



HISPANIC CENTER LEHIGH VALLEY 2020 2021 **ANNUAL REPORT**



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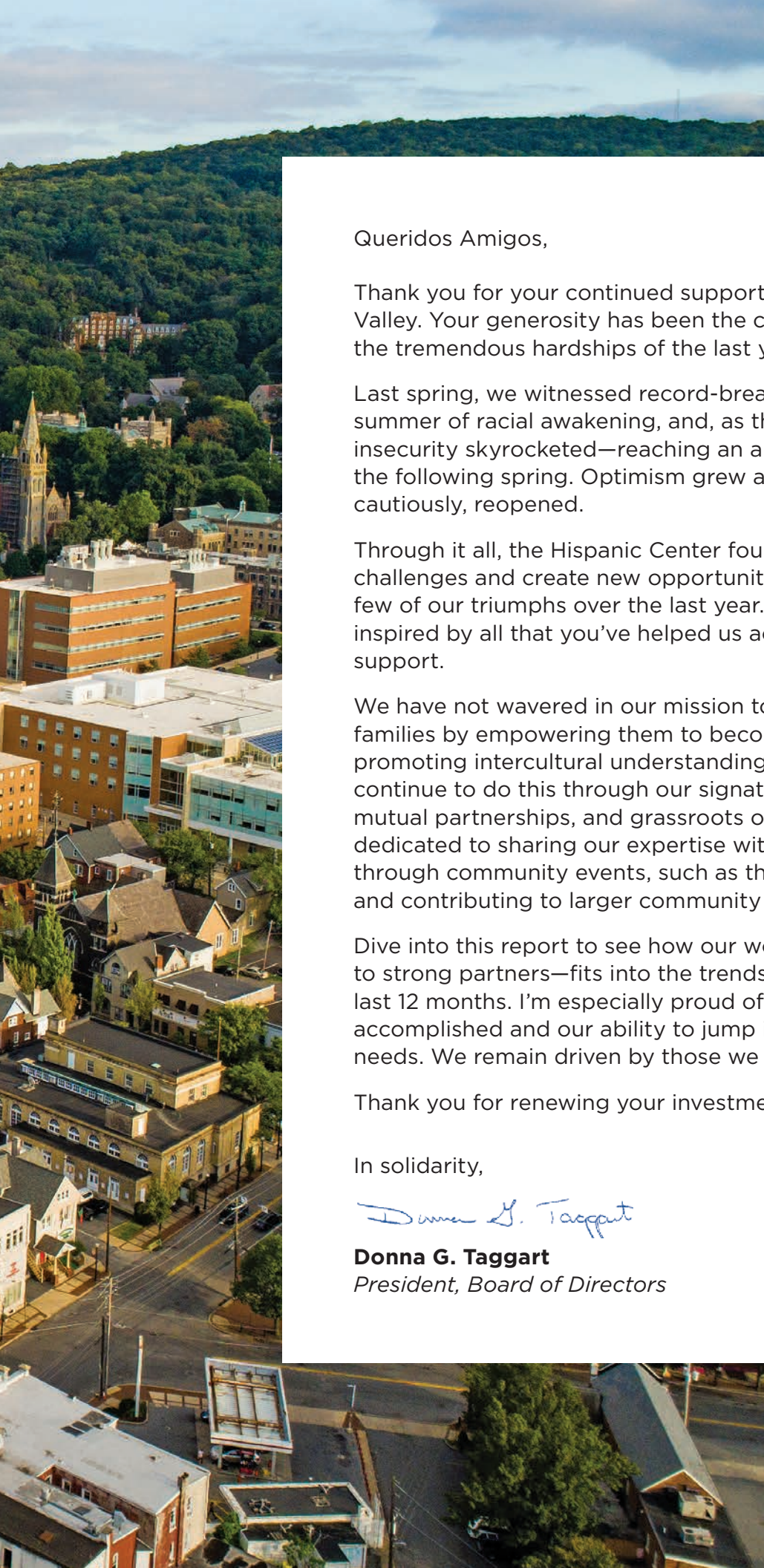
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Queridos Amigos,

Thank you for your continued support of the Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley. Your generosity has been the catalyst for our success despite the tremendous hardships of the last year.

Last spring, we witnessed record-breaking unemployment levels, a summer of racial awakening, and, as the holidays approached, food insecurity skyrocketed—reaching an all-time high. Vaccines arrived the following spring. Optimism grew as our communities slowly, and cautiously, reopened.

Through it all, the Hispanic Center found innovative ways to overcome challenges and create new opportunities. This report outlines just a few of our triumphs over the last year. It is my hope that you'll feel inspired by all that you've helped us accomplish with your generous support.

We have not wavered in our mission to improve the quality of lives of families by empowering them to become more self-sufficient, while promoting intercultural understanding in the Lehigh Valley. We will continue to do this through our signature programs and services, mutual partnerships, and grassroots outreach. We also remain dedicated to sharing our expertise with the larger Lehigh Valley through community events, such as the Annual Health Equity Summit, and contributing to larger community coalitions.

Dive into this report to see how our work—made possible thanks to strong partners—fits into the trends, themes, and events of the last 12 months. I'm especially proud of the breadth of work we've accomplished and our ability to jump into meeting the most pressing needs. We remain driven by those we serve.

Thank you for renewing your investment in our organization.

In solidarity,

Donna G. Taggart
President, Board of Directors



LEHIGH VALLEY

OUR IMPACT

62,065

pounds of emergency
food distributed to families



Educated over

1,000

people on the 2020 Census



1,500+

COVID-19 vaccinations administered in
collaboration with community partners

9,486

WIC intake appointments
conducted



52 seniors received

19,000

pounds of food delivered
to their homes



500

backpacks distributed to
children in our community

Distributed

100

clean-up kits for residents
impacted by Tropical Storm Isaias

Distributed PPE to over

400

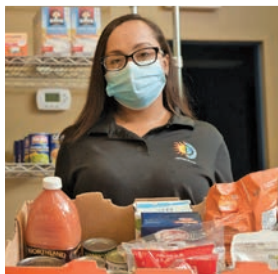
individuals at the start
of the pandemic

160

Thanksgiving
turkeys
distributed

Engaged over
3,600

individuals in the first Spanish
Community Conversation
about the COVID-19 vaccine



Served over
2,850

individuals at our food pantry

Engaged over
250

people in our annual
Health Equity Summit

Led
4

community
conversations
on social
justice topics



LEHIGH VALLEY

Who We Serve:

Children • Students
Families • Seniors

How We Do It:

Volunteers

Individual & Corporate Donations

Community Partnerships

Local & Government Grants

Events & Sponsorships

“ It is such an honor to be part of the Board of Directors at the Hispanic Center of the Lehigh Valley. The organization truly cares about its community and has demonstrated that passion for service despite the challenges brought forth by the pandemic. From providing contactless food services for families in the area to hosting COVID-19 vaccine clinics and everything in between, the Hispanic Center has demonstrated that despite being a small organization, its impact is significant.

Additionally, through the initiative called “Community Conversations” the organization encouraged the community to continue to engage in dialogue regarding topics related to racial equality because continued dialogue can lead to a change. I am truly inspired by the mission of the Hispanic Center of the Lehigh Valley. ”

Katherine Mann

Hispanic Center Board Member



ABOUT US

The Hispanic Center of the Lehigh Valley was established in 1968.

Our mission is to improve the quality of lives of families (Hispanic and non-Hispanic) by empowering them to become more self-sufficient, while promoting an intercultural understanding in the Lehigh Valley.

We believe in a community that embraces economic opportunity for all and views cultural diversity as a foundation for building a stronger society and a more vibrant economy.

We also believe that, at the heart of change, is the individual's desire and willingness to pursue a path toward their own independence and self-sufficiency.

STAFF

Victoria Montero, MPH
Executive Director

Jeremy Hatz
Senior Accountant

Shanaya Desai
Administrative Coordinator

Rubi Garcia
Social Service Coordinator

Diana Sanchez
Food Pantry Coordinator

Liza Perez Leon
*Senior Center Coordinator/
Food Manager*

Irene Berrios
Senior Center Chef

Noemi Garcia
WIC Nutritionist

Yaseleen Rivera
WIC Program Assistant

Naurys Ramirez
WIC Program Assistant

Cassandra Ortiz
COVID-19 Coordinator

Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley's COVID-19 RESPONSE



“ St. Luke's University Health Network has worked side by side with the Hispanic Center to ensure the COVID-19 related needs such as testing and vaccinations among our Hispanic communities are met. By working in collaboration with the Hispanic Center, we were able to meet people where they feel most comfortable and safe to ensure we work together to fight this pandemic. ”

Rajika Reed, Ph.D., MPH, M.Ed.

*Vice President Community Health, St. Luke's University Health Network
Hispanic Center Board Member*

Since the start of the pandemic, the Hispanic Center has played an active role in responding to the local impact of the COVID-19 virus, particularly among People of Color and low-income community members who have been most disproportionately affected in the Lehigh Valley. Staff immediately recognized the need for culturally appropriate communication regarding COVID-19 and worked closely with a wide range of community partners to ensure that the Lehigh Valley's Hispanic/Latino community received accurate information, access to testing, and had other pandemic-related needs met, including referrals to rental assistance programs and provision of emergency food. The Social Services Program staff shifted their work to address a surge in pandemic-related basic needs for the duration of the fiscal year.

The Hispanic Center has worked closely with a wide range of partners to offer vaccination clinics targeting the Hispanic/Latino and non-citizen immigrant community. To date, the

Hispanic Center's vaccination campaigns have excelled at reaching Spanish-speaking and undocumented populations due to procedures established by staff and outreach methods, including assistance with registration for clinics in Spanish and English by phone or in person so that individuals without access to the internet or with limited literacy in English or Spanish can register. Each participant receives four to five personal contacts from staff throughout the course of the two vaccines to ensure that they will be able to attend clinics, have transportation, and are aware of the importance of returning for their second vaccine. In addition, staff assist with day-of check-in at clinics to create a smooth hand-off to medical personnel.

Staff members have drawn on personal and professional networks to connect with undocumented and other immigrant communities to recruit participants for vaccination clinics, including churches, landscaping companies, and local schools.



Hispanic Center of the Lehigh Valley Receives \$100,000 from the CDC Foundation to Support Community-Based COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign

In June 2021, the CDC Foundation announced the selection of the Hispanic Center among 150 national community-based organizations receiving grants of up to \$100,000 for vaccination outreach and reduction of health inequities among communities at higher risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The federal grant will allow the Hispanic Center to expand existing work promoting vaccination access and addressing vaccine hesitancy among Hispanic/Latino, African American, and immigrant communities throughout the Lehigh Valley in efforts to reduce disparities in vaccination rates in neighborhoods that have been most impacted by the pandemic.

Over a ten-month period, the Hispanic Center will work in collaboration with a wide network of medical and neighborhood partners throughout the Lehigh Valley to implement a coordinated campaign of neighborhood-based vaccination events, a bilingual media strategy, and build a network of credible, frontline non-profit and community messengers to disseminate accurate and up-to-date information on vaccination opportunities.

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE INCLUDE:

Distributed PPE materials to over

400

individuals early in the pandemic, in partnership with Latino Connection and Gateway Health Plan

Engaged more than

3,600

individuals in the first Spanish-language Community Conversation about the COVID-19 vaccine, entitled, "Keeping our Community Safe," in partnership with St. Luke's Hospital, La Mega Radio Station, Star Community Health, and Life Church

Administered over

1,500

vaccinations through clinics in partnership with St. Luke's Hospital, Capital BlueCross, Rite Aid Pharmacy, Service Electric, and La Mega Radio Station

Released a bilingual outreach video targeting vaccination hesitancy among communities of color in the Lehigh Valley



“ As a trusted community organization among the Hispanic/Latino community, the Hispanic Center has been able to reach individuals in their own language and break down potential barriers to vaccine access while addressing vaccine hesitancy. We are honored to be recognized by the CDC Foundation for our community-based approach to addressing the pandemic, and we are thrilled that we will be able to expand our efforts to reach more of our neighbors here in the Lehigh Valley at a moment when vaccination is more important than ever. ”

Victoria Montero
Executive Director



FOOD PANTRY PROGRAM: Food Insecurity

A mere two weeks after the pandemic took hold, the Hispanic Center's Food Pantry program doubled the number of individuals served per month. Between the months of March and June 2020, the Food Pantry served more individuals than in the previous fiscal year combined.

The increase in need continued through the end of fiscal year 2020-2021, with historic numbers of individuals and families seeking emergency food services. A total of 246 households utilized the Hispanic Center Food Pantry through 859 visits, providing food resources a total of 2,850 times for a total of 62,065 pounds of food distributed in the last fiscal year.

Due to the pandemic, Hispanic Center's Food Pantry Program pivoted from a client-choice model to an appointment-only basis available four days a week. Clients received pre-packaged food supplies to ensure a seamless, contactless experience and ensure the health and safety of both clients and staff.

Like millions of other working parents, Hispanic Center staff rose to the challenge of maintaining essential food services open while juggling the new demands of caregiving. Though the Food Pantry experienced staffing challenges due to the pandemic, the Hispanic Center managed to provide continuous, uninterrupted services at a time when food insecurity has hit an all-time high—reaching historic levels of clients served.

TOTAL CLIENTS SERVED PER MONTH



“ The Hispanic Center Food Pantry has been my support, even my rescue, when I didn't know how I was going to make ends meet to feed my family. I know the Food Pantry will not let my family go hungry. ”

Tatiana Bailey
Hispanic Center Client

BASILIO HUERTAS SENIOR CENTER: Healthy Aging

On March 16, 2020, the Hispanic Center's Basilio Huertas Senior Center closed its doors for in-person services and shifted to remote services for over a year. For a program predicated on regular, in-person contact and targeting a generation largely unfamiliar with virtual services, the challenges facing Hispanic Center staff were considerable. Staff committed to ensuring that their 52 senior clients would receive the same level of support in meeting their basic needs that they would have at the Senior Center, shifting their contacts to regular phone calls and virtual case management.

Many senior clients depend on the program's twice-daily food services. To keep seniors nourished, the Senior Center shifted all food services to contactless deliveries of pre-packaged food. 52 seniors received twice-monthly food packages consisting of a two-week supply of shelf-stable and culturally relevant foods.

In addition to phone call check-ins and food deliveries, staff went above and beyond their normal responsibilities to ensure that senior clients had their needs met during these challenging times. A few of the many services provided included:

- Connecting seniors with community resources
- Assisting seniors with housing applications
- Renewing On-Track program applications
- Completing Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program applications
- Scheduling medical appointments
- Applying for rent rebates
- Accessing ordering over-the-counter medications from participants' health plans
- Scheduling COVID-19 vaccine appointments for participants
- Applying for the Farmers Market Nutrition program



In July 2021, after 15 months of distance programming, the Senior Center reopened for in-person programming with a new schedule and brand-new programming. Seniors now attend either a morning or afternoon program to accommodate COVID-19 health protocols, which has allowed for a more personalized experience.

Prior to returning to in-person programming, staff ensured seniors' well-being and continued participation in the program by:

- Educating seniors on fluctuating COVID-19 guidelines
- Delivering PPE materials including hand sanitizer, masks, and sanitizing wipes
- Advocating for the importance of vaccination against COVID-19
- Guiding participants through the vaccination process
- Delivering emergency kits, personal hygiene products, and food packages





Support Liza's work at the Basilio Huertas Senior Center by volunteering or donating to the program!

Visit our website for more information: www.hclv.org

LEHIGH VALLEY



LIZA PEREZ LEON

from Hurricane Maria Survivor to Senior Center Coordinator

Liza Perez Leon was used to being a helper, not the one receiving help. A career social worker in Puerto Rico, Liza said, "I chose social work because I can influence people's lives in a positive way, with the purpose of providing support and helping people to develop their abilities and goals in their lives."

But when Hurricane Maria devastated the island of Puerto Rico in the fall of 2017, Liza's life and career were turned upside down. Her mother Migna Leon had traveled to Bethlehem a month earlier to visit family, and when it became clear that recovery in Puerto Rico would take a long time with travel home severely restricted, Liza made the difficult decision to join her mother in the Lehigh Valley—permanently.

Faced with the challenge of reinventing her life in an unfamiliar community, Liza's mother reached out to the Hispanic Center for assistance finding a place to live. Hispanic Center staff quickly mobilized resources and support to find Migna an apartment, where she welcomed Liza home on November 14, 2017—a date which Liza will never forget. "I felt many sad emotions when facing this sudden change, but at the same time I was filled with a lot of hope. As I settled into the city of Bethlehem with my family, I found that Bethlehem is a great place to live with a very nice and loving Hispanic community."

Liza's first stop in Bethlehem was at the Hispanic Center, where staff began introducing her to the Lehigh Valley community and the many career opportunities available to a trained, bilingual social worker. By April 2018, Liza was employed full-time at KidsPeace, but her experience with the Hispanic Center was always in the back of her mind. Liza remembers, "Since I received so much support and help through the Hispanic Center, I was interested in being part of the work team that, with dedication and commitment, helps our Hispanic and non-Hispanic community. I am a social worker, so I felt the duty to help the community through the Hispanic Center in the same way that they did for me and my family."

When an opportunity arose to lead the Basilio Huertas Senior Center in October 2019, Liza quickly applied and was hired immediately. "At the Hispanic Center, we are committed to meeting our clients where they are, in their language, and as fellow members of our community. The relationships and trust that our staff builds with our clients are key to making a difference in people's lives, and Liza's path to the Hispanic Center exemplifies the power of those personal connections," Hispanic Center Executive Director Victoria Montero explains. "We are so fortunate to have someone with Liza's personal and professional experience running the Basilio Huertas Senior Center, and I can't think of a better person for that role."



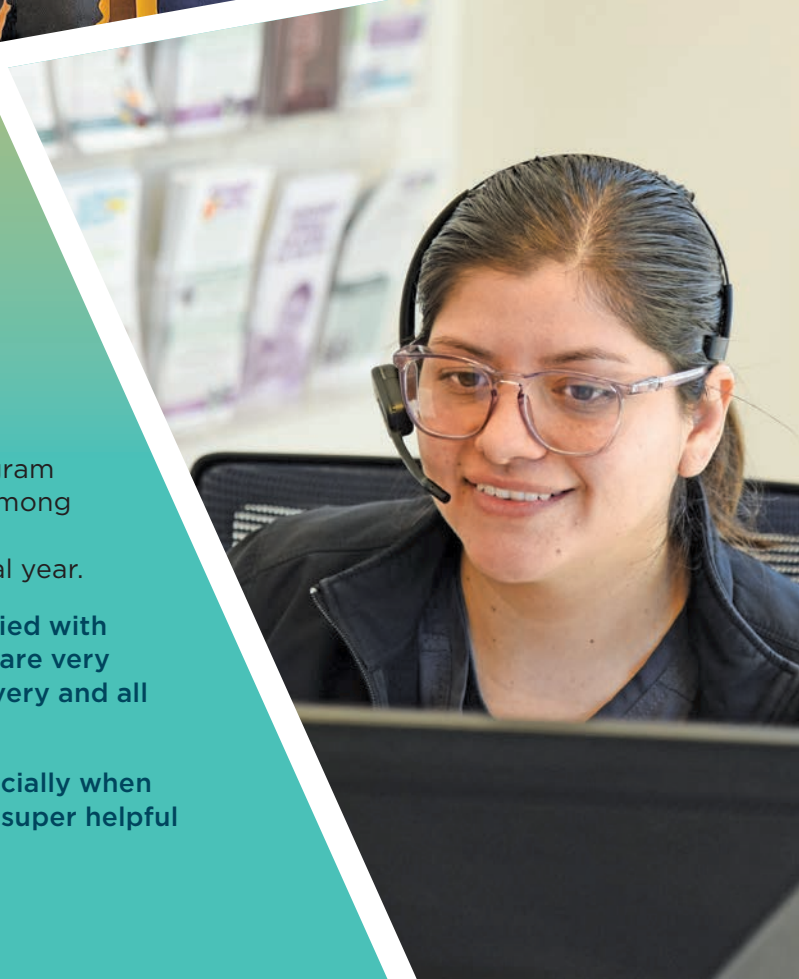
WOMEN, INFANTS, & CHILDREN PROGRAM: Early Childhood & Maternal Health

Bethlehem's only Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) office is co-located at the Hispanic Center's Fowler Community Wellness Center and supports pregnant women, new caretakers, and children up to age 5. WIC provides low-income families with vital nutrition education, helps new parents make healthy food choices for their families, and provides financial assistance for affordable food. Participants also receive education on infant and child feeding, child development information and assessments, and learn how they can support local farmers.

During the pandemic, the Hispanic Center's WIC program met the rise in demand for nutritional food services among caretakers, pregnant women, and children. Our staff conducted 9,486 intake appointments in the last fiscal year.

“ I am currently 23 weeks pregnant and very satisfied with the service I am receiving from the WIC office. They are very convenient, friendly, helpful, and willing to answer every and all questions. Thank you. ” WIC Client

“ A great staff experience. It helped me a lot, especially when I didn't have any other assistance. They were always super helpful and went above and beyond. ” WIC Client



MOBILIZING OUR COMMUNITY

Despite restrictions on in-person programming and events, the Hispanic Center continued to offer signature service events in virtual formats. Highlights of our remote programs include:

- Distributed over 160 Thanksgiving turkeys in partnership with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of the Greater Lehigh Valley, La Mega Radio Station, and New Bethany Ministries
- Filled 500 backpacks with school supplies for low-income children ahead of the 2020-2021 school year, in partnership with La Mega Radio Station
- Distributed 100 clean-up kits for residents impacted by the effects of Tropical Storm Isaias, in partnership with the American Red Cross of Greater Pennsylvania
- Organized 2020 Census community outreach to over 1,000 individuals through conducting reminder follow-up calls, offering assistance completing forms, and outreach to local businesses and community members
- Held five 2020 Census "Street Outreach Days" in SouthSide Bethlehem
- Produced an educational video on the importance of voter mobilization in the fall of 2020, in partnership with the Hispanic Federation



- Delivered non-partisan voting signs to homes in SouthSide Bethlehem to assist with civic engagement efforts during the 2020 general election, in partnership with the Hispanic Federation

Advocating for Health Equity & Social Justice

As the primary organization serving the Lehigh Valley's Hispanic/Latino community, the Hispanic Center is committed to advocating for health equity and promoting social justice locally while engaging in dialogues on issues that impact our communities throughout the region. For the last three years, the Hispanic Center has hosted an annual Health Equity Summit that convenes local leaders and members of our community to discuss current topics affecting our nation's communities of Color.

Our virtual November 2020 summit "Racial Justice for Stronger Communities" had over 250 attendees—an increase of over 100 participants from 2019. Through community sponsors, the Summit raised more than \$15,000 for the Hispanic Center's general operations. As a result of these efforts, the Hispanic Center was able to launch a virtual Community Conversations program.



The Hispanic Center's Community Conversations series launched in January 2021 and consisted of four sessions on a range of topics, including colorism in the Hispanic community, the power of educational empowerment, mental health and stigma, and building trust with law enforcement in community. Speakers included local and regional experts and participants were provided with live interaction opportunities, including Q&A panel sessions, live chatting, and more.

“It's always lovely working with the Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley and Victoria Montero. She and her staff are always very professional, responsive, and eager to make things as simple as possible. Our latest project involved me hosting the Community Conversations virtually - which was a wonderful experience. I'm honored to have been able to participate. The topics and guests were super engaging, relevant to current events and informative.”

Genesis L. Ortega

Community Correspondent/Host, WLVR News



FOWLER COMMUNITY WELLNESS CENTER

Since June 2018, the Fowler Community Wellness Center at the Hispanic Center has provided a permanent home to leading community agencies that provide integrated social services, job training/employment, and physical/behavioral healthcare to support low-to-moderate income individuals and families toward realizing healthy, self-sufficient lives.

Thanks to the generous support of contributors to our Vision for Renaissance Capital Campaign, our co-located partners have worked closely with the Hispanic Center programs to create one-stop shop where clients can learn job skills, explore employment opportunities, access basic human services, receive mental health services and connect to vital, quality healthcare. All programs located in the Fowler Community Wellness Center remained open throughout the duration of the pandemic, providing essential services to Hispanic Center clients and the broader community.

In addition to housing the Hispanic Center's Women, Infants, and Children program, the Fowler Community Wellness Center is home to:



H.O.P.E. (Health, Outreach, Prevention and Education) at St. Luke's provides clinical care, case management and prevention services to persons who are HIV+ or at high-risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. Supported by Ryan White Act federal funding, the center aims to maintain viral load suppression, reduce stigma, and address socio-economic barriers and chronic health co-morbidities. All services are provided by bilingual and bicultural staff. An on-site dietician/health coach, behavioral health specialist, chaplain, visiting nurse, and medical-legal partner supplement medical staff. Services include rapid HIV testing, prevention tips and strategies, comprehensive primary and specialty care, case management and social services, housing assistance, and integrated behavioral health care.



PA CareerLink® Bethlehem Employment and Training Center - Workforce Board Lehigh Valley established its first satellite employment and training center at HCLV in mid-2017. For the third year since its establishment at HCLV, PA CareerLink® continues to work closely with Community Empowerment

Program referrals to provide job fairs and employer information sessions, job training workshops and skills training, and assistance with online job research and applications. Job seekers use the center's bank of computers to access the internet for career planning and job seeking. Staff presents workshops on employability skills, resume preparation, interviewing and job search techniques, training programs and employment opportunities. Staff provides information on nearby job openings and makes referrals to local companies. Job fairs offer additional avenues for job seeker success.

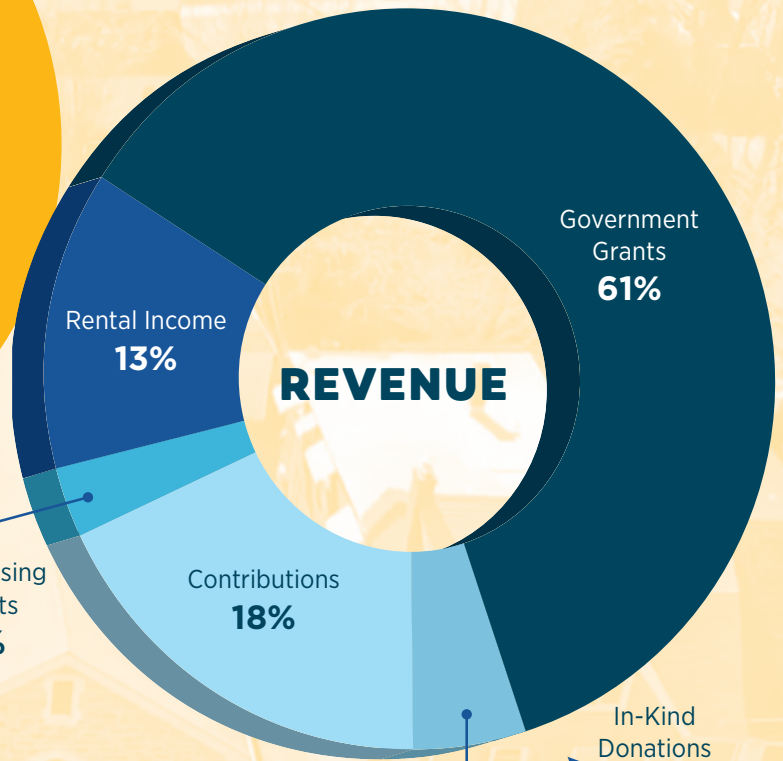
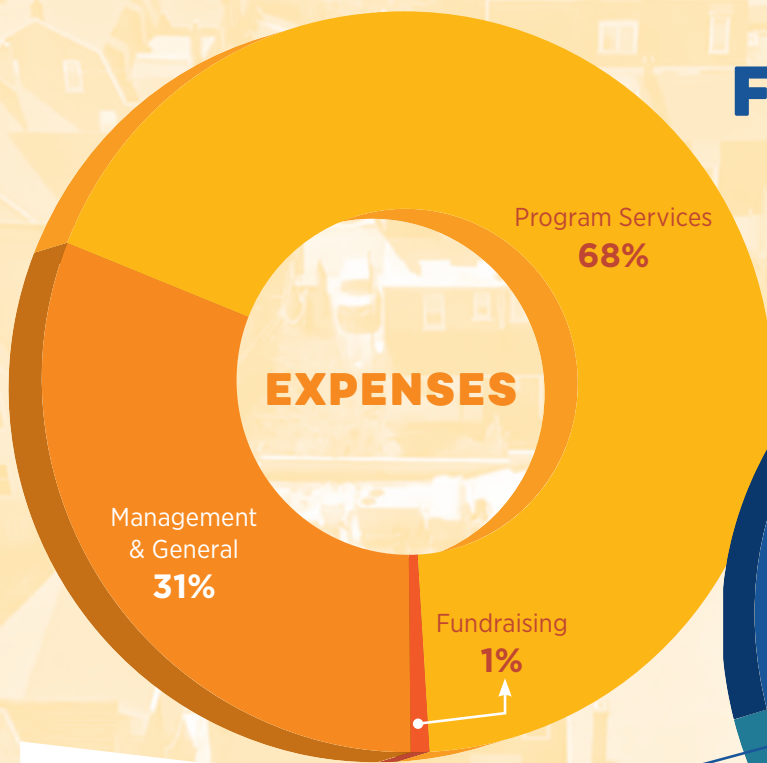


Pinebrook Family Answers, a multi-faceted mental health services agency, provides outpatient assessment and treatment to individuals with diagnosed mental illness, especially targeting the low-income individuals and families residing in south Bethlehem and nearby neighborhoods. Staff

works with many children in foster care who have experienced significant trauma in their lives; referrals are made to other programs within the agency, including family-based mental health treatment, diversionary services, and homecare for the elderly.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2021



EXPENSES

Program Services	\$516,026
Management & General	\$235,247
Fundraising	\$7,589

REVENUE

Government Grants	\$511,967
Rental Income	\$109,108
Fundraising Events	\$25,179
Contributions	\$151,072
In-Kind Donations	\$41,965

¡GRACIAS! THANK YOU!

We hope this glimpse of our successes is uplifting after this difficult year. We continue to keep those most impacted by the COVID-19 virus and its repercussions in our hearts and intentions. Despite the uncertainty ahead of us, our organization will continue to do our part to ensure our community remains united through the challenges that may come.

On behalf of the Hispanic Center Board of Directors, staff, and the individuals and families benefitting from their generosity, please join us in extending our heartfelt gratitude to the Hispanic Center's supporters.

Please consider supporting the Hispanic Center of the Lehigh Valley with an annual contribution at any level. Visit our website for more information: www.hclv.org/donate



LEHIGH VALLEY

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