Dear Friends:

As we round out the 2018 calendar year, we share the needs of some of the nonprofit organizations that have requested funding through our Community Assistance Fund in this Cause Connection. With limited funds available for these unmet needs, we are sharing these requests with others in hopes that an organization near and dear to your heart may catch your interest and generate support at a time of special need.

The Community Assistance Fund is one part of our new three-pronged approach to Foundation-directed or “discretionary” grants in the Lehigh Valley. Earlier this fall we launched our Nonprofit Effectiveness Pilot, an investment in the future of the nonprofit sector by targeting support to strengthen governance, management, and operations of nonprofit organizations. And third, as a follow-up to our 50th anniversary Spark grants, our Igniting Change Fund is taking an issue-based approach that focuses on access to services provided to vulnerable populations. For more information, visit our grants overview page on the website.

You may have noticed our logo has taken on three words. Connect, Grow, and Fund. It’s our new tagline that captures the overall benefit and value that LVCF offers to the community in a way that is easily remembered and understood. It also expresses the promise we make to our donors and fundholders.

At the Lehigh Valley Community Foundation, we have a promise for you.

- We CONNECT you to community needs by providing a highly personalized and effective approach to philanthropy.

- We GROW a stronger community by helping you fulfill your charitable vision and grow a charitable legacy.

- We FUND nonprofits and partner in the community to improve the quality of life in our region as a trusted and respected grant maker.

Thank you for your continued support of LVCF and the nonprofit organizations working to improve the quality of life in the Lehigh Valley.

Regards,

Bernard J. Story
President & CEO

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Touchstone Theatre

Founded in 1981 as a not-for-profit theatre company, the mission of Touchstone is to create, produce, and present original theatre; tour original and ensemble created work; provide educational programs to local children and youth; and demonstrate the power of theatre as a community-building tool.

The Theatre has two major needs at this time, budget support for cost incurred by replacing its HVAC and for scholarships for Camp Touchstone.

HVAC

Touchstone needed to replace the HVAC unit that heats and cools its rehearsal room and upper lobby. The current 15+ year-old HVAC unit stopped working this summer and was deemed beyond repair. The rehearsal room is used on a daily basis throughout the year as the primary rehearsal space for its actors preparing for shows; the classroom where apprentice classes and public workshops are held; the primary classroom for summer camps; and an occasional meeting room.

CAMP TOUCHSTONE

In addition, Touchstone is in need of funding to help support the daycamp scholarships for Summer 2019. The two-week camp is held in the summer for theatre and art led by an ensemble of artists. The camp serves youth ages 9 to 13.

Led by Touchstone teaching artists, participants gain experience in acting, playwriting, improvisation, movement and character development, while developing self-confidence, creative expression and skills of group collaboration. Camp Touchstone is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for young people to discover their unique artistic voices in a playful and encouraging environment. The program culminates in a theatrical presentation for friends and family onstage in Touchstone’s intimate 75-seat theatre.

Touchstone has received twice the number of requests in the past two years for scholarships as it seeks to increase its offerings to under-served members of the community.

Touchstone Theatre
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http://www.touchstone.org/
Promise Neighborhoods Lehigh Valley (PNLV), located in downtown Allentown covers nine blocks in the culturally rich and economically diverse “Old Allentown Historic District.” Promise Neighborhoods is committed to the success of children, from cradle to career. Each neighborhood program strives to mobilize its unique assets—people, businesses, programs and services, resources, public policy—within self-governing bodies that practice shared decision-making, resources, accountability, and outcomes for the children living and learning in the neighborhood.

Promise Neighborhoods Lehigh Valley needs support to offset an unexpected gap in their budget due to a change in the sublease agreement with another organization which vacated the shared space in the Allentown office.

This gap in funding will have a negative impact on the relationships and programs PNLV has built in the community. PNLV’s programming is critical to residents of the promise neighborhoods and the space provides a safe place where residents can gain valuable information on community resources, social activities, leadership development and entrepreneurship. The heart of PNLV’s work is centered around collaboration and community capacity building by lifting up the voices of the people most impacted.

The location is ideal for their drop-in space that increases peoples’ sense of hope and belonging. PNLV’s programming is responsive to the needs of the community, hiring and developing individuals from the neighborhood to lead programming. PNLV supports and develops the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs and media makers through their Leadership Without Limits, Entrepreneurship Without Limits, and Media Without Limits programming.

Additional funding is critical to their ability to maintain their current space and presence in this community. Maintaining the current location is crucial to accessibility to neighbors who rely on their downtown location.
Civic Theatre of Allentown

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http://www.civictheatre.com/

Civic is a non-profit theatre that aspires to enrich lives and build community through locally produced first-class theatre, arthouse film, and innovative arts-infused education. The Theatre serves as both a cultural resource, as well as an important economic engine for Allentown’s West End District.

Each year, over 40,000 patrons are served by Civic’s dedicated staff and volunteers. This year, it has increased the number of live theatre offerings, which will be performed in its newly renovated theatre.

Civic Theatre is seeking additional resources to relieve the financial burden of renovations and roof repairs.

Renovations included the repair of the parapet and roof of Theatre514, and repair to the interior of Theatre514’s second floor administrative offices, which was caused by water damage. The second floor of Theatre514 houses Civic’s managing director, marketing director, development director, graphic artist and film manager. It also houses a small meeting area that is vital to the gathering of committees and staff who work collaboratively to discuss and identify action items for positive outcomes on a variety of functional areas. The first floor of Theatre514 houses a 94-seat black box film studio and Civic’s box office operations. The black box film studio is heavily frequented by senior citizens.

Each year, hundreds of children develop self-expression, conflict resolution, problem solving and artistic growth through Civic Theatre School.

Also, Civic impacts 4,000 children from low-income backgrounds each year who attend school in Allentown by making a quality live theatre experience a reality to them by means of subsidized tickets to the seasonal offering of “A Christmas Carol.”

Civic Theatre of Allentown
IN FOCUS SPOTLIGHT
Serving as the hub of the community, the Northeast Ministry is a non-profit social service agency located in the heart of the low-income housing neighborhood of Marvine-Pembroke in Bethlehem. Their goal is to offer programs and services to those in need in the community and to help them reach their highest potential.

While many of their programs focus on the youth of the community, the food pantry is offered to individuals of all ages and their Connecting Seniors Program focuses on bringing the senior citizens of the community together. Northeast Ministry has created a presence in the community that offers help and hope to those living in Northeast Bethlehem.

Northeast Ministry is seeking funding to support scholarships for youth from low-income families to attend the daycamp in 2019.

As a Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, the success of Northeast Ministry is completely dependent on contributions from individuals, businesses, churches, grants, and fundraising events.

A daycamp is offered for youth who are entering 2nd grade to entering 8th grade. The Camp is held from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., offering youth the option to receive a free breakfast served at 8:00 a.m. A nutritious lunch is also provided to campers.

Last year, 74 children were enrolled in the summer camp which runs for six weeks from June to August. Every Tuesday and Thursday, campers enjoyed swimming lessons and free time at Yosko Pool. Small group trips included guided tours of the Steel Stacks Hoover-Mason Trestle and afternoon visits to the Cops ‘n’ Kids Reading Room. Large field trips included the East Stroudsburg State Planetarium, Mauch Chunk Lake, and a special, all-camp trip to the Bronx Zoo, which was a major highlight of the summer.
Central Moravian Church in Bethlehem, as part of the worldwide Moravian Church, emphasizes mission and service to others.

Each year, Pastor Hopeton Clennon leads a group of about 20-30 volunteers on a week-long service trip to Jamaica. The core of the group is made up of college students and some high school students from the Bethlehem area. The Church provides support for these additional students through donations and fundraising efforts and each participating traveler pays for a portion of the cost of their trip. Additional funds are needed to make up the shortfall in the budget raised by participating students.

This alternative Spring Break trip focuses on helping the Jamaican community with construction and educational projects. It also provides an opportunity for students to interact with elementary-age children in a rural community in the southwestern region of Jamaica. Over the past nine years, the projects have involved painting houses, churches, schools, orphanages and a medical clinic, laying tiles, and construction with lumber.

Support is needed in order to help fund the travel costs for Bethlehem area high schools students.

Live Learn & Play, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation established in September 2012 to help local families with Autism and special needs by promoting awareness and inclusion. Located in the South Mall in Allentown, they are a one-of-a-kind inclusive Sensory Gym & Resource Center. Their programs and services are designed for children and adults with Autism and special needs, and is open to everyone. The center was designed based around the concept that we can all learn from each other.

The facility has over 3000 sq. ft. of indoor space with both an Indoor Sensory Gym and multipurpose room/classroom. The first room has equipment including two jungle gyms, incline plane with rope pull, ball pit, foam pit, quiet tower, rock wall two-story play area. The second room has toys, trains, Legos, large foam blocks, sensory floor mazes, TV with Xbox, and a trampoline.

A number of factors has led to a budget shortfall in the Fall of 2018. Decreased levels in both giving and program-related income has threatened current programming levels.

Support is needed to maintain programming levels for families with Autism.

The mission of New Bethany Ministries is to provide opportunities for a secure future to the hungry, homeless, poor, and mentally ill of the Lehigh Valley. Their goal is to help families and individuals who are capable to become self-sufficient and live independently.

New Bethany Ministries is part of the Lehigh Valley Regional Housing Advisory Board (LVRHAB). Its Affordable Housing Committee is seeking support for an annual stipend towards an intern or part-time administrative person. The position's responsibilities include scheduling and attending meetings to take minutes and share information on the discussion board that New Bethany is establishing.

The goal of the LVRHAB is to employ a collective impact approach to the affordable housing issue through the coordinated entry system, known as Connect to Home. The system connects people to the right solution to end their housing crisis or homelessness as quickly and effectively as possible. It ensures limited housing and resources are prioritized for those who need them the most.

Support is needed to fund a part-time position to support the work of LVRHAB and New Bethany Ministries.