



Sixth Street Shelter

Fall 2024 Newsletter

PROGRAM OF
**COMMUNITY
ACTION** LEHIGH
VALLEY

From Tragedy to Triumph: A Family's Road to Recovery After the Allentown Fire

In April 2024, a massive fire devastated the 700 block of North 7th Street near Tilghman Street in Allentown, displacing at least 36 residents. Several rowhomes were destroyed, leaving families searching for temporary shelter and facing the daunting task of rebuilding their lives. We were privileged to work with one of the first families displaced by the fire.

This family of eight—two sisters, a husband, and children from both families—arrived at the Sixth Street Shelter on May 22, 2024. During their stay, they faced another tragedy when one of the sisters suffered a personal loss. We provided support and recommended counseling to help them through their emotional and familial devastation.

We connected them with community resources, and thanks to the relationships our Shelter staff have with Bridgeside Estates (formerly Little Lehigh Subsidized Housing), we secured permanent housing for them. In June, the family and their Case Manager submitted the application for the newly renovated properties.

On July 29, their application was approved! The next day, they signed their lease and received the keys to their new home. With the emergency support provided by the Sixth Street Shelter, they saved enough for the security deposit and first month's rent. By the end of August, **they moved into a newly renovated 4-bedroom, 1.5-bath home with subsidized rent**, turning the page after monumental challenges.



Unfortunately, the statistics on homelessness continue to rise...

653,000+

people in the U.S.
experienced homelessness
on a single night in January 2023.

This is more than a

12%

increase compared to the previous year.

The percentage of renter households
spending more than

50%

of their income on rent increased
dramatically, rising over 12%
between 2015 to 2022.

In Lehigh County,

14 out of 100 renters

are likely to face eviction.

SixthStreetShelter.org

@SixthStreetShelter

A letter from our Board Chair



I'm Geoff Gutgold from GGA Global, a Lehigh Valley ad agency. I want to take a moment to express my profound belief in the vital role that The Sixth Street Shelter plays in our community. Having served on the advisory board for nearly three years, I've witnessed firsthand the incredible dedication of our board members, the relentless efforts of our staff, and the driven professionalism of our case managers. It's been a deeply rewarding experience to be part of this compassionate team.

Last year alone, The Sixth Street Shelter served over 91 families consisting of a total of 341 individuals. As the largest family shelter in Lehigh and Northampton Counties, we provide not just temporary housing, but a critical lifeline that strengthens our community. The countless success stories that emerge from our work fuel my passion and commitment to this outstanding organization.

Our collective efforts in addressing homelessness and improving lives are a testament to the power of working in harmony for a greater good. It's heartening to see the difference we make and to know that, together, we're building a better future for those in need making the Lehigh Valley even better!

-Geoff Gutgold

Sixth Street Shelter Advisory Board Chair

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week

November is Homelessness Awareness Month, a time to reflect on the struggles faced by those without stable housing. We would especially like you to join us in participating in Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week this year, which is being held November 17-23. This is an annual program where people come together across the country to draw attention to the problems of hunger and homelessness with a focus on education and taking action. You can find more information at hhweek.org.

At the Sixth Street Shelter, we are dedicated to raising awareness and offering resources to help families find a safe, temporary place to call home while they work toward securing permanent housing. *We invite you to support us this month through in-kind home donations, a monetary contribution, or by volunteering with us!*

A Day To Remember: Sixth Street Shelter Day

On June 6th, we celebrated Sixth Street Shelter Day for the second year, with Mayor Tuerk's proclamation marking the occasion. **Thanks to our partners and community, the day was filled with advocacy, powerful stories from past and current residents, and a reminder of the urgent need to support those facing homelessness.** Representatives from Peter Schwyer and Mike Schlossberg's offices attended, and Mayor Tuerk highlighted the Shelter's critical role in the Allentown community and beyond.

Despite the serious conversations about homelessness, the community came together for some fun. The afternoon featured a variety of exciting activities, including music from **DeeJay Byg Fury** of WDIY, a performance by the **Dieruff High School Marching Band**, entertainment from the **Central Elementary School Cheerleaders**, and a special appearance by the **Phantom's mascot, meLVin!**

Let's not forget the delicious food that was graciously provided by **Ms. Velvet's Café, Mama's Famous Pizza and Grill, Wegmans, and Bear Creek Mountain Resort.** Thank you so much for nourishing our community on Sixth Street Shelter Day!

Plans are already underway for next year's celebration as we mark the Shelter's 40th anniversary. We hope you'll join us!



Community Action Development Allentown's AfterZone Initiative is proud to support Fine Feather Foundation's focus on the arts, children's mental health, and child welfare. Their mission is to empower at-risk youth and their families through art and media-based programs by building communities of dedicated allies and volunteers. We are thrilled to congratulate some of our amazing resident children who earned brand-new bikes at the end of summer camp for their outstanding behavior!



We had an amazing time this season at **Fine Feather Foundation's Excelsior Summer Camp**, which ended with a fantastic recital at **William Allen High School** in Allentown! The students wowed us with their newly learned talents in singing, acting, podcasting, dancing, and more. We're especially excited that some of the kids from our Shelter were able to be part of this camp at no cost.

Fine Feather Foundation's Excelsior Summer Camp



Holiday Giving



As the holiday season approaches, **will you consider including the Sixth Street Shelter in your giving?** While financial donations have the greatest impact, we also welcome tangible holiday gifts! If you prefer, we have suggestions to help with convenient holiday gifting:

Adopt a Family – Shop for one of our families using their personal wish list! Wish lists will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis starting November 18, and all gifts must be delivered to the Shelter by Friday, December 20. To be matched with a family, please contact Wendy below.

Gift Card Drive – Gift cards allow our residents to enjoy the experience of holiday shopping with their families. Cards from big box stores are ideal, as they offer a wide variety of items (Walmart, Target, Dollar General, Amazon, Visa, etc.)

Amazon Wish List – Essential supplies are always needed for the Shelter's guests and their furnished apartments. Please check our online list for items we frequently need, such as (new/unused) twin-sized sheet sets, pillows, baby wipes, kitchen supplies, toiletries, and more. View our full list at: SixthStreetShelter.org/Donate-Supplies.

Please note: We are unable to accept perishable food, used clothing, used linens/towels, or used household appliances for safety reasons.

Contact Wendy for more information or for other ways you can make the season bright for families at the Shelter.

Wendy Wright
Development Officer
wwright@cacvlv.org
484-821-2809



Volunteer Challenge



Enterprise Mobility, now 65 years old, started with just seven cars and is making a significant local impact. In April, about 30 Enterprise employees, including one who drove from Scranton, volunteered at the Sixth Street Shelter through the Volunteer Challenge organized by the Volunteer Center of Lehigh Valley. They spent the day cleaning, weeding, and painting...even completing a previously unfinished project to beautify the Shelter's outdoor space.

Their support didn't end there. A few months later, Enterprise generously donated **\$10,000** to further assist the Shelter's programs. The Sixth Street Shelter is deeply grateful for their volunteer work and financial contribution, which exemplify true community partnership!



Free Will: Write your legal will online, free & simple

Protect what matters most and create your legacy. Sixth Street Shelter and Community Action Lehigh Valley have partnered with FreeWill, a trusted platform where you can create a will at no cost. Consider including the Shelter in your will to help future generations access vital resources in challenging times.

Visit: FreeWill.com/CommunityActionLV