Fundholder Spotlight – Lee Butz

Lee Butz's great-grandfather built covered bridges in the Lehigh Valley in the 1860s, and the Butz family now has its fifth generation of builders at the helm of the Alvin H. Butz Company. Known for their orientation toward high quality and adherence to budget, deadlines, and requirements in the structures which they build, the Butz family has also become synonymous with building the community as well.

“My grandfather did not have the kind of financial success that would have enabled him to do things in the community,” notes Lee. “My dad worked 16-hour days and my mother stayed home to answer the phone. A lot of Butz Company work was done around the dining room table.” The Butz Company grew in the 1970s, when it got its first construction management contract. Growth and success made community involvement and community philanthropy possible.

“It isn’t all altruistic,” says Lee. “There’s a business component to doing things for the community. Involvement opens doors and enhances impressions. The more you do for the community, the more the community does for you. We encourage our employees to be involved in the community, and I’m gratified that some of our sub-contractors have modeled this commitment as well.”

“Family philanthropy is a shared value,” says Lee. “Everyone is on board and feels good about the opportunity to serve the community. My son, Greg, has said that the company may well be remembered more for the things we did for the community than for the buildings we’ve built.”

The charitable fund which the Butz family maintains at the Lehigh Valley Community Foundation is an accompaniment to their family foundation and corporate philanthropy.

“The Lehigh Valley Community Foundation has already been a powerful force for good in the community,” says Lee, “and will be increasingly important. It isn’t just the money that is secured and distributed, it is the philanthropic commitment that the Community Foundation helps to generate in families in the way you help people to look at their lives. The role of the Community Foundation in the Lehigh Valley is beyond estimation.”