

Fall 2023

Easton Office Ribbon-Cutting

On September 14, the Conference celebrated the opening of a drop-in center in Easton. The event included speeches given by Tyler Martin, The Easton Housing Authority Executive Director, The Lehigh Conference of Churches' Executive Director, Abigail Goldfarb, guest Denise Guffy, and employee, David Watson. The event also included an open house, and an official ribbon cutting.

The Conference has provided rental assistance to Northampton county residents since 2015, however, the travel to Allentown for assessments and case managers created a barrier to those residents seeking assistance. A partnership between the Easton Housing Authority (EHA) and the Conference will now allow for further continuum of care programming in this area.

The drop-in center, located in EHA's building at the at 40 N. Union St. Easton offers assistance for those affected by housing issues, bi-lingual case management, food, and referrals to other agencies.



Speakers Denise Guffy and David Watson pose with the official ribbon and scissors after the ribbon cutting

"The Easton Housing Authority has been very gracious in offering us this space. We excited to be in Easton and offer our services in a more accessible way," Executive Director Abigail Goldfarb said.

Services will be made available at the housing authority North Union Site at 40 N. Union St., Easton, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through

Friday. A Spanish-speaking on-site case manager will be available daily.

Mondays and Thursdays will feature case management and street outreach, with access to assistance from street outreach case managers.

Tuesdays will feature peer support services with guidance provided by certified recovery specialists and certified peer support professionals.

Wednesdays will focus on employment and representative payee services, including employment navigation and pay services; and Friday will offer community-based case management with frontline public health workers.



Receiving the Certificate of Special Recognition by Congress Woman Susan Wild is David Watson, Tyler Martin, and Abigail Goldfarb



Several staff were onsite at the ribbon cutting

Leadership Messages



Abby Goldfarb
Executive Director

I spent a lot of time this fall exploring the idea of 'home.' Whether it was at The Most Beautiful Lehigh Valley....Maybe where we spent the day exploring how everyone could be housed by 2050, or through the renovation of Conference owned houses and readying them for new residents, or planning for Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, home has become a central theme in my every day. Home is not just the place you keep your things or where you sleep. It is a space to be yourself, safe from judgment. It is a reflection of your true self.

Many people I meet do not have homes, but even more live each day wondering how many more days they will be able to have a home. The distress this causes is unimaginable. How long until the power shuts off? How many of my belongings will I be able to keep? How will my kids get to school? What will I do with my pets?

Did you know that children who move, even if they stay in the same school district, have a dropout rate 40% higher than those who stay in the same place throughout their school career?

A recent count shows there are 558 homeless students in the Allentown School District. How successful can they be without a home? How many more are trying to master algebra when tomorrow their possessions will be on the curb?

The greatest gift the Conference can give is the chance for our neighbors to stay in their home. This holiday season I invite you to join us in doing just that.



Katie Albarelli
Board President

As fall gives way to winter, the inevitable seasonal requests for giving start arrive in our mail boxes, inboxes and at our doors. Let's be honest; most people take the mail from their mail box into their homes and throw half of it away as soon as they get inside, or they hit delete on the giving requests as "junk mail". To me, what is interesting about this is that we take for granted that we are able to go indoors and toss things in the trash, or simply click a button on our personal computers to delete these items. We give little thought to the richness that we experience in having our possessions and even less thought to the fact that we are fortunate to have homes, a roof over our heads, and private rooms that many of us consider our sanctuaries - our refuge from the difficulties of life. We routinely take our comforts for granted as an everyday part of our life. But wouldn't it be wonderful to extend this richness of home and hearth, this expectation of safety and security, to everyone?

Muhammed Ali said that "service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth." Most of us reading this do have literal rooms that we rent here on earth; roofs over our heads, beds to rest in, and a warm, safe place to return to each day and night. Most of us work hard, toiling long hours, for these comforts. We routinely share our homes, our rooms, with friends, families and neighbors throughout this upcoming giving season. My hope for this same season, is that we can share our labors beyond ourselves and our immediate circles, and pay our rent forward. My hope is that we share in service together and together we pay the rent for both our rooms and rooms that provide safety, warmth and comfort for others as well. Thank you so much, and we look forward to serving with you.

Allison

Allison became a member of the Community Based Case Management program the beginning of February this year. She was struggling with homelessness, mental and physical health concerns, as well as history of alcoholism. She had been hospitalized at LVH on the Behavioral Health Unit at the time.

Allison was discharged from LV hospital BHU the end of February, and a few days later was hospitalized at St. Luke's Lehighton Campus BHU. Allison remained hospitalized for two months while the hospital worked with her to become stable. Meanwhile her CBCM worked to find her a stable place to live.

Allison was also connected with a Social Determinants of Health Case Manager, who worked along with her CBCM Case Manager to help Allison succeed once she left the hospital.

Allison did return to the hospital briefly and was assigned additional supports. Allison now has a team of Case Workers from two agencies helping her remain out of the hospital and she is doing wonderful.



Conference Walk-in and Drop-in Hours

Allentown Office/457 W. Allen St, Allentown: Assessment Walk-in Hours: Monday—Thursday: 9:00AM—3:00PM

Drop -in Hours: Monday—Friday: 8:090AM—4:00PM

Easton Office/40 North Union St, Easton: Drop-in Hours: Monday—Friday: 9:00AM—3:00PM

Franklin

Franklin left his job to take care of his ailing mother in 2019. He moved into her one-bedroom apartment and slept on the couch so, per her wish, she could stay in her home. Franklin's mother passed away in 2021 and after paying for her funeral, the remainder of his mother's life insurance policy allowed him to stay in the apartment they shared for another 4 months while he looked for a job.

When his funds were exhausted, Franklin had to leave his home. After about week sleeping on the streets, the Conference's Street Outreach Team connected him with bus passes, a tent, sleeping bag, and food.

Franklin not only received those items, but was linked with other services. With help from Outreach, he was able to locate a job that paid a wage that would allow him to sustain an apartment and move off the streets. The conference paid his first month rent and security deposit on a unit and also got him a new bed, love seat, and kitchen set.

Franklin is now thriving and is planning for the future. He has already received a promotion at work and plans to donate back to the Conference to help others that are in same situation he was.

Development



Christopher Moran Development Officer

I want to convey my deep appreciation to our amazing donors and devoted volunteers. Your steadfast support and selfless dedication are the cornerstone of our mission's success. Whether it's your generous financial contributions or the time and effort you invest, your influence ripples through the lives we reach. Together, we've cultivated a resilient community united by a shared passion for effecting positive change. We look forward to continuing our journey together, working hand in hand to make our community a better place. Thank you for being the driving force behind our cause!

In the months ahead, our calendar is packed with exciting events and meaningful initiatives. These include our Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, the Weather Alert Box Initiative, the Edward M. Gianforte Leadership Giving Society, and so much more! We look forward to your active participation in all the incredible opportunities the Conference has in store for you. Join us in making a positive impact!



Dr. Edward M. Gianforte, a medical microbiologist and radiologist, was the single largest individual donor in the Conference's 69-year history. Upon his death in 2013, Dr. Gianforte – who previously had no association with the Conference – made a \$700,000 bequest, which has sustained the Conference kitchen for more than a decade. As we approach the conclusion of this extraordinary gift, there is no more appropriate way to pay homage to his memory and perpetuate the meaningful work he initiated than

by urging others to emulate his generous spirit and contribute as he did.

The Gianforte Leadership Giving Society will recognize those individuals and families who serve as role models of generosity by leading the way with an annual gift to the Conference of \$1,000 or more. **Any donor who makes an outright gift or pledge of \$1,000 or more by the end of December 2023, will be considered a Founding Member of the Society.** And, thanks to the incredible generosity of an anonymous donor, the gifts of all founding members will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$25,000.

Learn more at: lehighchurches.org/gianforte

The Lehigh Conference of Churches

Weather Alert Box

The Lehigh CONFERENCE of CHURCHES

BREAKFAST:

- Dry Cereal
- Granola/Breakfast Bar
- Fruit Cup
- Dry Milk Pouch
- Instant Coffee
- Bottles Water
- Juice Box

LUNCH/DINNER:

- Chicken/Tuna Packet
- Easy Open Soup Can
- Individual Bag Chips
- Beef Jerky
- Trail Mix
- Fruit Cup/Oranges
- Wrapped Pastry
- Candy Bar
- Juice Box

Help us continue feeding the community through office closures due to inclement weather during the winter season. Your donation allows us to purchase food items to make bagged lunches and dinners.

Contact cmoran@lehighchurches.org for more info or questions.





HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK

NOVEMBER 12TH-19TH, 2023

ABOUT H&HA WEEK

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is an annual program where people come together across the country to draw attention to the problems of hunger and homelessness. Participating groups spend the week holding a series of educational, service, fundraising, and advocacy events.

Locally, the Conference will engage in a week of daily activities to educate the community, advocate for change, and raise funds to help those facing hunger and homelessness in the Lehigh Valley.

H&HA WEEK SCHEDULE

- **November 12th:** Kick Off: Uniting Faith Communities to End Homelessness
- **November 13th:** Abolish Hunger: A Roundtable Discussion
- **November 14th:** Faces of Homelessness Panel II
- **November 15th:** Housing & Equity Community Forum, Community Spotlight Series, and Keynote Dinner Featuring Donald Whitehead Jr.
- **November 16th:** Public Screening of 940 Caledonia
- **November 17th:** Hope For Homeless: Open Mic Night
- **November 18th-19th:** One Night Without A Home

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITES AVAILABLE



Rejoice!

A Message from Genie Watson, Ecumenical Associate



Genie Watson
Ecumenical Associate

Greetings,

This is the day the Lord has made we shall rejoice and be glad in it (Psalm 118:24)

This scripture encourages us to rejoice for it is another day and new mercies but, with all that is going on in our world today how can we rejoice? Did God not know what we will be facing in this hour did He not know that there are wars going on and that people are dying? Does He not know the hunger and homelessness we see when we step outside our door step? Did He not see that family that lost everything and have to start over with no help no resources?

The answer is yes, our God knows all these things, He is omniscient (Psalm 139) He knew before we were born the trials we would face. How do we rejoice and be glad in it? We look towards our faith in God and trust that He is in full control. This is our hope. We hope in God that in all these things He will make a way for us, He will comfort us and give us a peace that surpasses all understanding.

We trust that in the end when it is all said and done we come out victorious. We continue to pray for life's challenges and woes. We continue to stay steadfast in His word and his presence. In these things we find strength to rejoice we find hope in being glad because He is God and besides Him there is no other.

Let us pray: God we come before you some with heavy hearts, confused minds, broken spirits and lost hope. We pray that You would touch all of our soul sick diseases. We pray that You would send peace in our hearts and that these wars would cease and come to an end. God we ask that You would send the resources for all humanity to live a quality life here on earth. We thank You for it now in Jesus name Amen!

REJOICE IN HIM!

Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

Date: Sunday, November 19, 2023

Time: 4:00PM

Location: St. James AME Zion, Pastor Young
410 Union St. Allentown,

Theme: Peace

Keynote Speaker: Zaleeae Sierra of Promise
Neighborhood of the Lehigh Valley



NO RSVP Required



Free to all



Join us!

Member

Learn the benefits of becoming a member church at the Lehigh Conference of Churches.

Contact Pastor Genie Watson, Ecumenical Associate, at gwatson@lehighchurches or 610-433-6421 ext 6422.

Churches



We're a part of it!

The Conference is always up for a good time! We advocate, educate and sometimes, just do things for fun to get people thinking of the Conference.

Here's just a sample of some events we've recently taken part in or planned.

Trunk or Treat



Juneteenth Celebration



Dodd Elementary Open House



Nazareth Adult Soapbox Racing Association



Bash at the Beach Basketball Tournament



Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration



The Lehigh Conference of Churches
457 W. Allen Street
Allentown, PA 18102

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US POSTAGE
PAID
LEHIGH VALLEY
PERMIT NO. 1409

Ecumenical Encounters
Fall 2023

Published by
The Lehigh Conference of Churches



United Way of the
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UnitedWayGLV.org



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