

Project Steno Report - June 2019

*There are not enough stenographic reporters or captioners to serve the market.
We have a plan to solve the shortage.*

Since our inception, Project Steno has raised \$400,000 in pledges and contributions. This comprehensive report includes achievements outlined in previous reports plus updated numbers and new information charting progress made since our March 2019 report.

Our organization:

- Board: Jim DeCrescenzo, Bill Weber, Glyn Poage, Ed Varallo, Tiva Wood.
Executive Director: Nancy Varallo.
Advisory Council: Kathy Silva, Rick Levy, Doreen Sutton, Camille Duffy, Renee Bush, Chris Willette.
- We are a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Our FY2018 financial statement (Form 990) is available upon request and can be found on our website. The 2019 Form 990 is in preparation.

Tuition Assistance:

- **Fielded more than 750 inquiries from the public!**
- Received 137 applications for tuition assistance, interviewed 121 candidates, and enrolled 56 students from 22 states into our partner programs.
- Monitor each student monthly for progress.
- Partner schools/programs now number 15. (For full list, check our website at Getting Started.)

Military:

- **In cooperation with military personnel at the U.S. Naval Station at Guantanamo Bay, we will roll out our first on-base Basic Training program – a template for the vast military spouses target audience nationwide!**
- Met in October 2018 at the Pentagon with officials to promote Project Steno's Cover Your Bases Program™ for military members and their spouses. (Details below.) There are 510,000 military spouses in the Army alone, two-thirds of them under the age of 32. An ideal target audience!
- Launched Nancy Varallo's Basic Training™. This "easy to teach" intro to steno program was initially developed for our Cover Your Bases initiative. Court reporter volunteers have delivered the six-week Basic Training program at several high schools, adult ed. programs, and online via Zoom. Since January of this year, 183 recruits have enrolled in 15 sessions of Basic Training. At least six more sessions are scheduled to commence this August and September. (For information and registration, click Getting Started on our website.)
- Purchased 51 brand new student Wave writers from Stenograph LLC for use by military spouses who enroll in a Basic Training program.

Outreach:

- **Created three videos to promote court reporting and captioning. See them on our website. We invite you to post/share. (Further info below.)**
- Shepherded through to completion a first-year court reporting program at Fox Tech High School in San Antonio, TX – a template for high school rollout nationwide! Other Texas high schools are in the process of adding court reporting to their curriculum offerings.
- Created a library of customizable handouts/marketing materials, distributing same to teachers, schools, reporters, captioners, firm owners, and professional associations.
- Served as a resource for individual reporters and captioners, firm owners, association board members, advising on best practices for outreach to high schools and others.
- Many, many presentations made at high schools, national and state association conventions, plus educational meetings such as vocational technical administrators conferences, and veterans and military spouse organizations.
- Sponsored captioner Jennifer Schuck in June to The Digital Excellence Program for Minority Entrepreneurs, an event organized by Google and Dartmouth College's Tuck School of Business. Jennifer was able to spread the word about our profession and also introduce Project Steno to the leadership of organizations we hope to develop as future strategic partners.
- We continue to take advantage of interview opportunities on television, in podcasts and webcasts, where we promote court reporting and captioning as a career, and tout Project Steno's tuition assistance, high school, and military spouse programs.

Efforts by our Donors:

- “Donate \$2,000 and sponsor a machine! We'll put your name on it.” We inaugurated a fundraising campaign to defray the expenditure to purchase 51 new Wave machines. \$2,000 will cover the cost of one machine purchase plus shipping costs for two years, so we are promoting sponsorships. Each sponsored machine is labeled with the name of the association or individual sponsor.
- To date, machines have been sponsored by the NJ, IL, MA, PA, NC, and ID associations; Jennifer Gaul sponsored a machine in memory of her recently deceased husband, Sergeant Walter Joseph Gaul; the STAR board sponsored two machines; the Kevin Hunt Challenge in April brought in enough funding for four machines; donations on our Facebook Page raised even more funds.
- **We now have sponsors for 19 of the 51 machines.**
- Veritext Legal Solutions held two Fundraise for the Future events to support Project Steno and future reporters. They matched reporter donations, raising more than \$17,000 in two evenings!

Machine Donations and Vendor Support:

- Realtime Coach donated the Project Steno landing page which hosts our Basic Training textbook, dictation videos, and readback drills.
- Bryan University donated 20 used machines. To be used for our high school programs.
- US Legal facilitated the donation of 37 nearly new machines from the Chaffee School District in Ontario, CA. To be used for our high school programs.
- StenoWorks has been loaning machines to Basic Training recruits at no charge.
- ProCAT donated 10 refurbished machines. To be used for our high school programs.
- Stenograph gave us a very favorable price for the purchase of the 51 Wave machines.

We're making a difference – together!

Our plan is working!

“Project Steno is a work of heart,” says Nancy Varallo, Project Steno’s Executive Director. **“We are an unpaid all-volunteer effort, and the response from our fellow reporters and captioners has been enthusiastic and supportive. Donors have been generous, and we thank them one and all.”**

Project Steno accepts checks, credit card donations, and monthly contributions. Donors and donor information can be found at <https://projectsteno.org/support-us/>.

We’re working to save the profession – and with your continued support, we’ll succeed!

We’re raising awareness of “the best career you never heard of.” Eager students are coming to us; schools are signing on to become partner programs; military spouses are sharing our information and enrolling in Basic Training; and high schools in several states are starting classes.

How can you help? We need volunteers to share the load. Present at vocational high schools and administrative conferences. Teach a Basic Training session. We’ve got the tools you’ll need.

Are you on Facebook? Join our Facebook group or like our page!

Do you shop at Amazon? Go to Smile.Amazon.com and select Project to Advance Stenographic Reporting as your charitable organization. Project Steno will receive a percentage of each purchase. It’s easy.

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

Our *Imagine* and *You Can Help* videos promote awareness of the stenographic reporting and captioning professions. We thank Veritext for their help in creating our fundraising *Imagine* videos, Patrick Blaskopf at The Varallo Group for creating *You Can Help*, and Jen Schuck for captioning our videos. View them on our website or at https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=0QkBATw4r74 and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuX8WeQJ6E0&feature=youtu.be>

How Can Your State Association Help?

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

OUR PROGRAMS IN DETAIL

I. Project Steno’s Cover Your Bases Program™

Cover Your Bases is an initiative to deliver Nancy Varallo’s Basic Training™ program to military personnel, both men and women transitioning to the civilian workforce and spouses of active duty members. Our October 2018 meeting at the Pentagon got the ball rolling. Our goal is to run six-week Basic Training courses on-site at military bases around the country. 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 – one can work anywhere in the country. The military is a huge opportunity for us!

Outreach to the Military Spouses JD Network (a lawyers' group) has generated support for the delivery of Nancy's Basic Training to their members. Nancy and Jim DeCrescenzo met with the manager of the Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse team at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C. As a result, they will advertise Basic Training to their 20,000 military spouse members.

II. Tuition Assistance/School Partner Program

Project Steno has partnered with fifteen court reporting and captioning schools/programs! Acceptance as a partner program means they have a curriculum 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 benchmarks 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 56 students we have enrolled represent those who passed our vetting process, thus are the most likely to succeed. To get those 56, we fielded more than 750 queries from young people who heard about court reporting/captioning through our outreach efforts. We processed 139 applications for tuition assistance, interviewing 123 of them. We have accepted applications only from students who successfully completed Project Steno's Basic Training or an NCRA A to Z Program. Fourteen students have dropped out of the program for various reasons. (Alas, dropouts are inevitable.) Nevertheless, we anticipate a 50% (or better) graduation rate for our enrollees. Think about it: If we graduate 30 students from this enrollment of 56, that's a number that would traditionally require more than 300 enrolled students, given the graduation rates of schools nowadays. That's the importance of our vetting process.

III. Vocational High Schools/Career Education Programs

Project Steno has worked with several high schools in four states to launch court reporting and captioning programs in those schools. 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.

Through the tireless efforts of co-founder Glyn Poage, his son Chris Poage, and Realtime Coach's Mary Beth Everhart, a high school in San Antonio, TX completed its inaugural stenographic reporting program in May (10 students). We now 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 taught Basic Training to 26 students at three vocational high schools in Massachusetts in the spring of 2019. Three other schools have signed on for the next school year. These efforts include a "teach the teacher" component, so that individual high schools can continue to offer Basic Training programs in years to come using their own teachers. That's 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 and power points that we will customize (free of charge) for you.