United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley

2020 IMPACT REPORT

#UnitedWeCan #UnitedWeWill

Hunter
Palmerton, Pa.
Events in recent months have illuminated a growing crisis in our Greater Lehigh Valley community: the number of families in Northampton, Lehigh and Carbon counties who are working hard, yet struggling to survive.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, reports showed that more than one in three local families were living paycheck to paycheck, without savings to withstand an emergency.

Today, even more families are facing serious financial instability.

Thanks to years of support from generous donors, our region has a robust network of hundreds of partners dedicated to addressing the root causes of our region’s most pressing challenges. In recent years, our collective impact initiatives have strengthened our foundation – expanding food access, supporting a growing population of seniors and breaking down barriers that prevent students from succeeding in school.

That work positioned us to rise together to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Now, we must continue to grow our work to stabilize our kids, families and our Greater Lehigh Valley community.

For our families to be strong, we need a community that is strong.
EMERGENCY SERVICES
Strengthening the Greater Lehigh Valley safety net

Idah
Bethlehem, PA
For a local family of four with two young children, they have to earn $64,000 a year or $5,400 a month just to survive. To be financially stable, they must earn $99,000 per year. **The median household income is $60,871.**

**38% of households in our region are ONE EMERGENCY AWAY FROM NEEDING TO UTILIZE SAFETY-NET SERVICES.**

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15,198 RESIDENTS accessed emergency services supported by United Way.

- 88,000 meals served at soup kitchens
- 2,600 violence and crises intervention
- 2,050 disaster relief
- 1,950 emergency shelter

**14,413 residents** connected to resources through **PA 211**, powered by United Way.

- **58%** were for housing and shelter
- **23% of those** were **unmet**

This data underscores the lack of affordable housing and homeless services in the Greater Lehigh Valley. In partnership with **Regional Homeless Advisory Board**, we are plugging immediate gaps and advocating for long-term solutions.
In 2014, United Way joined community partners to create the Lehigh Valley Food Policy Council to address the root causes of food insecurity. Since then, we’ve:

• Expanded the reach of our food pantry network
• Brought innovative solutions to families living in food deserts
• Strengthened food programs for children
• Championed policy changes to develop long-term solutions

In the Greater Lehigh Valley, 22,300 children may not know when or where they’ll get their next meal. With schools closed during summer, many children lose a reliable source of breakfast and lunch.

Through the Corporation for National and Community Services’ VISTA program, we leveraged resources to provide staffing support at nine summer meal sites, allowing for increased meal distribution.

187,117 SUMMER MEALS
served to children during the summer months.

Summer food access expanded by 30% since 2017.
FOOD ACCESS
Increasing access to healthy food and ensuring no child goes hungry

Logan
Catasauqua, PA
The senior population in the Lehigh Valley grew 17% from 2010-2017 - 20 times faster than the rest of the population.

With that, 31,058 seniors reported having difficulty meeting at least one basic need at home, 3,549 are receiving no help and 17,747 state that they feel isolated from others.

With community support, we are expanding strategies that work to help more seniors lead safe, active and healthy lives.

Our United Way has been very busy leading the charge on the creation of a multi-pronged Age-Friendly Lehigh Valley plan. This is a two-county, multi-generational effort that aims to improve regional safety, health and inclusivity through transportation, housing and community connectedness.
HEALTHY AGING
Interconnecting supports to meet the needs of an aging population

Wilfredo
Allentown, PA
16,800 STUDENTS
served across 28 Community Schools promoting academic and life success through expanded learning opportunities, engaging programming, clothing closets, food pantries and dental, vision and health care.

Outcomes among students who participated in programs supported by United Way

- **Summer Learning** – 79% improved or maintained reading scores
- **Summer Learning** – 83% increased math scores
- **Attendance** – 74% improved or maintained attendance
- **Early Learning** – 89% met or exceeded developmental milestones

**SPOTLIGHT: MARVINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**
Bethlehem Area School District

- **8% CHRONIC ABSENCE RATE** ➤ **DOWN FROM 14% IN 2017**

88% of students participated in after-school programs:
  - Reading: 70% at or above grade level
  - Math: 86% proficient or advanced
EDUCATION
Helping students achieve socially, emotionally and academically

Jarius
Bethlehem, PA
Helping students achieve socially, emotionally and academically

Alani
Easton, PA
Powered by United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley and PBS39, Lehigh Valley Reads has expanded proven and effective education strategies to districts across the region:

- Partnerships with all 17 Lehigh Valley school districts
- Six school districts strengthened in-classroom reading instruction through the LV Reads micro-credential program in partnership with Penn State Lehigh Valley
- Partnered with Waterford to provide online learning program to promote school readiness for four-year-olds not engaged in a preschool setting
- Talk, Read, Sing engaged more than 80 trusted community messengers to encourage families to develop early literacy skills

7.5 MILLION MINUTES of reading achieved through the first Million Minute Challenge.

Trauma-informed schools support every student’s potential by preparing teachers, administrators and staff to recognize and respond to the impacts of childhood trauma.

Through Resilient Lehigh Valley:

- Five Lehigh Valley school districts have committed to adopt a trauma-informed school approach, supporting 30,600 students
- Handle With Care pilot program launched and trained 100 school and law enforcement leaders to strengthen collaboration and better support students exposed to traumatic events

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND ATTENDANCE
STAFF MORALE
For more than a century, your United Way has invested in a brighter future for our children and families.

Today, we’re stabilizing our community as we increase our investments in safety-net services, support the mental and emotional needs of our students and parents and advocate equity for our children, our working families and our seniors.

As we respond to meet our community’s changing needs, we can promise you this: Your United Way will continue to fight for the health, safety and financial stability of everyone in the Greater Lehigh Valley. The continued support of our donors and partners will be more important than ever.

#UNITEDWECAN #UNITEDWEWILL