

Lehigh & Northampton OBSERVER



Volume 20, Issue 6

November/December 2020

The Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties.

*Telephone:
610-849-8076*

www.arcoflehighnorthampton.org

Published six times a year to inform persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and the community about intellectual disability services in Lehigh and Northampton Counties.

Welcome back to the Lehigh & Northampton Observer! Since March, we've been unable to produce the bulk mail newsletter due to limits caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you for your continued interest in the newsletter.

**LEHIGH COUNTY
INTELLECTUAL
DISABILITY
COMMITTEE**

Regular in-person meetings are suspended until further notice.

Meetings are normally held the second Wednesday in January, April, July, October

Noon—1:30 PM

**The Clubhouse
1437 Gordon Street
Allentown, PA**

For updates on any budget information in the county or the state.

Consumers, parents, and anyone interested in the care and welfare of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities are welcome to attend.

Contact Bob Madden for information. Phone 610-849-8076 ,ext. 317

Dear Families, Friends and Colleagues:

Summer has turned to Fall. Before you know it, Winter will be here. As we move away from the warm weather, it is not too early to think about the 2021 Celebration Awards, which honors individuals with developmental disabilities who have distinguished themselves.

The Celebration Awards, established to help celebrate Developmental Disabilities Awareness month in Pennsylvania, is marking its 15th year.

Nomination categories are being re-organized for the upcoming awards. They will be available in January, 2021. Someone eligible for a Celebration Award must be diagnosed with a Developmental Disability and must receive some kind of disability related service in either Northampton or Lehigh County.

In the meantime, take a moment to think about a friend, family member, someone you teach or support who has a developmental disability. Why not give them a nomination? As the saying goes, "You can't win if you don't play." Nominations will be taken until February 1st.

Nominations aside, the next Celebration Awards Event is March 25th. The Celebration Awards committee is looking for new members. Please see page 2 of the newsletter for more information.

Have a safe and happy holiday season.

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A starburst graphic with a blue and white border containing the text "Fifteenth Annual" in red and black.

**Fifteenth
Annual**

Save The Date:

Celebration Awards

March 25, 2021

***Best Western Hotel and Conference Center
Rt. 512 Bethlehem***

The Celebration Awards started in 2007. The program was organized and presented by a committee that represented Lehigh and Northampton County's intellectual disabilities programs and other services providers. Celebration awards were originally limited to nominees identified with intellectual disabilities to mark Intellectual Disabilities Awareness month. Now that Pennsylvania designated the month of March to Developmental Disabilities awareness, the committee is reorganizing awards.

Someone eligible for a Celebration Award must be diagnosed with a Developmental Disability. The nominee must receive some kind of disability related service (ex: Support Coordination, Waiver, FD/FSS, Education, etc.) in either Northampton or Lehigh County.

Categories for nominations are being re-organized, they will be available in January 2021.

The Celebration Committee is looking for new members.

The committee hopes to hold a luncheon March, 2021 and will need help with organizing, taking reservations and seating for an in-person event.

We hope to encourage diverse representation on the committee; including past honorees, family members, other people receiving developmental disability services and service providers.

The committee holds meetings once a month from September through April. Committee meetings normally last around one hour. Members can participate remotely as needed.

There are sub committees related to picking honorees and staging the event. Sub committees may meet more frequently as we get closer to the event date.

If you are interested in joining the Committee, please send an email to Celebration.Committee.15@gmail.com.

The current committee will review requests to join the committee and follow up.

LEHIGH COUNTY FD/FSS

- Participants were re-enrolled in Lehigh County's FD/FSS program with the same allocation as the previous year.
- Lehigh County made 1/2 of each person's allocation available starting July 1, 2020.
- In Lehigh County, FD/FSS allocations are good for the entire fiscal year (July, 2020 through June 30, 2021). There is no need to get Lehigh County's approval to use a participant's allocation after January 1, 2021.
- Invoices must be submitted to Eater Seals for payment/reimbursement within 180 days (6 months) of the purchase or service date.
- The budget for Lehigh County has not been finalized. Once Lehigh County's budget is final, The County will know how much FSS funding is available the rest of the current fiscal year. Available funds will not exceed the original amount of a person's allocation.
- Questions about Lehigh County's FD/FSS program can be directed to Bob Madden, FD/FSS coordinator. Phone 610-849-8076, Ext. 317. Email: bmadden@arcoflehighnorthampton.org.



NORTHAMPTON COUNTY FD/FSS

- Northampton County is allocating FD/FSS funds for the first half of the fiscal year (July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020).
- Vouchers for services for the first half of the fiscal year must be received by Easter Seals by the close of business (4:30pm) on January 8th, 2021.
- Any unused funds will not be automatically carried over to the second half of the year.
- If necessary, individuals may request transferring funds to the second half of the fiscal year (January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021).
- Requests to transfer first half-year funds to the second half must be made to Supports Coordinators by November 15, 2020 for carryover consideration.
- Northampton County will re-assess funds as time progresses and determine if additional monies can be allocated to individuals and their families.



Questions or concerns about the FD/FSS program in Northampton County should be addressed to the participant's individual Supports Coordinator.

School Districts across Lehigh and Northampton Counties continue updating information on ways to provide education to students. This is a developing situation that needs to be monitored regularly.

Please find a listing and links to public schools in Lehigh and Northampton Counties below. School district links contain information on school district opening plans and other important topics.

LEHIGH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

[Allentown School District](http://www.allentownsd.org); www.allentownsd.org
[Bethlehem Area School District](http://www.basdschools.org); www.basdschools.org
[Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit 21](http://www.cliu.org); www.cliu.org
[Catasauqua School District](http://www.cattysd.org); www.cattysd.org
[East Penn School District](http://www.eastpennsd.org); www.eastpennsd.org
[Northern Lehigh School District](http://www.nlsd.org); www.nlsd.org
[Northwestern Lehigh School District](http://www.nwlehighsd.org); www.nwlehighsd.org
[Parkland School District](http://www.parklandsd.org); www.parklandsd.org
[Salisbury School District](http://www.salisburysd.org); www.salisburysd.org
[Southern Lehigh School District](http://www.slsd.org); www.slsd.org
[Whitehall-Coplay School District](http://www.whitehallcoplay.org); www.whitehallcoplay.org

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

[Bangor Area School District](http://www.bangor.k12.pa.us); www.bangor.k12.pa.us
[Bethlehem Area School District](http://www.basdschools.org); www.basdschools.org
[Catasauqua Area School District](http://www.cattysd.org); www.cattysd.org
[Colonial Intermediate Unit 20](http://www.ciu20.org); www.ciu20.org
[Easton Area School District](http://www.eastonsd.org); www.eastonsd.org
[Nazareth Area School District](http://www.nazarethasd.k12.pa.us); www.nazarethasd.k12.pa.us
[Northampton Area School District](http://www.nasdschools.org); www.nasdschools.org
[Northern Lehigh School District](http://www.nlsd.org); www.nlsd.org
[Pen Argyl School District](http://www.penargylschooldistrict.org); www.penargylschooldistrict.org
[Saucon Valley School District](http://www.svpanthers.org); www.svpanthers.org
[Wilson Area School District](http://www.wilsonareasd.org); www.wilsonareasd.org

[Carbon Lehigh IU Local Taskforce 21](#)

November 18, 2020 10 AM—12 PM
 December 16, 2020 10 AM—12PM
 January 20, 2021 10 AM—12 PM

All meets are on Zoom platform until further notice. Meeting. <https://zoom.us/j/5378786005?pwd=TnVhbXdLTnFCWm5SOHZoNTBoelAxQT09>

Meeting ID: 537 878 6005
 Passcode: 6ULFpM

Contact Amanda Robbins, Chairperson with questions mandaphd1@gmail.com.
 Visit www.cliu.org

[Colonial IU 20 Right to Education Task Force](#)

November 2, 2020 (snow date November 3)
 January 11, 2021 (snow date January 12)
 March 15, 2021 (snow date March 16)

All meetings will be held on the Zoom platform until Further notice.

Visit the Colonial IU 20 web site www.ciu20.org and search Right to Education Local Task Force

Anyone interested and wanting information for the virtual meeting is invited to contact Leslie McKelvey, leslie.mckelvey@yahoo.com

In order to continue helping people with important information, The Arc's Advocacy Department is developing an on-going series of virtual workshops, using the Zoom Platform.

You can access Zoom with smart phones, tablets, laptops or desktops. You may need to download the Zoom app for smart devices. If you don't have a computer or other device, you can call in and hear the audio.

For those who have never used Zoom, here are some basics.

- Zoom is a internet based, remote meeting platform.
- With a desktop computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone, you can see and hear the presenter. The presenter can show visuals such as PowerPoint slides, printouts and spreadsheets to participants.
- Some Zoom meetings allow participants with microphones on their devices to actively participate.
- Zoom meeting have a chat box allowing participants to write questions or comments for all participants to see.
- When you register for a Zoom you must supply an email address. Zoom will confirm your registration and send reminders and a link to your workshop. All you need to do is click the link on the day and time of the workshop. There are telephone numbers listed with email reminders in case you want to call in.
- If you don't have access to a computer, laptop, smart phone or tablet you can phone in for the workshop. Call Jessica McKenty, Advocacy Director at 610-849-8076, ext. 330 for assistance.



To register for a Zoom workshop, visit the Arc website: www.arcoflehighnorthampton.org. Open the [events](#) tab, find your workshop and click the "register here" link to register for your workshop. Check The Arc website and The Arc's Facebook page events section for more training announcements and other information!

Questions can be sent to Jessica McKenty. Email: jmckenty@arcoflehighnorthampton.org or phone: 610-849-8076 ext. 330.

Zoom Workshops Coming in November and December:

SSI, SSDI & Housing for People with Disabilities

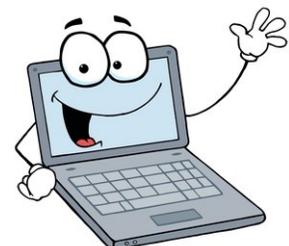
Presenter: Christine McIntyre, Esq.
 Wednesday, November 11, 2020
 7:00PM via Zoom

TechOWL 101: AT For our Whole Lives - Tools & Technology for People with Disabilities

Presenter: Kathryn Krum, LVCIL Coordinator of Accessibility and Related Programs
 Thursday, November 19, 2020
 6:30PM via Zoom

The History of the Disability Rights Movement

Presenter: Christine McIntyre, Esq.
 Thursday, December 3, 2020
 7:00PM via Zoom





What is NAMI Lehigh Valley?

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Lehigh Valley is a local nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by serious mental illness.

The onset of serious mental illness can overwhelm the person as well as their family members. They are faced with the difficult challenge of coping with the illness as well as finding ways to adapt and recover despite its persistent effects. False information and stigma keep many from seeking the help, support, and information they desperately need.

If you or a family member has a serious mental illness (clinical depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, schizophrenia and others), NAMI Lehigh Valley wants to make your life better. We help you understand mental health issues, develop better coping skills, and become more effective self-advocates.

Serious diseases of the brain can be treated successfully. We are dedicated to improving the lives of those who affected by serious mental health issues.

NAMI Lehigh Valley provides FREE:

Education programs

Support groups

Programs for schools

Speakers for community groups

And more!

Mission Statement

NAMI Lehigh Valley, an affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness and NAMI PA, is an association of families, persons with mental illness, mental health professionals and other community members dedicated to providing hope and support for individuals dealing with the effects of serious and persistent mental illness.

Our advocacy efforts and educational programming seek to inform the public about the nature of mental illness, remove the stigma attached to mental illness, and garner support and services for those affected by serious mental illness.

Visit: www.nami-lv.org for more information.

NAMI Helpline: 800-950-6264 (Monday-Friday 10 am- 6 pm)

Get help in a crisis 24/7 via text message: text NAMI to 74174

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is accepting applications beginning Nov. 2

What is LIHEAP?

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps low-income families pay their heating bills. LIHEAP is a grant; you do not have to repay it.

Eligibility:

- You must meet income guidelines
- You don't have to be on public assistance
- You don't need to have an unpaid heating bill
- You can rent or own your home

How Does LIHEAP work?

LIHEAP offers both cash and crisis grants. The cash grant is a one-time payment sent directly to the utility company/Fuel provider.

Cash Grants Cash grants help families pay their heating bills. The one-time payment is sent directly to your utility company or fuel provider, and it will be credited on your bill. (In some cases, the check may be mailed to you directly.) Cash grants range from \$200-\$1000 and are based on household size, income, and fuel type.

Crisis Grants Crisis grants may be available if you have an emergency situation and are in jeopardy of losing your heat. You can receive more than one Crisis grant, as necessary, during the season until the maximum benefit of \$600 is reached.

Crisis situations include:

- Broken heating equipment or leaking lines that must be fixed or replaced
- Lack of fuel
- Termination of utility service
- Danger of being without fuel (less than a 15 day supply)
- Danger of having utility service terminated (received a notice that service will be shut off within the next 60 days)

Contact your local County Assistance Office for a Crisis Grant. Lehigh County call 610-821-6509; Northampton County call 610-250-1700. **Assistance with home heating crisis situations is available 24 hours a day.**

Three ways to apply:

- Online at: www.compass.state.pa.us
- Call or visit your local County Assistance Office.

- Call the Statewide LIHEAP Hotline at 1-866-857-7095 or call PA Relay at 711 for the hearing impaired.

To apply you will need:

- ➔ Names of all people in your household
- ➔ Dates of birth for all household members
- ➔ Social Security Numbers for all household members
- ➔ Proof of income for all household members
- ➔ A recent heating bill

Who is eligible?

You may qualify for a LIHEAP grant if your household in come meetings the following guidelines:

Proposed 2021 Income Guidelines	
Household size	Maximum Annual Income
1	\$19,140
2	\$25,860
3	\$32,580
4	\$39,300
5	\$46,020
6	\$52,740
7	\$59,460
8	\$66,180
9	\$72,900
10	79,620
Each Additional Person Add \$6,720	

Contact LIHEAP:

For more information about LIHEAP, please contact your [county assistance office](#), or call the LIHEAP hotline at 1-866-857-7095, Monday through Friday. Individuals with hearing impairments may call 711.

County Assistance Offices:

Lehigh: 610-821-6509
Toll Free: 1-877-223-5956

Northampton: 610-250-1700
Toll Free 1-800-349-5122.

LEHIGH COUNTY CARES RENT RELIEF ASSISTANCE

Lehigh County residents can seek assistance with rent repayment by contacting the following agencies:

- **New Bethany Ministries**, Phone 610-691-5602, ext. 213
- **Catholic Charities:** Contact Tom Miller, Phone 610-435-1541, email: Tmiller@allentowndiocese.org (Catholic Charities also administers the CARES Rent Relief Program).
- For low- to moderate-income households who feel that they are being illegally evicted or foreclosed upon, please contact **North Penn Legal Services** at 610-317-8757 for free advice, referrals, and advocacy.
- For residents who are **14 days or less away** from losing their residence and have either a **Notice to Quit** or a **Lockout Order/Notice**, or are **currently homeless**, call 211 to be connected to the Coordinated Entry Referral System; or visit Lehigh Conference of Churches:
 - ◆ 1031 West Linden Street, Allentown, Monday to Thursday 9-11 am and 1-3 pm
 - ◆ 740 East Fourth Street, First Floor, Bethlehem, call for hours at 610-419-8282

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY CARES RENT RELIEF ASSISTANCE

If you live in Bethlehem, Bethlehem Township, Hellertown, Lower Saucon Township :

- **New Bethany Ministries**, Phone: 610-691-5602, ext. 213

If you live in Easton there are 2 agencies you may contact:

- **Easton Area Neighborhood Center**, Phone: 610-253-4253 or email Ross Marcus at rmarcus@eastonanc.org.
- **ProJeCt of Easton**, Phone: 610-258-1100 ext. 13; email Michael Banas at mbanas@projecteaston.org

All other municipalities of Northampton County, contact:

- **Third Street Alliance**, Phone: 610-438-1763, email Ziana Keith at zkeith@thirdstreetalliance.org

For Residents who are 14 days or less away from losing their residence and have either a Notice to Quit or a Lockout Order/Notice:

- **Call 211** to be connected to Northampton County Tenant Eviction Assistance program seeking rental assistance.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Deadline Extended To December 31

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate program deadline for older adults and residents with disabilities to apply for rebates of rent and property taxes paid in 2019 has been extended from June 30 to December 31, 2020.

The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians age 65 and older; widows and widowers age 50 and older; and people with disabilities age 18 and older. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters, and half of Social Security income is excluded. Spouses personal representatives or estates may also file rebate claims on behalf of claimants who live at least one day in 2019 and meet all other eligibility criteria.

The maximum standard rebate is \$650, but supplemental rebates for qualifying homeowners can boost rebates to \$975.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate application forms and assistance are available at no cost from Department of Revenue district offices, local Area Agency on Aging, senior centers and state legislators' offices.

For more information, visit the PA Department of Revenue's web site: at www.revenue.pa.gov or call 1-888-222-9190.



HOW TO DISPOSE OF UNUSED MEDICATIONS

Is your medicine cabinet full of expired drugs or medications you no longer use? How should you dispose of them?

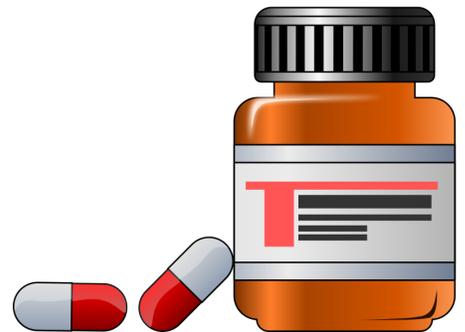
Many community-based drug “take-back” programs offer the best option. Otherwise, almost all medicines can be thrown in the household trash, but consumers should take the precautions described below.

A small number of medicines may be especially harmful if taken by someone other than the person for whom the medicine was prescribed. Many of these medicines have specific disposal instructions on their labeling or patient information leaflet to immediately flush them down the sink or toilet when they are no longer needed. For a list of medicines recommended for disposal by flushing, visit the FDA web site and search “Disposing of Unwanted Medications” or follow this link: www.fda.gov/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know

Drug Disposal Guidelines and Locations

The following guidelines were developed to encourage the proper disposal of medicines and help reduce harm from accidental exposure or intentional misuse after they are no longer needed:

- Follow any specific disposal instructions on the prescription drug labeling or patient information that accompanies the medicine.
- Do not flush medicines down the sink or toilet unless this information specifically instructs you to do so.
- Take advantage of programs that allow the public to take unused drugs to a central location for proper disposal. Call your local law enforcement agencies to see if they sponsor medicine take-back programs in your community. Contact your city’s or county government’s household trash and recycling service to learn about medication disposal options and guidelines for your area.
- Transfer unused medicines to collectors registered with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Authorized sites may be retail, hospital or clinic pharmacies, and law enforcement locations. Some offer mail-back programs or collection receptacles (“drop-boxes”). Visit the DEA’s website or call 1-800-882-9539 for more information and to find an authorized collector in your community.



If no disposal instructions are given on the prescription drug labeling and no take-back program is available in your area, throw the drugs in the household trash following these steps:

- 1) Remove them from their original containers and mix them with an undesirable substance, such as used coffee grounds, dirt or kitty litter (this makes the drug less appealing to children and pets, and unrecognizable to people who may intentionally go through the trash seeking drugs).
- 2) Place the mixture in a sealable bag, empty can or other container to prevent the drug from leaking or breaking out of a garbage bag.

FDA’s Ilisa Bernstein, Pharm.D., J.D., offers a few more tips:

- Scratch out all identifying information on the prescription label to make it unreadable. This will help protect your identity and the privacy of your personal health information.

- Do not give your medicine to friends. Doctors prescribe medicines based on your specific symptoms and medical history. Something that works for you could be dangerous for someone else.
- When in doubt about proper disposal, ask your pharmacist.

Bernstein says the same disposal methods for prescription drugs could apply to over-the-counter drugs as well.

Why the Precautions?

Some prescription drugs such as powerful narcotic pain relievers and other controlled substances carry instructions for flushing to reduce the danger of unintentional use or overdose and illegal abuse.

For example, the fentanyl patch, an adhesive patch that delivers a potent pain medicine through the skin, comes with instructions to flush used or leftover patches. Too much fentanyl can cause severe breathing problems and lead to death in babies, children, pets and even adults, especially those who have not been prescribed the medicine.

“Even after a patch is used, a lot of the medicine remains in the patch,” says Jim Hunter, R.Ph., M.P.H., an FDA pharmacist. “So you wouldn’t want to throw something in the trash that contains a powerful and potentially dangerous narcotic that could harm others.”

Environmental Concerns

Some people are questioning the practice of flushing certain medicines because of concerns about trace levels of drug residues found in surface water, such as rivers and lakes, and in some community drinking water supplies.

“The main way drug residues enter water systems is by people taking medicines and then naturally passing them through their bodies,” says Raanan Bloom, Ph.D., an environmental assessment expert at FDA. “Many drugs are not completely absorbed or metabolized by the body and can enter the environment after passing through wastewater treatment plants.”

“While FDA and the Environmental Protection Agency take the concerns of flushing certain medicines in the environment seriously, there has been no indication of environmental effects due to flushing,” Bloom says.

“Nonetheless, FDA does not want to add drug residues into water systems unnecessarily,” adds Hunter.

FDA reviewed drug labels to identify products with disposal directions recommending flushing down the sink or toilet. This continuously updated listing can be found at FDA’s Web page on Disposal of Unused Medicines.

Disposal of Inhaler Products

Another environmental concern involves inhalers used by people who have asthma or other breathing problems, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Traditionally, many inhalers have contained chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), a propellant that damages the protective ozone layer. CFCs have been phased out of inhalers and are being replaced with more environmentally friendly inhaler propellants.

Read handling instructions on the labeling of inhalers and aerosol products, because they could be dangerous if punctured or thrown into a fire or incinerator. To ensure safe disposal that complies with local regulations and laws, contact your local trash and recycling facility.

First Published: June 4, 2015. Visit www.fda.gov/consumers for other important health care information



What did the icy road say to the truck?
Want to go for a spin?

What do you call a snow man in August?
A puddle

What falls in winter but never gets hurt?
Snow

Where do snowmen put their money?
Snow banks

What does a gingerbread man put on his bed?
A cookie sheet

What do you get when you cross a snowman and a vampire?
Frostbite

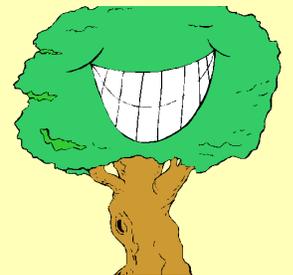
**BI-COUNTY
OBSERVER:**
Lehigh County Edition

Published six times a year for persons receiving services from the Intellectual Disabilities Departments in Lehigh and Northampton Counties.

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The Bi-County Observer is available by e-mail. You help save trees and the electronic newsletter comes to you before the print version. The electronic newsletter has links to e-mail and web sites that are just a click away!



Contact Bob Madden to be included in the newsletter.

Phone: 610-849-8076 (ext. 317).

E-mail: bmadden@arcoflehighnorthampton.org