

2014 VISION IN PHILANTHROPY RECEPTION

The 2014 Vision in Philanthropy Award was presented to Linda Sheftel at a reception at the ArtsQuest Center at SteelStacks on November 12th.

Bernie Story, President & CEO, kicked off the evening's program, which presented examples of using the Community Foundation as a way to give. Bernie introduced Beall Fowler, a member of the Board of Governors. Beall and his late wife, Linny, established two funds at the Community Foundation. Beall shared anecdotes about each fund to explain the reason for and purpose of them. A donor designated fund was established to support a particular nonprofit organization while benefitting from the Community Foundation's fund management expertise. A donor-advised fund grants to many nonprofit organizations and programs. The Community Foundation staff is available to support Beall, as fund representative, by providing knowledge of pressing community needs and organizations.



Pictured from left to right: Bernie Story, Linda Sheftel, Elliot Sheftel and Denise Blew.

One of the programs supported by the W. Beall and Marlene O. Fowler Fund is El Sistema Lehigh Valley, a program of the Allentown Symphony Association. El Sistema has also received community partnership grants from the Community Foundation. Sheila Evans, Executive Director of the Allentown Symphony Association, and Steven Liu, Director of El Sistema Lehigh Valley, spoke about this valuable program at the reception. El Sistema Lehigh Valley brings underserved and special needs youth within the Allentown School District a free opportunity to develop life skills learned by participating in high-quality daily music instruction, large ensemble experience and performances, and academic tutoring within a safe and nurturing environment. The children who participate were found to have higher test scores in mathematics and science and increased attendance at school. The program also helps to provide an identity and purpose for the students.

The reception concluded with a powerful message from Linda Sheftel, the 2014 Vision in Philanthropy Award recipient, about the power of community philanthropy. Next year marks the tenth anniversary of the passing of Linda's son, Justin, whose life inspired the establishment of two funds at the Community Foundation (see related article). The Board of Governors felt very strongly that Linda Sheftel be given the 2014 Vision in Philanthropy Award as a way to recognize Linda for her deep and meaningful commitment to philanthropy in the Lehigh Valley and the strength she demonstrates in honoring the life of her son.

Congratulations to Linda!

FUND SPOTLIGHT – JUSTIN SHEFTEL MEMORIAL FUND & JUSTIN SHEFTEL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

People come to the Community Foundation for a variety of reasons. Many of our donors have established charitable funds in memory of loved ones who were lost. Linda and Elliot Sheftel established the Justin Sheftel Memorial Fund and the Justin Sheftel Scholarship Fund in memory of their son. Justin, age 18, had just graduated from Parkland High School. While vacationing with friends in Ocean City, MD, Justin was hit and killed by an underage drunk driver.

Since the establishment of the Funds in 2005, roughly \$300,000 has been donated and \$225,000 has been granted out, including \$130,000 to Parkland High School graduates for scholarships in Justin's name. The accomplishments of the scholarship recipients after graduation are truly amazing: a Master's in Robotics; a Master's from Johns Hopkins; a Physician's Assistant; three in medical school; two CPAs; and one pursuing a Ph.D. in Microbiology. The other grants went to a variety of charitable organizations, including the Lehigh Valley Miracle League, the Jewish Community Center, and Allentown School District's "The Drive" program.

Proceeds from the annual softball tournament are donated to the Funds. The first softball tournament was held three weeks after Justin's death and had four teams competing. The next year the tournament grew to eight teams, and now, almost ten years later, the tournament has 22 teams with 300 players and men's and women's divisions.

In addition to the tournament, Linda educates teenagers about the devastating effects of underage drinking and drunk driving on drivers, victims and their families. Linda presents to students in high schools in Pennsylvania and Maryland. Over 100 school presentations have been completed since the first year.

The Justin Sheftel Memorial Fund & the Justin Sheftel Scholarship Fund are featured in Profiles in Philanthropy on the Community Foundation website. To read more about them, visit www.lehighvalleyfoundation.org/Justin-Sheftel-Memorial-Fund.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

In October, Bernie Story attended the 2014 Annual Conference for Community Foundations, which was celebrating the industry's 100th anniversary. Over 1,400 philanthropic leaders from across the United States attended the conference held in Cleveland, OH, the site of the first community foundation founded in 1914.

What began in Cleveland 100 years ago has transformed the global philanthropic landscape. Today, there are more than 750 community foundations in the U.S. and 1,827 globally. Together they grant about \$5 billion to the causes that matter most to their communities.

Each day of the three-day conference was devoted to a particular theme: individual excellence, organizational excellence, and community-philanthropy excellence. Many new initiatives and ideas were shared among attendees, and Community Foundation staff will use these ideas to sharpen its focus, its message and its ability to make an impact in the community.



Bernie attending the Conference for Community Foundations in Cleveland, OH.

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT - GUIDING EYES FOR THE BLIND

Guiding Eyes for the Blind is a nonprofit organization which breeds and trains guide dogs and works with visually-impaired individuals to assimilate them to guide dogs. The service of Guiding Eyes is free for the visually-impaired.

The training school in Yorktown Heights, NY, offers a residential training program for visually-impaired students. Students stay on campus and are part of a 21-day program which provides experiences with their guide dogs in rural, urban and suburban settings. Because class sizes are small, staff from the training school can provide specialized training for each student. In addition to the residential program, the Guiding Eyes' staff also provides home training for those students unable to travel to the school. Last, but certainly not least, there is a program for children with autism called "Healing Autism." Dogs are bred at the school for participation in this program, which provides safety and companionship to children.

The Canine Development Center, located in Patterson, NY, is a specialized breeding facility with advanced technology in canine genetics, breeding and behavior. The puppies are raised as part of the Puppy Raising Program before being matched with a student.

The George T. Walker Charitable Fund provides annual grants to Guiding Eyes for the Blind. In May 2014, staff from the Foundation visited the facility in Yorktown Heights. After a tour of the facility and a demonstration with a guide dog, the staff presented Guiding Eyes with a challenge grant. Launched in September 2014, the Pennsylvania Challenge Grant will support individuals from Pennsylvania who attend the training school in Yorktown Heights. The organization is challenged to raise \$90,000, which will be matched by a grant from the Community Foundation, thereby providing \$180,000 to Pennsylvania students.

Recently, Elaine Mara and her guide dog, Kevin, were featured in an article in The Express-Times. The Bethlehem native is a graduate of the Guiding Eyes for the Blind training school. To read the full article: www.lehighvalleylive.com/bethlehem/index.ssf/2014/10/guide_dog_transforms_bethlehem.html.

For more information about Guiding Eyes for the Blind, please visit their website at: www.guidingeyes.org.



Bernie Story with Thomas Panek, Guiding Eyes' President & CEO, and his guide dog, Gus.

SHARE LEHIGH VALLEY DEBUTS NEW MAPPING

SHARE lehigh valley recently debuted new maps! The updated feature of the website includes better functionality with the use of Google Maps and allows users to search for specific programs in their geographic location. Visit sharelehighvalley.org to try the new map features.



SUPPORT THE AMERICA GIVES MORE ACT

What does the America Gives More Act mean for you and your charitable giving? The America Gives More Act proposes important changes to the IRA Charitable Rollover. The IRA Charitable Rollover was introduced in 2006 as a temporary incentive for individuals to give charitably from their IRAs without first having to recognize the distributions as income. The IRA Charitable Rollover has not, thus far, been extended for the 2014 tax year. The America Gives More Act would make the Rollover permanent and allow taxpayers age 59 ½ years or older to transfer unlimited dollar amounts from their IRA accounts directly to charities, including donor-advised funds at the Community Foundation.

The Community Foundation supports the passing of the America Gives More Act. The Act was passed by the House of Representatives in July and is expected to reach the Senate in the upcoming weeks. We will provide an update on the Senate vote when it takes place.

CFO OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER

At a ceremony held at DeSales University on September 17th, Trisha Higgins, CPA, Vice President & CFO of the Community Foundation, was presented with the Lehigh Valley Business CFO of the Year Award in the category of Small Nonprofits (24 or fewer employees). Awards were presented in seven different categories and honored financial executives in the Greater Lehigh Valley who have demonstrated significant impact on their companies and have contributed to the region's economic growth and stability.

Trisha was nominated by the Community Foundation staff and was selected as a finalist by a panel of independent judges. She was chosen as the winner based on the ranking of three criteria: career achievements; impact of the nominee's contributions; and leadership in other areas of management. Bernie Story said, "We are extremely proud that Trisha was selected to receive this great honor. She is a tireless supporter of the Community Foundation and the people and organizations it serves. We consider ourselves very fortunate to have someone of Trisha's skills and insight in the position of Vice President & CFO."



Trisha and Bernie at the CFO of the Year Award Reception.

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS SEMINAR - SAVE THE DATE

The 2015 Professional Advisors Seminar and Reception will be held on Thursday, January 22nd, at 4 PM at Saucon Valley Country Club. A panel of professional advisors will present and discuss philanthropic case studies. Continuing education credits are available. Please contact Erika Riddle Petrozelli, Director of Donor Services, for additional information.