines. This curriculum may even be offered as an after-school club.

Through the tireless efforts of co-founder Glyn Poage and Realtime Coach's Mary Beth Everhart, a high school in San Antonio, TX launched its inaugural stenographic reporting program in November (13 students). High school students are our primary focus. We will soon have a template plan to offer high schools around the country that want to start stenographic reporting programs. What better time than while in high school to begin acquiring speed on the machine? Students who reach a speed of 140 wpm in high school can eliminate perhaps an entire year of post high school classes – and easily achieve graduation in less than 24 months!

Nancy Varallo is currently teaching Basic Training to 25 students at two vocational high schools in Massachusetts. These efforts will serve as the model for bringing introductory steno programs to high schools nationwide. Want to help? Schedule a visit to a high school in your community. Project Steno has handouts that we will customize for you. They are free of charge to you, of course!

IV. State association/local court reporting school collaboration

As a template for success, the collaboration between the Pennsylvania Court Reporters Association (PCRA) and Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) is exemplary. In the face of declining enrollments, Mary Beth Johnson, Business Technologies department head at CCAC, applied to become a Project Steno Partner Program and, with the help of PCRA volunteers, ran a very successful NCRA A to Z Program. She contacted the local CBS-TV station, described the free A to Z course and its purpose, the availability of Project Steno's tuition assistance program, and the prospect after two years of schooling to graduate into a well-paid profession. The appeal of "The best career you've never heard of" was immediately apparent, and the TV station aired a six-minute interview of Mary Beth, accompanied by a former student and a veteran reporter who live-captioned the interview.

<https://pittsburgh.cbslocal.com/video/3890320-looking-for-a-career-change-try-court-reporting/#.WzTpAUqZ9L0.facebook>

Project Steno has created a recruitment video to attract young people to our profession.

We invite you to use, download, advertise, disseminate, tout our video. Please do!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QkBATw4r74>

The plan is working! Will you support us? Donor info at <https://projectsteno.org/support-us/>. Donate online at <https://projectsteno.org/donate-online/>.