



CAUSE CONNECTION

Connecting people who care to causes that matter

Investing for Impact in Early Childhood Education

In August, shovels hit the ground on Turner Street in Allentown as Resurrected Life Community Development Corporation (RCDC) celebrated the start of its expanded Children's Academy—a \$7.2 million project years in the making. LVCF CEO **Erika Riddle Petrozelli, CPA, CAP®** joined **Rev. Dr. Gregory Edwards** and the many community leaders, partners, and neighbors who gathered to mark the moment and thank the many public and private contributors who brought the project to this stage.

Expanding Early Learning

The expansion will modernize and renovate the existing building, add classrooms and technology upgrades, and create new outdoor play space—steps that will ultimately allow the Academy to serve significantly more infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with high-quality, culturally responsive early learning. A ribbon-cutting is targeted for 2026.

The funding stack behind this effort reflects exactly the kind of cross-sector problem-solving our region does best. Financing includes support from Finanta and Truist, along with a \$3.4 million loan from the United Church of Christ's Church Building & Loan Fund, supplemented by federal, state, and city resources. The Lehigh Valley Community Foundation is proud to have contributed funding that helped complete the stack and move this long-awaited project from plan to groundbreaking.

Investing for Impact

For LVCF, this milestone is also a practical example of our new expansion into the area of impact investing—using flexible, mission-aligned capital alongside grants to catalyze community outcomes. Put simply, impact investing is investing with the intention to generate measurable social benefit as well as a financial return. In this case, our capital (paired with many others') helped close a remaining gap so construction could begin, ensuring more Allentown families will gain access to safe, high-quality early childcare in the years ahead.

"We're grateful for the leadership of RCDC and the many partners who believed in this vision through a challenging, often risk-averse financing landscape," Erika said. "As Rev. Edwards said at the ceremony, a project of this scope led by community builders is uncommon—but no less necessary—when the goal is liberation through education and economic stability. LVCF is honored to play a small but catalytic role in making it real."

The project also aligns with LVCF's broader commitment to strengthen the early childhood ecosystem across the Lehigh Valley through grantmaking, convening, and collaboration. Together with donors and partners, we'll keep pairing philanthropy with innovative financing tools to meet urgent needs for children and families—because when our youngest learners thrive, our entire region thrives.



Meeting the Moment:

The Trusted Response Fund

At LVCF, we believe a strong community depends on a strong, inclusive nonprofit sector. Yet today, many organizations face real challenges as funding streams shift and economic pressures grow. Through deep conversations with our partners, one message came through clearly: nonprofits need responsive, flexible support to continue serving our region well.

Flexible Funding for Nonprofits

The Trusted Response Fund, launching this fall, is designed to meet that need. Nonprofits serving Lehigh and Northampton counties can apply for grants of \$5,000 to \$20,000 to reinforce critical programs, plan for sustainability, strengthen leadership, and innovate to meet emerging challenges.

We hope to receive a broad range of applications from organizations that span the nonprofit sector. Eligibility includes 501(c)(3) nonprofits, fiscally sponsored projects, and coalitions preparing for systems-level readiness.

Equity at the Core

LVCF values the diversity of our nonprofit sector and is especially eager to support organizations led by or serving historically underrepresented communities—including BI-POC individuals, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants and refugees, veterans, rural populations, and those with lived experience. We recognize the barriers some organizations face in accessing funding, and we are committed to making this process open and accessible to all.

Applications open September 29 and close November 21, with awards announced in February 2026. This is our chance—together—to make sure nonprofits have the tools and resources to keep our community strong, resilient, and ready for whatever comes next. [Learn more...](#)



Join Us for the LVCF Fall Meeting Workforce Development & Economic Mobility

Join us for the Lehigh Valley Community Foundation's Fall Meeting on **Tuesday, September 30, 2025**, at the ArtsQuest Center at SteelStacks, where we will focus on Workforce Development & Economic Mobility, an issue at the heart of creating stronger, more inclusive communities.

Our featured speaker, **Ashley Putnam**, Director of the Economic Growth & Mobility Project at the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, will share insights on innovative workforce strategies, cross-sector collaboration, and policies that can open pathways to stability and opportunity across our region.



Following the program, we'll gather for a cocktail reception in the Blast Furnace Loft—an excellent opportunity to connect with fellow fundholders, community leaders, nonprofit partners, and friends of the Foundation.

"This event is about more than just discussing workforce development—it's about inspiring collaboration that leads to real change," said **Carrie Krug Nedick, CAP®**, Director of Donor Services. "By bringing together community leaders and experts like Ashley Putnam, we can better understand the challenges and opportunities facing our region and work collectively to expand economic mobility for everyone."

The event runs from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m., followed by the reception, and the \$30 registration includes the program, open bar, and light hors d'oeuvres. [Register Here](#)

As a valued fundholder, your participation helps advance the Foundation's mission of strengthening nonprofits and amplifying impact in the Lehigh Valley.