Thinking more broadly, I also reflect on how the issues that affect vulnerable populations in our region impact all of us on a personal level. Homelessness, poverty, availability of quality medical care, educational opportunities, access to arts and culture, community development, environmental concerns: these are all issues that impact not just individuals, but entire populations. If specific demographics are disenfranchised, not only does it impact them directly, but they are prevented from contributing to the greater good and the economic development for everyone. In turn, this damage impacts all of us across all socio-economic levels. How can we foster leadership in future generations if we can't promise each individual the foundations of what they need to thrive today?

These pressing issues which affect all of us urge me to consider how we can best reach those members of our community who need help most. By offering direct financial support to reputable local nonprofits, the Luzerne Foundation is able to bolster the economic and social success of northeastern Pennsylvania. As we honor Black History Month this February, I wanted to share a few words from Martin Luther King, Jr., who eloquently stated, "I looked forward confidently to the day when all who work for a living will be one with no thought to their separate...a dream of a nation where all our gifts and resources are held not for ourselves alone, but as instruments of service for the rest of humanity." I think these words ring especially true for our area, where the generosity of individuals has, for a long time, helped to sustain our region and make our communities stronger. The financial support of local citizens like you has enabled The Luzerne Foundation to enrich our area, where the generosity of individuals has, for a long time, helped to sustain our region and make our communities stronger. The financial support of local citizens like you has enabled The Luzerne Foundation to enrich our region, where the generosity of individuals has, for a long time, helped to sustain our region and make our communities stronger. The financial support of local citizens like you has enabled The Luzerne Foundation to enrich our area, where the generosity of individuals has, for a long time, helped to sustain our region and make our communities stronger. The financial support of local citizens like you has enabled The Luzerne Foundation to enrich our area, where the generosity of individuals has, for a long time, helped to sustain our region and make our communities stronger.

Thanks for Giving!
Wyoming Valley Alcohol & Drug Services (WVADS) is dedicated to providing both treatment and prevention education to the citizens of Luzerne County. WVADS prides itself on administering professional and confidential care to anybody who needs it. One phone call can get you or a loved one a private assessment/evaluation to determine the appropriate treatment for individuals who are suffering from gambling addiction.

It should be noted that WVADS offers financial assistance for individuals or families who may be unable to fully pay for treatment. “We work with all insurance and private pay,” Harlen said. “We want you to get the help that you need.”

“WVADS has been the first agency in Pennsylvania to be certified to treat people for gambling problems. The agency offers confidential assessments/evaluations to determine the appropriate treatment for individuals who are suffering from gambling addiction. We go into school districts and the community and we teach different populations about substance use disorders, and provide education about drugs and alcohol. We do hundreds of presentations each year and thousands of hours of prevention education too.”

Harlen continued, “Through presentations and seminars we teach about the dangers of drugs, alcohol and gambling to our local citizens. Through our vast network of business professionals and community resources, ever-willing to give back, we find an exciting way to engage, enrich and elevate our local non-profits.”

The Westmoreland Club has been a cornerstone of Wilkes-Barre since 1873, known mostly for fine dining and elegant events,” Wilson said. “Last year I was tasked with bringing to life an integral part of the Westmoreland Club’s Vision, ‘We care about and influence our surrounding community and engage in philanthropic outreach.’ What does this organization do get? A $5,000 credit toward hosting a fundraising event at the Westmoreland Club, in addition to being the 2020 beneficiary of the club's women's committee's 'Acts of Kindness’ event in December, which last year raised more than $5,000.

To learn more or nominate a non-profit, visit www.501cFree.info. The second round of voting is for the top 15 organizations.

“Then, a reveal party will be held at the Westmoreland Club on August 15 where the winner will be announced.”

But, even participating organization seemingly wins thanks to companies like Westmoreland Worldwide, MLB Advertising and Omnitized, which will provide each with a media kit to help promote themselves on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and e-mail. This will help the companies spread their messages to the community while asking for votes. It’s a win-win for all parties, including Wilson and Nataupsky, who are enlisting the help of the Westmoreland Club’s network to generate traction. “Through our vast network of business professionals and community resources, ever-willing to give back, we find an exciting way to engage, enrich and elevate our local non-profits.”

Jason Nataupsky, co-chair of the Westmoreland Club’s Vision, echoed those sentiments. “It’s rare that you are given the unique opportunity to utilize an establishment like the Westmoreland Club, to help directly benefit some of the best organizations that make our tight knit community so wonderful,” he said.

So, when Elyse Wilson, chair of our program, asked me to join the 501cFree initiative, it immediately meant so much to me. Giving back to the community that we belong to is a value that has been woven into the fabric of my entire life, from very early on,” Nataupsky continued. “Highlighting many Luzerne County non-profits and helping them to share their ‘why’ has also helped me to evolve my role here at home, which I find great fulfillment with.”

To learn more or nominate a non-profit, visit www.501cFree.info. Wyoming Valley Alcohol & Drug Services (WVADS) is dedicated to providing both treatment and prevention education to the citizens of Luzerne County. WVADS prides itself on administering professional and confidential care to anybody who needs it. One phone call can get you or a loved one a private assessment/evaluation to determine the appropriate treatment for individuals who are suffering from gambling addiction.

Harlen encouraged anyone thinking about getting help to consider WVADS for treatment: “If someone feels they need help, we’ll get them help; we’re here for them. We’re a community agency and we’ll do our best to help them out; we don’t refuse people.”

To learn more about WVADS, visit their website at www.wvadsinc.com or at their Facebook page @WVADSinc, and for information on donating, call (570) 820-8888.
The YMCA has existed as a global organization for 175 years, and it’s had a presence in Wilkes-Barre, PA for nearly as long. The Wilkes-Barre YMCA (or simply “the Y”) was founded in 1863, and has since strived to impart Christian principles through helping its community members build healthier minds, bodies, and spirits. Beyond the recreational facilities offered by the Y, the Wilkes-Barre chapter of the organization also boasts a long history of community service involvement throughout the Wyoming Valley.

Dallas resident Jim Thomas has worked with the YMCA for 44 years, serving in roles including Program Executive and Youth & Camping Director before becoming Executive Director in 1994. Under Thomas’ leadership, the Wilkes-Barre YMCA has evolved to serve individuals ranging in age from infancy to older adulthood through the implementation of several community-based programs, including childhood education, summer day and overnight camps, summer learning loss prevention, chronic disease prevention and management, wellness, aquatics and more. Recently, the Greater Wilkes-Barre Friendly Sons of St. Patrick named Thomas their Man of the Year for his lifelong service to his community through his efforts at the Wilkes-Barre YMCA.

In addition to its wide variety of athletic and wellness programs, clinics, and leagues, the Y also offers childcare services, including daycare for ages 6 weeks through 3 years, preschool programs, and a before/after school program for children grades K-6 attending any Wilkes-Barre Area school. Free tutoring is also offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout September to May, provided by students from Wilkes University. The Wilkes-Barre YMCA also operates YMCA Camp Raven in the Pocono Mountains, featuring day camps for children ages 6 to 12 and teens ages 13 to 16; registration for summer 2020 is currently open and accessible at wbymca.org. Regarding membership, the YMCA is able to provide financial assistance for those living on a fixed or limited income, thanks in large part to the organization’s donors.

The Y will also be hosting a fundraiser on May 2nd: the Kentucky Derby Gala at the Westmoreland Club, which will feature a dinner, screenings of the race, and a silent auction. The Wilkes-Barre YMCA is always happy to accept donations, and any contributions go toward improving facilities, enhancing programs, and helping low-income and under served families and individuals. Donations can be sent to Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA, Development, 40 W. Northampton Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701 or made online at their website, wbymca.org. Additionally, to stay up to date on YMCA news and events, visit their Facebook page, @wbymca.

The Y, as well as Candy’s Place, is a non-profit organization that serves as a resource for people battling cancer. The center was established in 2005 by Lisa Orlandini, who served as the center’s program director before becoming executive director in 2018. Orlandini’s sister was diagnosed with cancer, and the family opened Candy’s Place to provide a space for cancer patients and their families to gather.

Candy’s Place is located at 190 Welles Street, Suite 166 in Forty Fort, and offers a variety of services, including counseling, play therapy, music therapy, and art therapy. The center also hosts a variety of events and classes, such as yoga, meditation, and cooking classes.

Orlandini stated, “We started launching expressive art workshops to help people can use that creative process to help them work through the things they’re experiencing.”

Also in the new, expanded portion of Candy’s Place is the fitness center, which houses an assortment of new exercise equipment, and plenty of open space for aerobics classes held in the evenings and yoga/cardio classes in the evenings. Nearby is the center’s new rec room, complete with a big screen TV, reclining couches, a pool table, and a dartboard. Orlandini commented, “It’s been fondly referred to as the ‘man cave,’ but I say, ‘In all fairness, it’s also the ladies’ lair!’

In addition to its financial support, the center also receives donations of items such as designer bags, to ties, to golf clubs. In addition, the 23rd Annual Walk for Candy’s Place is scheduled for May 9th: more information can be found on their website, cancerwellnessnepa.org. Orlandini requested that people consider donating to the center or volunteering their time.

“My mom has been living with stage 4 colon cancer for 4 years,” Orlandini said. “So my sister took her here and my mom got some wigs. When Candy’s Place was about to close, my mom and I applied. And here we are!” Orlandini has served as CEO since December 2018 and the center has since expanded in February of 2019, adding another 3,000 square feet to their facilities. The center, located at 190 Welles Street, Suite 166 in Forty Fort, aims to provide as many options of support and care as possible to anyone ages 18 and up experiencing any type of cancer, male or female. Open Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Candy’s Place offers, as Orlandini put it, “a little bit of everything.”

As for upcoming events, Candy’s Place is hosting a “Purse ‘Plus’ Bingo” fundraising event at King’s College on March 27th, with prizes ranging from designer bags, to ties, to golf clubs. In addition, the 23rd Annual Walk for Candy’s Place is scheduled for May 9th: more information can be found on their website, cancerwellnessnepa.org.

Money donations can also be made through their website, but the center also accepts items on its wishlist. Orlandini encouraged anyone curious about Candy’s Place to visit for a tour of the facilities: “A lot of the time, people just don’t know what’s available, but once people come in and see what it’s all about, they’re amazed.”
The Times Leader Transformation Team Invites Everyone To Join Us!

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