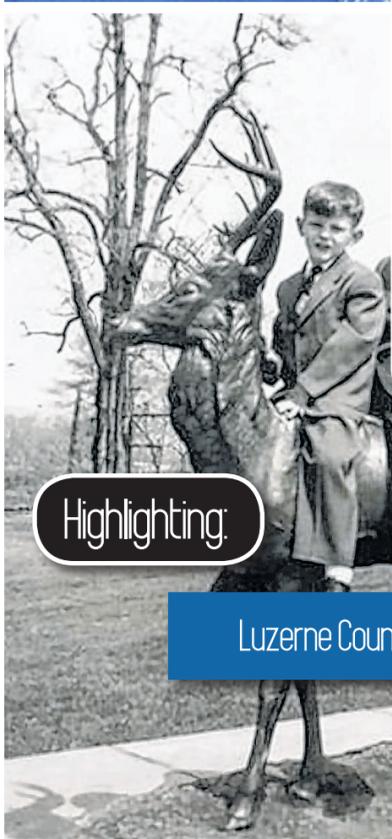


A Special Supplement to | 2019
TIMES LEADER



We're a
Valley Heart
with a
Heart

LEARN • SUPPORT • ENGAGE
with local nonprofit organizations



Highlighting:

Luzerne County Head Start

Northeast Sight Services

Wilkes-Barré Preservation Society

Little Theatre of Wilkes-Barre



President and CEO of The Luzerne Foundation talks 'We're a Valley with a Heart'

Charles M. Barber
President and CEO of The Luzerne Foundation

Learning is not just about books, it is about growing from life experiences, building new relationships, and pursuing new opportunities. As the electric excitement of the back-to-school season begins, students and teachers are no doubt busily preparing for the possibilities of what this transformative school year may hold. They know it's all about the life-changing experiences which inspire students to become their best selves.

At The Luzerne Foundation, we're excited for back-to-school because that means it's time for us to kick off a new year of our Youth Advisory Committee (YAC). As students settle back in after a relaxing summer break, we're just getting warmed up for a fresh season of fun philanthropy education for local students. Our unique YAC training is an experiential program, which informs young people about the important collaborative skills needed for effective charitable giving. For us, it's not only about teaching students the technical skills, they'll also learn about what it means to be part of impactful decision-making, to respectfully consider the input of others, and how to step up and be a trusted leader right when it counts.

This year, 36 talented and dynamic high school students, from freshmen through senior classes and representing an impressive thirteen school districts, will come together to cooperatively review community needs. They'll carefully consider grant applications, make thorough site visits, and ultimately award grant funding to up to three deserving nonprofit organizations. More importantly though, the students learn to work as a team in order to reach a meaningful shared goal. Students participate over the course of their four-year high school careers,

and we are privileged at The Luzerne Foundation to see them grow exponentially, mature, and progress in their journey toward purposeful community stewardship during this time. To date, YAC has supported 18 causes with grants totaling nearly \$100,000 since the 2013-14 school year. We can't wait to see who will benefit next from the students' efforts when they deliberate in April to award this year's grants.

This month, in addition to starting an enterprising new season of YAC, we're also excited to help spotlight four more nonprofit organizations in this innovative series with the Times Leader. You'll learn about a selection of phenomenal

nonprofits who educate our community in many different ways and continue to make our region a brighter place. One of the notable pioneers in preparing young people for better outcomes is Head Start, a consistently proven leader in providing early childhood education and family development. Head Start guides youngsters in developing a love of education and becoming life-long learners. Another outstanding community asset is the Little Theatre of Wilkes-Barre, the longest-running performing arts facility in our region. It offers educational programming for both adults and children, including a Youth Workshop tailored to teaching acting skills, confidence-building, and teamwork in actors ages 5-18. Their programs give all participants a rich education in what it means to hone their craft in the arts.

We're also pleased to highlight Northeast Sight Services, an incredibly hardworking and dedicated nonprofit, which helps blind and visually impaired individuals achieve the best possible quality of life. By educating people of all ages about early detec-

tion, the organization helps to combat the problem of vision loss. Finally, you'll read about Wilkes-Barre Preservation Society, a visionary group committed to preserving the architectural history of our community by educating community members about the importance of restoring valuable buildings, which have significant social relevance.

Each of these nonprofits helps to promote the education, vitality, and health of our communities. We support their missions and encourage them to continue the meaningful work that they do. If you'd like to contribute to the ongoing efforts of nonprofits in our area, please consider visiting www.luzfdn.org to see how you can make a difference. The Luzerne Foundation is your community resource for philanthropic leadership, and just like our motto says, *we're here for good.*



A Note from our Publisher

Mike Murray
Publisher, Times Leader
Media Group

Non-profit organizations are the backbone of volunteerism, there to help make things better for those less fortunate. These unsung heroes are your friends, neighbors and family. The organizations range from providing meals to shelter to just being there in case of need. Regardless of the function of the organization, their purpose is to serve.

This time of year, fundraisers are the norm rather than the exception. Yes, every non-profit requires the funds needed to keep their programs in tact but even more important are the volunteers. Not only are they the backbone of these fine organizations but the catalyst for execution of each program.

This fall don't simply reject a call or a letter from your local organization. Think about joining and making a difference. Your time and effort is what so many non-profits need. They will be forever grateful as will all those who benefit from their services.



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Nonprofit Spotlight — Luzerne County Head Start



Ever since the national Head Start program was launched in 1965, Luzerne County Head Start (LCHS) has worked to provide educational and developmental assistance to children in Luzerne and Wyoming Counties. As one of the first Head Start programs, LCHS worked with approximately 90 families in 1965; today, they provide services for more than 1,100 children. Lynn Evans Biga, who has served as the Executive Director of LCHS for the past 30 years, has noticed an increase in childhood poverty over time, noting that 1 in 3 children under the age of 5 in Luzerne County are living below the poverty line. Now more than ever, it has become crucial that local children are afforded the opportunity to receive an education, regardless of their economic status.

LCHS employs about 300 people, and their roles vary; positions include teachers, classroom aides, family workers, nutrition specialists, and cooks. Everyone involved shares the common goal of helping local families and their children maintain a healthy home life and achieve a quality education. LCHS currently operates 25 classrooms and centers across both Luzerne and Wyoming Country, with a main office on Beekman Street in Wilkes-Barre where about 250 children attend school. In addition to providing the tools and spaces necessary for kids to succeed academically, LCHS also strives to offer comprehensive services to its enrolled children and their families, even beyond the classroom. This includes helping parents fulfill their parental roles and achieving family self-sufficiency, providing children with breakfasts and lunches, and offering hearing, vision, and lead screenings.

Volunteering is an important part of LCHS's success. Currently, LCHS is in need of volunteers in a variety of areas, ranging from classroom help with preschool children to facility upkeep and maintenance. Looking to the future, LCHS was recently awarded an expansion grant that will allow them to serve an additional 72 children for the 2019-2020 program year. They are also preparing to open a Head Start classroom on the Luzerne County Community College campus in Nanticoke. You can learn more about donating and the volunteering process at their website, lcheadstart.org.



Lynn Evans Biga
Luzerne County Head Start
Executive Director

More Info:

- 570-829-6231
- www.lcheadstart.org

Luzerne County Head Start Photos



Nonprofit Spotlight — Wilkes-Barré Preservation Society



An appreciation for the past: that's what the Wilkes-Barré Preservation Society seeks to promote and spread. Founded in 2003, the Preservation Society has served as a resource for local preservationists while also offering the community the chance to learn more about its roots and formative years. The Society's curator and director, Tony Brooks, founded the organization with hopes of awakening people's knowledge of Wilkes-Barre's rich architectural history. Brooks, who also serves as a Wilkes-Barre City councilman, has made it his goal to instill a sense of pride in those who call the city home by helping them learn more about Wilkes-Barre's architecture and social history.

To do this, the Wilkes-Barré Preservation Society offers guided walking tours, aimed at fostering an understanding and appreciation for the city's past, present, and future. Historic Wilkes-Barre landmarks visited along these tours include the Market Street bridge, Irem Temple, and the Luzerne County Court House, with a unique story behind each location. While preserving the legacy and memory of Wilkes-Barre's history, the Preservation Society also works to protect and restore various historic buildings within the city. This has included efforts to revitalize the aforementioned Irem Temple, and the Society's current major focus is on the Zebulon Butler House, which is the oldest house in Wilkes-Barre, having been built in 1793.

For those interested in an opportunity to tour Wilkes-Barre and learn more of its history, save the date: September 21st is your next opportunity to take part in an Architectural Walking Tour hosted by the Preservation Society. The city of Wilkes-Barre is also partnered with the Wilkes-Barré Preservation Society in celebrating the 250th anniversary of the city's founding on September 7th. You can learn more about the Wilkes-Barré Preservation Society by searching for their page on Facebook, and you can donate towards their efforts to restore the Zebulon Butler House by visiting their page at the Luzerne Foundation website, luzfdn.org.



Tony Brooks
Executive Director

More Info:

- 570-793-3631
- www.luzfdn.org

Wilkes-Barré Preservation Society Photos



Nonprofit Spotlight — Northeast Sight Services



NORTHEAST SIGHT SERVICES

Since 1918

OUR VISION IS CLEAR:
SIGHT LOSS SUPPORT & PREVENTION™

After 100 years of serving the blind and visually impaired citizens of Northeast Pennsylvania, Northeast Sight Services shows no signs of stopping. The agency was founded in 1918 by Arline Phillips, who was blind herself; her wish was to help blind people help themselves, and it's a wish that Northeast Sight Services honors to this day. While incidence of complete blindness is quite low, some degree of visual impairment is very common, especially in the elderly. Regardless, Northeast Sight Services strives to help blind and visually impaired people maintain a healthy quality of life and aid them in ensuring a sense of independence.

Northeast Sight Services currently serves Luzerne, Pike, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties, providing assistance for the visually impaired as well as working to prevent vision loss through early detection and education. In doing so, Northeast Sight Services offers vision screenings for both adults and children; over 5,000 kids undergo these screenings each year. President/CEO Sara Peperno and Director of Development Amy Marie Feldman emphasized that visual impairment not only causes difficulty in performing physical tasks, but it can also lead to feelings of isolation. Northeast Sight Services seeks to combat this on all fronts by providing in-home support as well as social events and groups so that visually impaired persons and their families have the opportunity to meet and socialize with people like them. Over the past five years, Northeast Sight has worked to provide blind and visually impaired children with an outlet to have fun and learn with each other by way of the InSight Kids Club. Originally formed as a camp that would meet every summer, the group eventually expanded into a club that meets monthly in order to give kids more opportunities to get together and form a community.



Sara Peperno

President & CEO

More Info:

- 570-693-3555
- www.northeastsight.org

Northeast Sight is hosting its Annual Awards Dinner and Auction at the Woodlands in Wilkes-Barre on October 10th. You can find more information, donate, and learn about volunteering by visiting their website, northeastsight.org.

Northeast Sight Services Photos



Nonprofit Spotlight — Little Theatre of Wilkes-Barre



You don't need to go to Broadway for an authentic theatre experience; there's one to be had right in your backyard, and it's been there since 1922. Little Theatre of Wilkes-Barre, ever since opening its doors and curtains, has presented hundreds of productions for over two million people throughout its near 100 year history. Before Little Theatre's founding, Broadway itself was actually still quite small, and plays were often only put on by professionals; people in the area who were interested in both watching or partaking in theatre had few options. Now, Little Theatre often puts on productions that debuted on Broadway only a few years prior, bringing high-caliber and lovingly crafted entertainment to the people of Northeast Pennsylvania, as well as giving local talent the chance to shine.

David Parmelee, the General Manager of Little Theatre, believes it is incredibly important to preserve and share the culture of theatre with the public. Additionally, he finds that the theatre's productions serve as a great way to bring the community closer together; if you thumb through a stack of programs from the theatre's productions, you're likely to find a familiar name or two. Hours upon hours of time are dedicated to learning lines, making costumes, and constructing set pieces, and these efforts all culminate in an opportunity for people to gather together, be transported to another time and place, and hopefully experience a closeness and greater appreciation for their community.

Little Theatre's nearest upcoming production is *Jekyll & Hyde*, a powerful musical that examines the dual nature of mankind. The musical is set to premiere on September 6th, with additional performances on the 7th, 8th, 13th, and 14th. Little Theatre is always looking for volunteers; every show needs concessions and ushers, but especially set pieces. David Parmelee remarks that potential volunteers need not be expert carpenters, just handy enough to help out! You can learn more about volunteering and upcoming shows as well as make donations at Little Theatre's website, ltwb.org.



David C. Parmelee

General Manager

More Info:

- www.ltwb.org
- 570-823-1875

Little Theatre of Wilkes-Barre Photos



Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

13th Annual Conference

OCTOBER 25TH



9am - 3pm; Registration Starts at 8am

At The Woodlands, Wilkes-Barre Township, PA, Route 315

**All Grandparents Free, Professional Social Service Personnel \$35 Each.
Checks payable to Luzerne Foundation GRG Fund**

Register with Susan Harding at susanharding@luzernecounty.org

570-822-1158, ext. 2383

Questions directed to Howard J. Grossman, Chair
NEPA Intergenerational Coalition, at 570-262-3443
Pittston Memorial Library or grossmanhj@aol.com

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