



FIGHTING FOR GOOD

**COMMUNITY  
ACTION** LEHIGH  
VALLEY

**ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021**

# A Spirit of Gratitude

Why would anyone choose to have a “Spirit of Gratitude” after such a tumultuous year? People lost jobs, businesses shut down, hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives to a pandemic, and racial tensions were no longer covert as people became audacious enough to speak their beliefs, formed from their favorite news source – accurate or fake. The long-term story of how we interact with one another, how our economy and government operate, and how our community evolves is still being written. And the ending is not at all clear.

And yet, if you are fortunate enough to be reading this, you are still alive and breathing and are among those who are able to count your blessings. We, too, are blessed and privileged to have a strong and resilient nonprofit that helps people through hard times such as these. Being grateful in the midst of chaos with an unknown ending is the only way an organization like Community Action knows how to be.

We exist to help people improve their lives when times are hard, to feed hungry branches of our community in times of need, to lend a helping hand to those who need a boost, and to advocate for those who can't find their own voice. We do our best work in times like these.

## But, we don't do it alone.

Our “Spirit of Gratitude” is because of the help we receive. It is because of our donors, our volunteers, our partners, our friends, our board members, our employees, and members of our community who all work together to make sure the work can get done. No one person can do this work unaccompanied - hence the name: “Community” Action.

The pandemic has brought our real purpose into sharp focus. This past year has helped us find new ways to aid this community when it needed it most. We bought Chrome books and provided WiFi so area students could continue to be educated. Masked and socially distanced, we pivoted and dispersed more food than we ever have. We were asked to be the conduit to distribute millions of dollars in COVID Hospitality Industry Relief Program (CHIRP) funds to struggling businesses. We partnered with other nonprofits to help keep people in their homes with rental assistance programs. Residents facing roof-over-their heads crises, neighbors stunned by unexpected hunger, and businesses facing bankruptcy all found Community Action Ready. Present. Available. Supportive. Engaged. We didn't stop working...we worked SMARTER!

We are also grateful for those who return to say, “Thank you!” We are grateful for the people who leave messages on our phones that say, “I don't know what I would have done if it weren't for Community Action.” For the people who send us tear-stained notes in the mail; and most of all, for those who show their gratitude by becoming successful in their careers, their finances, and by building wealth by starting new businesses and buying homes...those who build generational wealth for their children and their children's children, those who improve our economy – we are truly humbled and grateful for you, as well.

We are grateful that we have been, continue to be, and always will be here for the times when gratefulness is hardest to find. Thank You!



Dawn Godshall  
Executive Director



Wayne Barz  
Board President







# Mission Statement

The mission of Community Action Lehigh Valley is to improve the quality of life by building a community in which all people have access to economic opportunity, the ability to pursue that opportunity, and a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

## Why Community Action?

Community Action Agencies (CAA) are private nonprofit or public organizations whose development was encouraged by the federal government in 1964 to combat poverty in their local communities. They involve all sectors of the community—elected officials, public sector representatives, and especially low-income residents—in developing programs that address the causes and conditions of poverty in their communities.

## Areas of Impact

Advocacy

Business Start-Up & Development

Food Access & Nutrition

Housing

Neighborhood Revitalization

Youth

FIGHTING FOR GOOD

# COMMUNITY ACTION LEHIGH VALLEY



LEHIGH  
VALLEY

## NEW LOOK. SAME AGENCY.

We have grown and evolved since our humble beginnings in 1965, and it was time for a change.

Nearly two years ago, Klunk & Millan took a deep dive into our marketing and communications. They found that as we've expanded our programs and services to meet the growing needs of the region, our brand structure became increasingly fragmented and lacked clear identity. Most folks knew of our larger programs like Second Harvest Food Bank or Sixth Street Shelter, but didn't know they fell under the Community Action umbrella.

At one point in the not-so-distant past, we had 15 different logos – one for each of our programs and subsidiaries. Cohesion and consistency were not words used to describe our marketing; few programs had marketing material, and even fewer had branding guidelines. We knew we needed to simplify the way we presented ourselves and think more strategically about our identity – or, multiple identities if you will.

In the Fall of 2020, Fig Industries started working on our brand redesign.

Our goal, rooted in the research conclusions of the brand positioning study begun two years ago, was to unify the look and feel of the programs and subsidiaries that form Community Action—and give us a more consistent, powerful, authentic platform to engage audiences, share our message, and meet our new tagline: **Fighting For Good.**



# Board of Directors

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Hilda Rivera

Dr. Joseph Roy

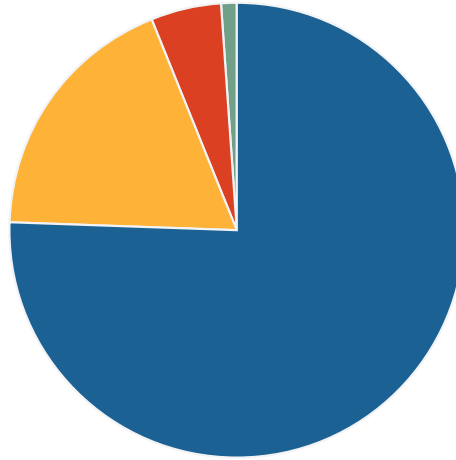
Sandra Vulcano

Irene Woodward

Robin Zmoda

# 2020-2021 FINANCIALS\*

July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021



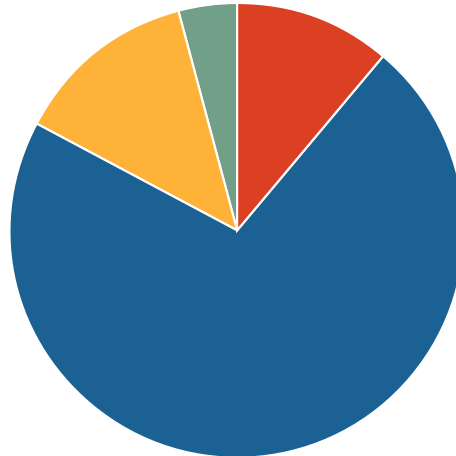
## REVENUE

Private: 75% (\$28,697,515)

Federal: 18% (\$6,947,234)

State: 5% (\$2,107,196)

Local: 1% (\$569,644)



## EXPENSES

Admin/Fundraising: 11% (\$3,422,708)

Direct Assistance: 71% (\$21,198,903)

Program Staff Costs: 13% (\$3,913,416)

Other Program Costs: 4% (\$1,228,896)

\*These unaudited figures include revenues from Community Action's subsidiary nonprofit community development corporations as well as the value of food we distribute through the Second Harvest Food Bank.

Our audit is conducted by Buckno Lisicky & Company. Our audited financial statements can be obtained at [communityactionlv.org](http://communityactionlv.org)

A copy of the official registration and financial information for Community Action may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling, toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Layout & Design: Working Dog Press

Photography: Marco Calderon Photography, Moon Honey Photography, Lauren Smith Matthews

# Administrative Support Services

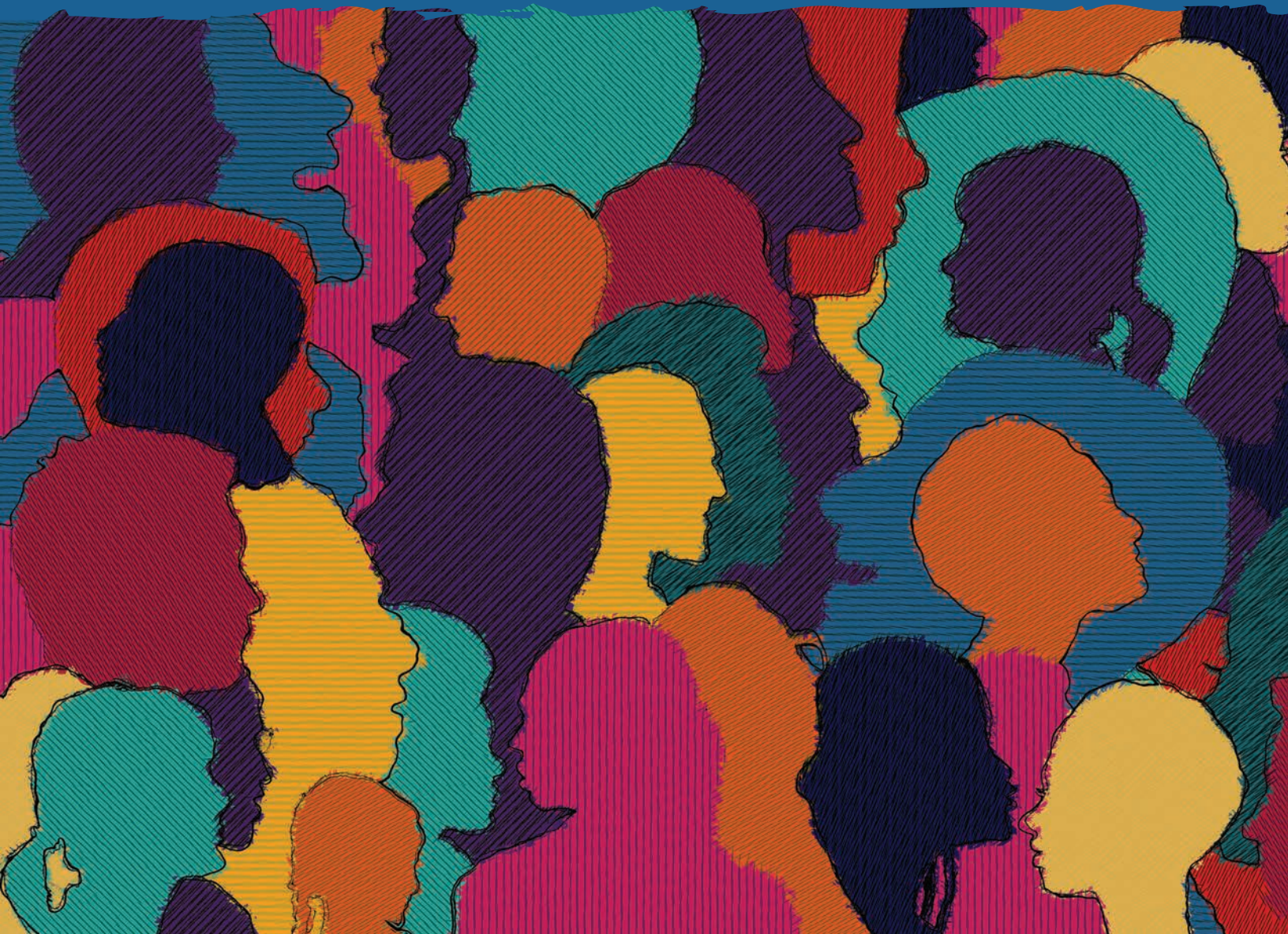
Community Action Lehigh Valley provides administrative support to a variety of entities that perform important work in our community. They include the following:



- ▶ Fiscal support to Catholic Charities and Lehigh County in its administration of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) that makes payments to prevent loss of housing due to COVID-19.
- ▶ Fiscal support to Lehigh County in its administration of a "clearinghouse" that makes payments for housing for people in need.
- ▶ Fiscal support to Northampton County for its clearinghouse.
- ▶ Administrative support for emergency food and shelter funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- ▶ United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley continues to contract with Community Action to provide key professional staff support for the Lehigh Valley Food Policy Council, a collective impact initiative of dozens of stakeholders. The Council continues to work toward goals of a five-year strategic plan (2018-2022) to address the root causes of hunger and food insecurity, lack of access to fresh, healthy food, diminishing farmland, and barriers prohibiting the success of local food producers and entrepreneurs.



# ADVOCACY





# Racial and Ethnic Justice

(Formerly Campaign for Racial and Ethnic Justice)

Racial and Ethnic Justice brings together the wide diversity of people, resources, and perspectives to push back on the bigotry and racism that is all too pervasive in this community to ensure that every person has equal access to opportunity. The goal of the conversation is the development of a five- to seven-year plan for closing the racial equity and wealth gaps in the Lehigh Valley.

## 1,053 individuals engaged

across Lehigh, Northampton and Monroe counties in conversations, trainings, and workshops focused on cultural humility, implicit bias, intersectionality, and racial equity.

## 688 people

participated in Cultural Humility and Implicit Bias Trainings.

## 299 people

participated in Racial Conversations.

## 48 people

participated in Intersectionality Workshops.

## 18 individuals

participated in Engage the Facilitator Training Program. These trainings further the mission of the Color Outside the Lines initiative by training a new generation of facilitators.





# Color Outside the Lines

## Ensuring Equitable Access to Opportunity

The mission of the Color Outside the Lines Initiative is to engage the Lehigh Valley in conversations about race and ethnicity that eliminate barriers to fairness and opportunity, strengthens our community, and leaves no one behind.

The Color Outside the Lines Initiative is a 5- to 7-year strategic plan to invest in our community's future. The plan seeks to address racial inequities and disparities in the following areas:

- ▶ **Housing**
- ▶ **Economic opportunity and employment**
- ▶ **Education**
- ▶ **Criminal justice**
- ▶ **Community quality of life with focuses on mental health, health, arts & culture, and recreation**

Color Outside the Lines (COTL) will work towards racial and ethnic equity by addressing the symptoms of the historical exclusion of Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and all other underserved communities. Community Action Lehigh Valley believes that racial and ethnic equity is realized when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes, and the outcomes for all groups are improved. Thus, our collective collaboration is united behind a vision to make the Lehigh Valley a community that celebrates its diversity through developing mechanisms to open doors rather than close them. We are creating a plan to ensure that everyone has equitable access to opportunity.

The COTL blueprint was developed through a series of informed communitywide conversations focusing on race, inclusion, humility, empathy, and cooperation. These conversations involved hundreds of people through forums, workshops, informal gatherings, community meetings, focus groups, conferences, and trainings within diverse sectors of the community.

Our focus is to build a longer table, where everyone has a voice in the decisions being made that impact their lives. Through this work, we push to build a better Lehigh Valley and a stronger community where we all are thriving. COTL has been endorsed by community stakeholders, elected officials, local universities and school districts, and business leaders.

Anticipated launch for the initial plan is December 2021.

# BUSINESS START-UP & DEVELOPMENT





# Rising Tide Community Loan Fund

Rising Tide Community Loan Fund provides technical assistance and extends credit to the prospective, start-up and established small businesses whose risk factors make it difficult to obtain funds from traditional lenders but who inevitably make up the backbone of a thriving local economy.

## Delivered \$249 million in COVID-19 emergency grant funds

as a member of the PA CDFI Network, along with 16 other community development financial institutions, to small businesses across the commonwealth.

## Disbursed \$348,385 in loans

bringing the total to date to over \$9,500,000.

## Approved 10 loans

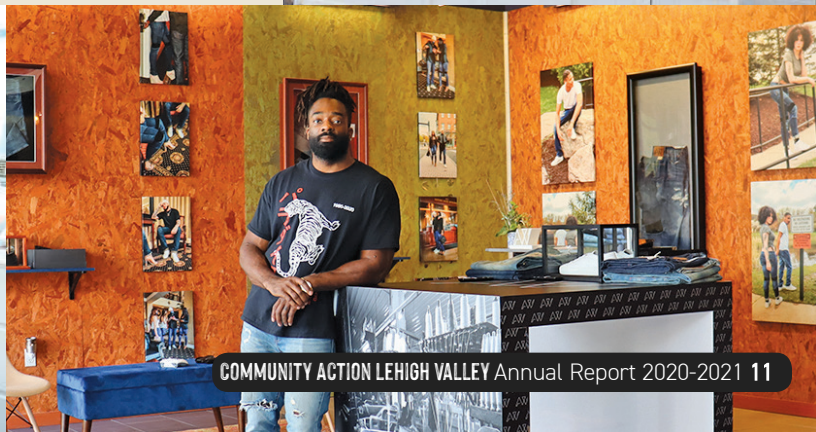
7 were made to women-owned businesses, 5 were made to minority-owned businesses, and 6 were to businesses owned by low-to moderate-income individuals and/or located in low-to moderate-income census tracts.

## Businesses that received loans

were two trucking companies, a grocery store, a coffee shop, a piano school, a sporting goods store, a bed and breakfast, a transportation company, a furniture store and a gift shop.

## \$161,000 of debt relief

secured and provided to businesses in our loan portfolio.





# Celebrating 20 Years of supporting small businesses

March 2020 marked Rising Tide Community Loan Fund's 20-year anniversary of helping our small business community thrive.

**\$9.5 MILLION** in financing disbursed to small business projects

**281 BUSINESSES** received loans across Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton, and Upper Bucks counties

**379 JOBS** created

**64% OF LOANS** went to low-income people and communities

**59% OF LOANS** went to women-owned businesses

**37% OF LOANS** went to businesses owned by minorities

"Rising Tide helps give the community a shot at a dream, a desire, and to make a passion a reality."

— Sam Masotto, Founder, Bonn Place Brewing Co.

"As a restaurant truck startup, there aren't a lot of opportunities for bank loans due to the high-risk nature of the business. Rising Tide was helpful with taking a risk on a small business that didn't have any prior experience in this industry."

— Christie Vymazal, Founder, The Flying V Poutinerie



# FOOD ACCESS & NUTRITION





# Second Harvest Food Bank of the Lehigh Valley and Northeast Pennsylvania

Second Harvest provides nutritious food, offers nutrition education, advocates to end food insecurity, dismantles barriers to create access and works to attain food justice. Our programs provide children, seniors and families with fresh and nutritious groceries. We also provide training and access to land to new and emerging farmers at The Seed Farm, help people enroll to receive SNAP benefits and administer supplemental nutrition programs for seniors and military families.

**10 MILLION** pounds of food distributed

**6 COUNTIES** serving residents in Lehigh, Northampton, Carbon, Monroe, Pike, and Wayne

**3.4 MILLION** pounds of fresh produce, perishable protein, and fresh dairy products distributed

**1.5 MILLION** pounds of food rescued

**23,873 BOXES** of nutritious food distributed to low-income seniors through the PA Senior Food Box Program

**EXPANDED MILITARYSHARE** from 1 to 5 counties, now serving 140 military families per month

**7 SITES IN 4 COUNTIES** participated in the Healthy Pantry Initiative, a partnership with Feeding Pennsylvania





# FreshForward

## Fighting for Food Justice

After a successful \$525,000 fundraising campaign, we were able to launch our FreshForward mobile pantry program, which increases the distribution of fresh, nutritious foods to people facing food insecurity.

At Second Harvest's site, we doubled our refrigerated and frozen storage capacity, growing from 48,000 cubic feet to 96,000 cubic feet, thereby increasing storage capacity from 96 pallets to 192 pallets of refrigerated and frozen product. We added two refrigerated sprinter vans to our vehicle fleet and purchased 100 coolers and freezers for our pantry network, equipping them with the ability to receive and store more fresh and frozen product.

FreshForward's comprehensive approach includes:

- ▶ Weekly mass distributions of fresh and perishable foods to the Second Harvest network on-site at the Second Harvest warehouse and off-site in Monroe County
- ▶ Nutrition education distributions in which the pantry receives fresh food and guidance from a nutrition educator during their normal distribution
- ▶ "Stop and Drop" distributions in which Second Harvest brings additional fresh food to pantries for distribution during their normal hours

In addition, we developed a Food and Nutrition Policy based on Healthy Eating Research (HER) guidelines, which were created in partnership between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Duke University, and the charitable food network. These guidelines prioritize and deprioritize food by categorizing them by nutritional value. This ensures that the food we purchase, receive through donations, and distribute to our community aligns with nutritional standards.



# The Seed Farm

The Seed Farm provides training opportunities, access to land and equipment, and business start-up assistance to emerging farmers on our 42-acre farm in Emmaus, located in Lehigh County.

Through our Farm Business Incubator program, beginning farmers with business plans may launch their own farms on our site. They produce and market their own products, while having access to land, equipment, and infrastructure at reduced rates. Incubator farmers receive continued guidance from experienced local farm mentors and Seed Farm staff. We also provide hands-on training in areas that are critical to new farm success, such as equipment operation, production planning, food safety, and more.

*The Seed Farm is part of our Second Harvest Food Bank of the Lehigh Valley and Northeast Pennsylvania program.*

**450% INCREASE IN LAND UTILIZATION** Farm Business Incubator footprint expanded from 1 to 5.5 acres

**4 BEGINNING FARMERS** joined the Farm Business Incubator

**6,464** plants sold at the Spring Plant Sale

**200+ VARIETIES** of vegetables, herbs, and flowers sold at the Spring Plant Sale

**800+ PLANTS DONATED** to community groups like Afros in Nature and Easton Urban Farm post-Plant Sale

**PROVIDED 180 HOURS** of training opportunities to new farmers





# Meet Michelle

## Growing the Local Food Economy

In the summer of 2020, Michelle Wagner started as a volunteer for The Seed Farm's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Workshare Program. For four months, she learned the basics of farming while helping harvest and prepare produce bags for the CSA recipients. During this time, she also learned about The Seed Farm's Farm Business Incubator program.

Originally being exposed to farming and CSA programs through a previous job, Michelle learned a lot about agriculture and got to see how the CSA process worked through an employee wellness program. She became interested in sustainability and learning how to grow her own food. "I started gardening, however I really wanted to take it to the next level. Learning how to homestead and start a small business, that was really appealing to me," says Michelle.

The Seed Farm's Planning Sessions helped Michelle launch Rise & Root Farm. This year, Michelle is one of four incubator farmers operating on our site. She grows vegetables, which she sells to the Kellyn Foundation, and flowers on a fourth of an acre.

**"I don't think I would have been able to do this from scratch on my own without the resources from The Seed Farm"**

-Michelle Wagner, Rise & Root Farm





# PromiseLand

## Planting Seeds and Growing Leaders



This year, a new initiative of Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley includes growing vegetables on 1/8-acre at The Seed Farm. The Promise Land Community Garden is coordinated in partnership with the Martin Luther & Coretta Scott-King Memorial Project of the Lehigh Valley and the Resurrected Community Development Corporation. Each organization supplies the person-power and The Seed Farm supplies the land, access to equipment and irrigation, and training.



Youth and young adults ages 13-25 make up the core group of volunteers. However, all ages are welcomed, and children often work alongside elders in the garden. The volunteers learn to make purposeful decisions in their lives and in their community through engagement and physically working on the land. The results are immediate and real. All produce grown is brought to Promise Neighborhoods' communities to be shared and distributed to residents.

The Promise Land Community Garden brings new vitality to the 42-acres at The Seed Farm. Garden volunteer days have become a place of community, with sharing of meals, dancing, and making music.

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**“When you share the keys, and give access to people who don’t normally have power, you get different outcomes. This is about food and food apartheid, but this garden is also about life.”**

-Dr. Hasshan Batts, Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley





# HOUSING



WE SEE YOU.  
WE HEAR YOU.  
WE ARE WITH YOU.

# Community Action Homes

(formerly Community Action, Better Homes)

Community Action Homes partners with local municipalities to improve the quality of the affordable housing stock in the Lehigh Valley through a comprehensive housing revitalization strategy. This strategy includes the following tools: the acquisition of houses, rehabilitation of those houses for resale to eligible buyers, rehab of owner-occupied homes, and façade improvements.

## LAUNCHED SUBSTANTIAL REHABILITATION PROJECTS IN BANGOR AND SLATINGTON

with support from Lehigh and Northampton counties

## SOLD 2 HOMES IN SOUTH BETHLEHEM

featuring energy-efficiency upgrades and modern amenities, to low-to-moderate-income homeowners

## COMPLETED 8 FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

to residential and commercial properties in Allentown, Bethlehem, and the Slate Belt, in collaboration with Community Action Development Allentown, Community Action Development Bethlehem, and Slate Belt Rising

## IMPROVED 4 INVESTOR-OWNED BUILDINGS

in Allentown occupied by low-income tenants. Tenants get better housing without paying more rent, the landlord gets an improved investment, and the neighborhood looks and feels better. This unique program is funded by a special \$450,000 grant from TD Bank

## COORDINATED REHABILITATION ACTIVITIES FOR 27 LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

in Lehigh and Northampton counties through programs funded by Lehigh County, Northampton County, and the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency. Rehabilitations increased safety and code compliance, removed lead-based paint hazards, and increased energy

## LAUNCHED SUCCESSFUL “HIGH NEED” ROOF AND HVAC SYSTEM REPLACEMENT PROGRAMS

for low-income Lehigh and Northampton County homeowners, with support provided by both counties

## INCREASED CREDENTIALS AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

of existing staff, with employees obtaining Lead Risk Assessor and PA Real Estate Salesperson licenses



# Housing Counseling

(formerly Community Action Financial Services)

Housing Counseling provides low- to moderate-income families with a continuum of coordinated services in order to improve their ability to own and retain their own home and, in the process, build assets that can translate into family and community wealth.

In partnership with the City of Bethlehem, we launched the Bethlehem Homebuyer Assistance Program, providing down payment and closing cost assistance in the form of a deferred payment loan to first-time home buyers who purchase in the City of Bethlehem and are at 80% median income or below. As of the end of June 2021, there are seven participating lenders for the program.

We were recognized by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency at the Housing Counseling Awards Ceremony held in December 2020 with the following: Best Agency Award, Financial Education and Coaching Award, Funder Partnership Award, and Best Housing Counseling Specialist Award for staff member Carol Jurchenko.

*Housing Counseling is part of our Community Action Homes program.*

- ▶ **45 families purchased a home**  
with assistance from the program.
- ▶ **7 virtual seminars (3 in Spanish, 4 in English)**  
held providing HUD-approved education.
- ▶ **150 prospective homebuyers**  
received certificates of completion for attending first-time homebuyer virtual seminars.
- ▶ **27 prospective homebuyers**  
received pre-purchase counseling.
- ▶ **22 prospective homebuyers**  
received pre-settlement counseling.
- ▶ **23 financially distressed homeowners**  
received default and delinquency counseling.
- ▶ **12 households saved from foreclosure**  
through loan modifications.
- ▶ **91% of families**  
who received a modification of their mortgage or a repayment plan in 2018 are still in their home today.
- ▶ **3 families**  
earned the savings match through the Home Ownership Savings Account Program (HOSAP) and purchased a home.
- ▶ **7 active savers**  
3 have saved at least \$2,000 and will receive a \$2,000 savings match when they purchase a home. This is made possible through a partnership with ESSA Bank and Trust.
- ▶ **8 participants**  
completed a six-hour Financial Education course that is taught with curriculum developed by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency.

# Lehigh Valley Community Land Trust

Lehigh Valley Community Land Trust acquires real estate to improve and sell to low- to moderate-income households to strengthen communities.

*Lehigh Valley Community Land Trust is part of our Community Action Homes program.*

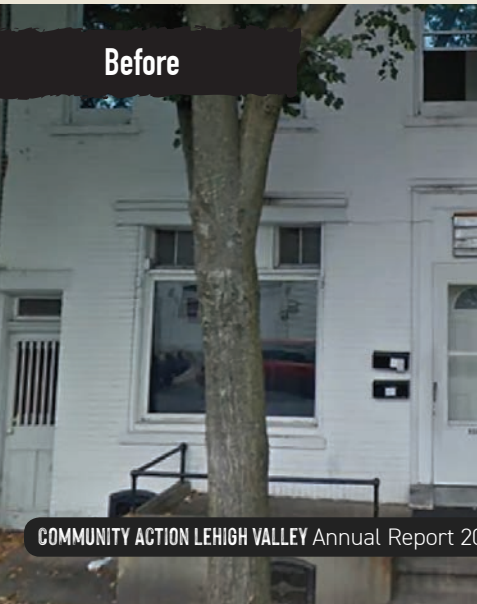
## Developed and implemented a new model of homeownership

where permanent affordability and owner-occupancy are preserved by deed restrictions rather than a ground lease. This will allow Land Trust homeowners to own both the home and the land.

## Revised the formula governing the resale of Land Trust homes

to allow homeowners increased equity at resale, providing them greater access to the wealth-building potential of homeownership.

These changes reflect the first major revision of the Land Trust program since its 2010 incorporation.





# Weatherization

Weatherization hires contractors to make improvements to the homes of low-income people and educates them on comfort and conservation techniques to enable them to save money on heating costs; it also repairs and even replaces failing heating systems.

*Weatherization is part of our Community Action Homes program.*

## **700 participants' homes visited**

Through safety trainings, proper PPE use and cleaning procedures, our staff and contractors were able to work without contracting or transmitting the COVID virus.

## **472 homes weatherized**

including comprehensive energy audits, blower door/ pressure diagnostics, insulating attics, walls and basements, thermal camera guided air sealing, repairing doors and windows, replacing high-energy use appliances and in some instances, repairing and replacing damaged heating systems.

## **4 home repairs completed**

that were previously deferred from weatherization services due to structural or moisture issues through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Deferral Program.

## **236 heating systems repaired/replaced**

in crisis situations through LIHEAP, an increase of 48 heating systems from the previous year. This is due to the CARES Program that opened crisis services during the summer months, a first for LIHEAP Crisis.

## **\$112,000+ received**

through a Lehigh County and United Way grant.

### **▶ \$34,000+ spent on PPE**

for the weatherization department and its subcontractors.

### **▶ 6 heating systems and 5 water heaters**

installed for Lehigh County residents in need.

### **▶ 17 additional water heaters**

purchased through our subcontractors to install for participants who need assistance.

# Sixth Street Shelter

We assist families experiencing homelessness secure safe housing through family-centered services, in-house programming, and referrals to community resources while advocating that affordable housing is a human right.

Located in Center City Allentown, Sixth Street Shelter provides safe, short-term housing for families of any configuration (including those with fathers and teenaged boys, multi-generational families, and those from the LGBTQ+ community) experiencing homelessness. The property has 25 private apartments, a Family Resource Center, playground, and full-choice food pantry for residents.

Our 18-to 24-month transitional housing programs in Allentown and Easton make it possible for parents to pursue educational or vocational training while working towards self-sufficiency for themselves and their children. We believe that education and job training play an important and valuable role in helping families thrive while also ending the cycle of generational poverty.

## 80 families

stayed at the Shelter including:

- ▶ 105 adults
- ▶ 172 children

## 27 families

stayed in our transitional housing programs.

## 142 children

moved to virtual learning with the help of our caseworkers.

## 27 parents

enrolled in educational classes and programming.







# Meet Jacqueline

## Strengthened by Sisterhood

Jacqueline Rodriguez first arrived at Sixth Street Shelter with her son, Angel, after her housing had fallen through. At the time, she was in school and completely on her own.

After moving into the Shelter, she developed a Family Service Plan (which included employment and education goals) with the help of her caseworker. Shortly after, she transitioned to the long-term transitional housing program and saw that she possessed the strength and independence needed to become self-sufficient.

Despite moments of doubt and fear, she pressed on and reminded herself that she was going to take care of herself and her son. She enrolled in college to start working toward her bachelor's degree and was able to maintain a 3.57 GPA. As someone who grew up in special education classes, Jacqueline said, "I was always told that I would never amount to anything, so graduating with a 3.57 GPA was the proudest moment of my life."

Jacqueline was also touched by the number of supportive women she met while in the transitional housing program. She was able to surround herself with this community of women who all looked out for one another – they spent holidays and birthdays together, worked together to set good examples for their children, and became family. Jacqueline said having this network of support was one of the most impactful aspects of the program for her.

Since completing the program, she notes that her life has changed in so many ways, **"I am stronger, more independent, I have more faith in myself and I know I can accomplish anything."**

Now, Jacqueline is excited for what the future holds. She's currently working towards her master's degree and starting a mentoring program for single mothers. Her dream is to create a program where women empower each other, encourage one another and build each other up, just like they did when she was in our program.





# NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION





# Slate Belt Rising

Slate Belt Rising is a neighborhood revitalization initiative designed to integrate and capitalize on the substantial assets of the individual Slate Belt communities. By leveraging the unique history, architecture, and culture of each municipality into a regional approach, Slate Belt Rising fosters comprehensive community and economic development.

While the program specifically targets the boroughs of Bangor, Wind Gap, Pen Argyl, and Portland, some initiatives promote development and the coordination of services for the entire region.



**\$35,200 INVESTED**

into façade and mural projects

**6 STUDENTS**

received \$500 scholarships to help them pay to further their education

**5 FAÇADE AND MURAL PROJECTS**

completed throughout Pen Argyl Borough

**CREATED VENDOR MARKETS**

in conjunction with Blue Flame Events to help support local small businesses

**SECURED FUNDING**

to replace the fence at the youth softball field in collaboration with the Green and White Youth Association





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HAMILTON

LOGIC LTD  
MOVIE THEATRE  
101 GLEBE

SEVENTH ST

BB&T



# Community Action Development Allentown

## (formerly Community Action Development Corporation of Allentown)

Community Action Development Allentown elevates and empowers residents by actively promoting neighborhood revitalization which strengthens the neighborhood economy, improves the quality of life and is inclusive of all residents. Our vision is a community whose diverse identity is respected and recognized for its rich cultural heritage thereby fostering vibrant and organically sustainable neighborhoods.

Completed the first year of the Allentown's Core Neighborhood Partnership Program in collaboration with multiple "youth serving" community partners:

- ▶ Conducted 2 multi-week virtual, youth entrepreneurial training classes with **26 attendees**.
- ▶ **Recruited 9 small business owners** to tell their story to youth entrepreneurs and to provide insight on being an entrepreneur.
- ▶ **Mentored 8 youth** entered in the Penn State Lehigh Valley Teen Entrepreneurship Challenge which culminated with their participation in the "Pitch Contest."
- ▶ **Launched NPP Naming Contest** to create a long-term identity for the "Allentown's Future" initiative. Winning entry was "Allentown's Core"
- ▶ Supported start-up of Generation Next freshmen class at William Allen High School with **21 students participating**.
- ▶ **Provided college tour for 12 youth** who received college application training as part of the SAT Boot Camps. Tour included 4 university campuses with tour guides.
- ▶ In collaboration with the Freedom School Partnership, **launched the James Lawson Freedom School at 3 sites** which collectively enrolled **112 youth** and served to mitigate the "summer slide" by utilizing a researched, multicultural, activity-based curriculum.
- ▶ Funded several after-school bilingual literacy and tutoring providers who collectively served over **100 Allentown School District elementary students** and concurrently provided technology instruction for over **50 parents**.
- ▶ Invested in the innovative anti-violence solutions work led by Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley (PNLV). Their Outreach Team and Violence Interrupters developed critical skills to build community trust and connect residents to services which help prevent youth violence. In addition to responding to every shooting within 24 hours, PNLV was able to **provide direct services to over 200 residents** and attend 6 candlelight vigils.
- ▶ **Awarded 19 scholarships** to a combination of former Generation Next students and graduates of the SAT Boot Camps.
- ▶ Partnered with the City of Allentown's law enforcement staff to implement the 7th year of collaboration on its signature Youth Academy effort focused on engaging middle school students from the Allentown School district to examine careers in law enforcement. **40 students participated over a 4-week period** and were rewarded with trips to Philadelphia Zoo, Reading Terminal Market, Leisure Lake, and Dorney Park.
- ▶ **Supported the 1st Spanish language "Civilian Police Academy"** designed to equip residents with the necessary skills to improve safety in their communities. There were 20 graduates.
- ▶ Piloted inaugural Hip Hop dance classes at Brigadier Anna Mae Hays Elementary School with **17 students participating** over a 2-week period and concluding with 2 final dance performances.
- ▶ Collaborated with Baum Art School to enroll **14 youth** in their Fashion Design Program with a focus on entering the fashion design industry as a career path or becoming a fashion industry entrepreneur.
- ▶ **Built capacity at 6 smaller non-profits** via the Coalition of Difference Makers initiative which allowed them to provide services to over 500 youth and their families.
- ▶ Assisted multiple community partners to provide numerous **community events and youth activities reaching over 5,000 residents** and which included: Mother's and Father's Day celebrations; R&B Explosion at West Park; High School Basketball Tournament; Dominican Festival; Blues Festival; Mobile Dental Van Clinic (oral hygiene); youth bowling; youth swimming; girls basketball clinic; vocal workshop; Trauma Informed Parenting Training; and laptop bags and mask distribution to students returning to school in spring 2021.





# Allentown's Core

## New Neighborhood Partnership Program Focuses on Allentown's Youth

Community Action Development Allentown's new Neighborhood Partnership Plan, Allentown's Core, includes a wide range of outreach, programs, and services to give inner-city children a better shot at thriving in a world that is leaving far too many behind. The project is focused on the neighborhood bounded by Seventh Street to the east, Twelfth Street to the west, Linden Street to the south and Gordon Street to the north.

Activities include: educational remediation for kids in all grade levels, an array of arts programming, youth entrepreneurship training, job development and placement programs, and more. Part of the plan is the development of a multi-million-dollar youth center in the neighborhood, which will eventually house most of the activity of the project.

The core of the six-year plan is financial commitments from companies that do business in the Lehigh Valley, supported by 80% tax credits by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development as part of its Neighborhood Partnership Program. At \$650,000 per year, it is the largest program of its kind in Pennsylvania.

**“The most frustrating thing about a neighborhood struggling to recover is how that struggle affects our kids. We want our kids to be hopeful, to have a future and to stay in the neighborhood and pass it down to their kids better than what they inherited.”**

-Rebecca Ramos, Community Member & Steering Committee Co-Chair

# Community Action Development Bethlehem

(formerly Community Action Development Corporation of Bethlehem)

Community Action Development Bethlehem has worked hand-in-hand with our neighbors to advance a neighborhood-based vision of community and economic development that builds on the strengths and assets of our diverse community in Bethlehem. We seek to improve the quality of life in south Bethlehem and Northside 2027 neighborhoods by empowering residents and expanding economic opportunity through small business support, housing rehabilitation and advocacy, and community development projects.

## Supported 5 businesses

with \$36,870 in rent through our Commercial Lease Subsidy program.

## Assisted 63 entrepreneurs

through small business support services.

## Engaged 719 residents

in neighborhood initiatives through volunteering, committee work, and community planning meetings.

## Funded 2 residential facades

that were completed on the Southside.

## Funded 4 youth programs

that served 100 youth through after-school programs in the arts, sports, and recreation.

## 25 residents

utilized the Tool and Seed Library through our partnership with Bethlehem Area Public Library.





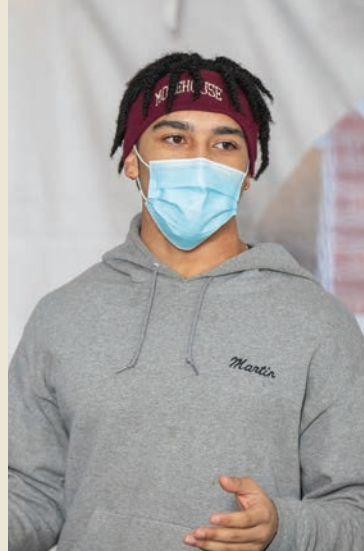
# YOUTH



# Generation Next

Generation Next is a college readiness, access, and completion program created to correct disparities in education. It ensures that students of color, future first-generation college students, and/or low-income students have increased access to opportunities that will further their education. The program works with students to achieve college admission, integrate into college life, and complete a post-secondary program.

*Generation Next is part of our Racial & Ethnic Justice program.*



**290 STUDENTS** served in Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton area school districts

**EXPANDED PROGRAM** into the Allentown School District

**4 SCHOOLS** partnered with us to offer Generation Next

**20 OUT OF 21 GRADUATING SENIORS** went on to college. One student took an intentional gap year but plans to attend college.

**3 GENERATION NEXT GRADUATES** completed 2-year college programs; all students are continuing in 4-year institutions

**8 SCHOLARSHIPS** were awarded to Easton Area High School students

**3 STUDENTS** received emergency funding for books and housing



# Generation Next Scholarship Fund

## Dine Out, Do Good

While attending a racial justice event, Apollo Grill owner Rachel Griffith was inspired by a speaker who encouraged attendees to find ways to help students of color attend and stay in college. She connected with her friend Hasanna Birdsong, who dedicates her time and talents to us as a Generation Next mentor.

Shortly after, in September of 2020, Apollo Grill launched the Generation Next Scholarship Fund, created to help Generation Next students navigate the financial burden associated with a post-secondary education.

"The Apollo Grill, like many restaurants, cultivates a diverse workplace," said Rachel. "We embrace each other, live for diversity, and love the fact that we have created this environment we call our 'safe' place. We are believers in social justice. This is our way to take action."

Alongside sponsorships and donations from patrons, Apollo Grill has committed to donating five percent of food sales every Tuesday night from 5-10 PM. Nearly two months after launching the fund, they raised \$50,000. These funds help us level the playing field for our Generation Next students by reducing the financial barriers that these phenomenal students are met with once they begin their college careers.

Thank you to Rachel, Hasanna, and the entire Apollo Grill crew for their dedication to our Generation Next students!







# SHE

SHE, an acronym for “self-esteem, health, education,” is an after-school program that encourages girls to see the many possibilities ahead of them by developing life skills that promote: self-esteem, personal well-being, resilience, healthy relationships, teamwork, leadership, and interest in academic success.

The program creates an educational and inspirational environment for local 4th-8th grade girls in the Allentown and Bethlehem Area School Districts.

*SHE is part of our Racial & Ethnic Justice program.*

**60 students**

participated in SHE.

**Expanded program**

into the Allentown School District.

**5 schools**

partnered with us to offer SHE.

**24+ lessons**

were created for both in-person and virtual curriculum.

**New lessons on**

Colorism, Hair Love, Refusal Skills, and Mindfulness.



**Some set  
the bar.**

**Others  
raise it.**



Thanks for always going above and beyond to make our community a better place.



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# Get Involved

## Volunteer



Scan the QR code for current opportunities or email [volunteer@communityactionlv.org](mailto:volunteer@communityactionlv.org) for more information!

## Sponsor / Donate

For sponsorship opportunities or to donate to Community Action and its programs, contact Erin Dallago at [edallago@caclv.org](mailto:edallago@caclv.org) or 484.893.1137.

## Media / Promotions

For media inquiries and promotional opportunities, contact Dannah Hartman at [dhartman@caclv.org](mailto:dhartman@caclv.org) or 484.893.1135.

## Careers/Internships



Scan the QR code for current openings or contact Elesia Fowlin at [efowlin@caclv.org](mailto:efowlin@caclv.org) or 484.893.1126.

## Connect

Stay up to date on all things Community Action by following our programs on social media or signing up for our monthly e-newsletters, found on these sites:

[Communityactionlv.org](http://Communityactionlv.org)

[Shfblv.org](http://Shfblv.org)

[Theseedfarm.org](http://Theseedfarm.org)



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1337 East 5th Street  
Bethlehem, PA 18015

## Our Locations



### Community Action Development Allentown

📍 523-525 North 7th Street | Allentown, PA 18102

☎ 610.433.5703 📶 [communityactionlv.org](http://communityactionlv.org)

### Community Action Development Bethlehem

📍 409 East 4th Street | Bethlehem, PA 18015

☎ 610.807.9337 📶 [communityactionlv.org](http://communityactionlv.org)

### Community Action Lehigh Valley

📍 1337 East 5th Street | Bethlehem, PA 18015

☎ 610.691.5620 📶 [communityactionlv.org](http://communityactionlv.org)

### Second Harvest Food Bank of the Lehigh Valley and Northeast Pennsylvania

📍 6969 Silver Crest Road | Nazareth, PA 18064

☎ 484.287.4015 📶 [shfblv.org](http://shfblv.org)

### Slate Belt Rising

📍 197 Pennsylvania Avenue | Bangor, PA 18013

☎ 484.523.0900 📶 [slatebeltrising.org](http://slatebeltrising.org)

### Sixth Street Shelter

📍 219 North 6th Street | Allentown, PA 18102

☎ 610.435.1490 📶 [sixthstreetshelter.org](http://sixthstreetshelter.org)

### The Seed Farm

📍 5854 Vera Cruz Road | Emmaus, PA 18049

☎ 484.287.4015 📶 [theseedfarm.org](http://theseedfarm.org)