

*Charity begins today. Today somebody is suffering, today somebody is in the street, today somebody is hungry. Our work is for today, yesterday has gone, tomorrow has not yet come—today, we have only today to make Jesus known, loved, served, fed, clothed, sheltered. Today—do not wait for tomorrow. Tomorrow might not come. Tomorrow we will not have them if we do not feed them today.*

*Mother Teresa*



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## **LEHIGH COUNTY CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES**

*There Is No Good Reason in  
This World To Be...*

*Hungry or Homeless,  
Struggling Alone with Mental Illness,  
A Youth At Risk,  
Divided in Faith.*

**2007/2008 ANNUAL REPORT**

Mission Statement

*Responding to the call of Jesus Christ, the mission of the Lehigh County Conference of Churches is to unite communities of faith as ecumenical partners. Putting our faith into action, we minister to and advocate for those in need and encourage all to reach their full potential.*

*A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
The Reverend Dr. Christine L. Nelson*

*THERE IS NO GOOD REASON IN THIS WORLD TO BE...*

- Hungry*
- Homeless*
- Struggling Alone with Mental Illness*
- A Youth At Risk*
- Divided in Faith*

It is not a new story to hear that in our country, the largest and most efficient food producer in the world, every year 35 million Americans are threatened by hunger, including 13 million children. Many of you reading this annual report meet them as you share yourself in the ministries of the Lehigh County Conference of Churches.

How can we make a difference? The simple question staff are taught to ask is the first step: "How can I help you?" You see, we believe people have the answers within themselves. What we provide are ears that take their needs seriously, and legs and hands and minds that are willing to walk with struggling people on their journey. You extend hope. They find courage. You provide some resources. They get up and walk toward a new life.

*BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND NOMINEES*

**2007-2008 Board of Directors**

President

Rev. Thomas Thomas 2011 (2)

Vice-President

Mr. Richard Focht 2009 (1)

Secretary

Mrs. Eunice Schermerhorn 2010 (1)

Treasurer

Ms. Theresa Racek 2010 (1)

John Acanfora 2010 (1)

Ms. Elizabeth Benke 2010 (2)

Ms. Heidi Butler 2009 (2)

The Rt. Rev. M. Blair Couch 2009 (1)

Ms. Heidi Mayville 2008 (1)

Mr. Ken Mohr 2010 (1)

Mr. Henry Moore 2009 (unfulfilled)

Mr. Ray Murphy, Jr. 2008 (1)

Mr. Virgil W. Palmer 2008 (unfulfilled)

Ms. Gwyn Parker 2009 (2)

Rev. William Ragan, Jr. 2011 (2)

Rev. Msgr. Joseph Sobiesiak 2011 (2)

Ms. Sonya Siegfried 2009 (1)

Dr. Erika Sutherland 2010 (2)

**Nominees for the 2008-2009 Board**

Ms. Mary Ann Gibbons, Ms. Renee Saleh, Mr. Bruce Keller, Rev. Charles Olmeda,  
Rev. Steven Lozada

Vision Statement

*Lehigh County Conference of Churches . . . . . Striving to be the face, feet, hands, and heart of God's grace in the Lehigh Valley, leading the faith community in feeding, clothing, healing, housing, and uniting God's children.*

*LCCC Management Staff*

*Rev. Dr. Christine L. Nelson,  
Executive Director*

*Ira Faro,  
Development  
Senior Director*

*Rev. Debra Hepburn,  
Ecumenical Director*

*Tom Smith,  
Operations Director*

*Tom Walker,  
Human Services  
Director*

*LEHIGH COUNTY CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES STAFF*

**Aspires Mentoring**

Gale Seiss, Coordinator  
Nicole Nugent, Assistant

**Administrative**

Sherril Albro, Accounting Manager  
Brian Best, Information Services Coordinator  
Gigi Pacheco, Admin Office Associate  
Karen Tomlinson, Admin Office Assistant  
Tweed Vanderhall, Admin Office Assistant  
James Holley, Janitor

**Daybreak**

Christine Morrison, Director  
Susan Unger, Vocational Coordinator  
Gladys Swoyer, Community Service Coord.  
Kevin Beck, Kitchen & Volunteer Coordinator  
Vianca Corazón, Kitchen Assistant

**Homelessness Prevention**

Sheri Lopez, Coordinator

**Homeless Supportive Services**

Holly Brennan, Intensive Case Manager  
Darcy Bush, Intensive Case Manager

**Linkage**

Ben Stephens, Coordinator

**Pathways**

Deanne Malacsics, Director  
Sharon Mullay, Housing Case Manager  
Margaret Sunny, Housing Case Manager  
Pam Johnson, HUD Housing Case Mgr.

**Soup Kitchen**

Charles Brannon, Coordinator

*WORKING TOGETHER IN 2007-08 WE ASSISTED:*

- 22 chronically homeless men and women find housing in addition to getting the medical, mental, and treatment care they need
- 7 chronically homeless who received the key to a real home through a second HUD grant which provides cash rental assistance with annual total to increase to 22 by the end of 2008
- The chronically homeless and the City of Allentown in cleaning up and closing camps, collaborated on an electronic “street sheet” that identifies where to obtain services, and identified and repaired holes in our community safety net via work on the Allentown Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in Ten Years
- In addressing with community partners the most critical problem of our community: affordable housing via the first regional Bi-County Housing Summit

*ADVOCATED FOR:*

- An increase in the minimum wage, the first since 1997
- Reauthorization of SCHIP (Children’s Health Insurance Program) through a presentation with CUNA to Congressman Charlie Dent
- The needs of children through dialogues with local members of Congress in association with the Children’s Coalition of the LV
- The need for increases in Food Stamps and reallocations in the Farm Bill with our friends at Bread for the World.
- Increasing our ability to do advocacy by introducing a Justice and Advocacy Network (j-a@lccconfchurch.org). We invite you to sign on.

Please read the rest of the report to celebrate the many other acts of focused compassion and advocacy for the betterment of our community.

*“Speak up for the people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless. Speak for them and be a righteous judge. Protect the rights of the poor and needy.”*

*Proverbs 31:8-9*

Thanks to over \$170,000 worth of donated food, the total cash spent for food per meal is 16 cents at the LCCC Soup Kitchen and 25 cents in Daybreak.

86% of Food Stamp recipients report running out of Food Stamps before the end of the month. The average benefit is less than \$1.16 per person per meal.

Second Harvest Food Bank Survey

*There is no good reason in the world to be...*

**HUNGRY**



The LCCC utilizes a three-pronged approach to address hunger in Lehigh County:

**1. FEEDING THE HUNGRY DIRECTLY** through the **LCCC SOUP KITCHEN** and the **DAYBREAK** drop-in center.

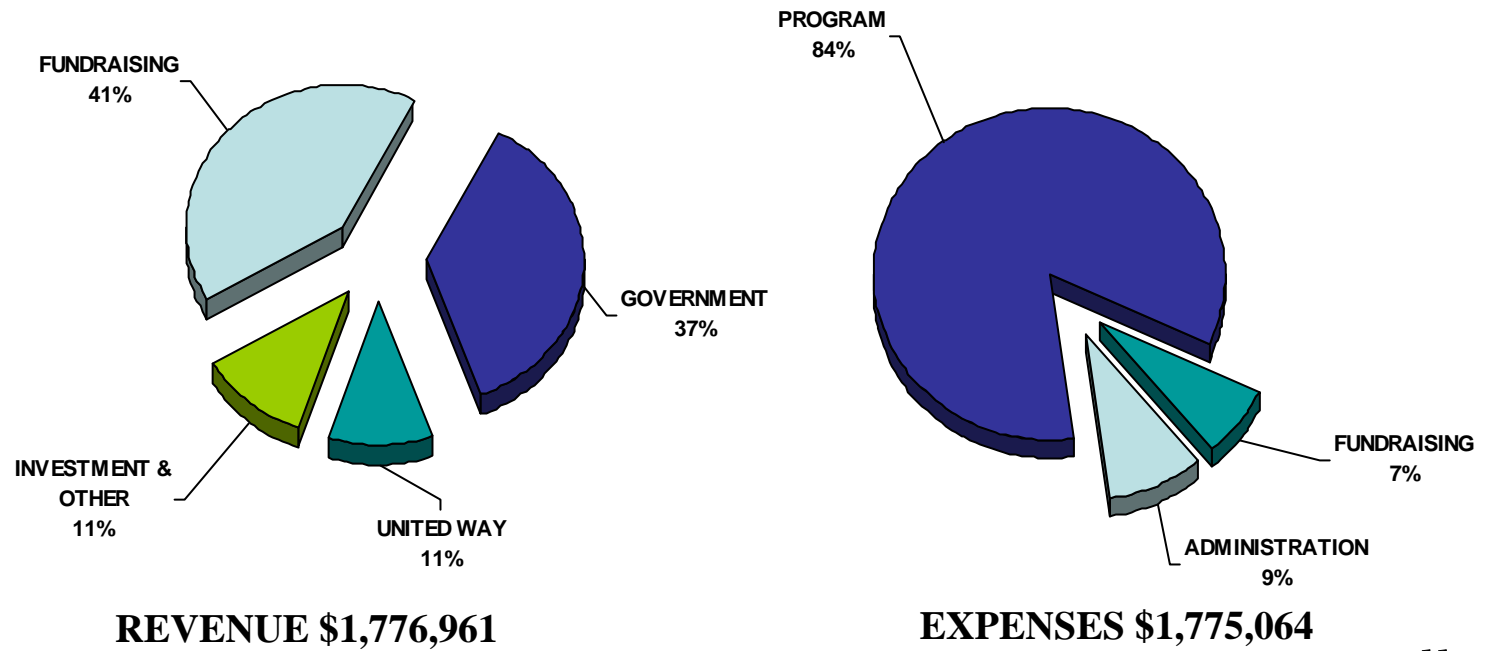
- 61,507 meals were served in 2007, a 10% increase over 2006 and over 21,000 more meals than were served in 2001.
- These meals are an important supplement to people who must make difficult choices between food, shelter and healthcare needs.

**2. GOING TO THE STREETS TO FIND HUNGRY PEOPLE TO LINK THEM TO SERVICES**, encouraging them to take advantage of the public and private resources available to them, providing assistance in obtaining legal IDs 190 times, making 111 referrals to emergency shelters and 89 referrals for food assistance. Individuals and families were linked to additional resources both within the LCCC and in the broader community 361 times in 2007.

**3. EDUCATION and ADCOCACY** for solutions to the problems that hungry people face as they travel the road to self-sufficiency through:

- Annual sponsorship of workshops in partnership with Bread for the World
- Newsletters that reach over 1,500 concerned friends, and
- Letter-writing efforts to legislators concerning such issues as minimum wage.

**PROPOSED REVENUE & EXPENSES  
FY 2008/2009**



*AUDITED REVENUE & EXPENSES  
FY 2006/2007*

**REVENUE STATEMENT**

<b>FUNDRAISING REVENUE</b>	
CONTRIBUTIONS	\$423,430
GRANTS	164,273
SPECIAL EVENTS	75,585
	<u>\$663,288</u>
UNITED WAY	\$77,868
<b>GOVERNMENT REVENUE</b>	
FEDERAL GRANTS	\$197,470
FEMA	35,662
LEHIGH COUNTY	239,194
ALLENTOWN CDBG	50,000
	<u>\$522,326</u>
<b>INVESTMENT &amp; OTHER</b>	
PROGRAM REVENUE	\$20,146
INVESTMENT & OTHER	52,467
CAMPAIGN FOR OPERATING	106,711
	<u>\$179,324</u>

**TOTAL REVENUE  
\$1,443,079**

**EXPENSE STATEMENT**

<b>PROGRAM EXPENSE</b>	
DAYBREAK	\$296,890
HOMELESS SUPPORT. SERV.	196,356
PATHWAYS	194,116
SOUP KITCHEN	189,351
LINKAGE	71,365
HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION	50,253
PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANCE	33,995
ASPIRES	19,764
ECUMENISM	115,900
	<u>\$1,167,990</u>
MANAGEMENT & GENERAL	\$124,196
FUND RAISING	\$106,164

**TOTAL EXPENSES  
\$1,398,350**

*There is no good reason in the world to be...  
HOMELESS*



Eight years ago, in flight from an abusive relationship, Sharon Thompson arrived on the doorstep of an Allentown emergency shelter. She brought nothing with her but her two children and the clothes on their backs. "The shelter was scary at first. Nobody wants to be there," she says. "But they provided me with information and referrals. I learned all that I could."

One of the first referrals was to the Pathways program of the Conference. There Sharon received clothing suitable for job interviews, toiletries and personal care items for herself and her boys. Pathways also referred Sharon to CareerLink where Sharon connected with a job with a major Lehigh Valley corporation. Given the promise of steady income, Pathways then provided Sharon with the first month's rent on an apartment.

With her eldest boy recently married and the younger in vo-tech, Sharon has decided to give back to the community that helped put her back on her feet. She is now the community resource counselor at Bethany E.C. Church where she works closely with Pathways and other programs of the Conference to help people as she was once helped.

*"People reached out to help me. If my story will be important to someone else, please tell it."*

*Sharon Thompson,  
former Pathways  
client*

*In 2007, 42% of the 8,172 persons in families helped by Pathways were children.*

*996 of the 2,584 persons in Lehigh Valley emergency shelters were children.*

*Lehigh Valley Shelter Census*

## *HOMELESS...*

Housing is the most critical issue facing individuals and families living in poverty. Four LCCC programs address the critical shelter needs of our less fortunate neighbors:



**LINKAGE:** Reaching out to 338 homeless men and women on the street in 2007, assisting clients obtain the legal identification necessary to qualify for services, walking with them to obtain those services, thus saving lives.

**HOMELESS SUPPORTIVE SERVICES:** Providing intensive case management for 53 disabled and chronically homeless men and women, stabilizing their lives and leading to permanent housing.

- 73% received mental health services, 61% received medical treatment and 56% entered treatment for a chemical dependency.
- 41% of this hardest-to-serve population achieved permanent housing.

**PATHWAYS:** Touching the lives of 8,172 people living in poverty and on the cusp of homelessness in 2007, providing the basic necessities of life: housing referrals 1,497 times, 258 referrals to emergency shelter, advocacy and assistance with utilities 225 times, 287 employment referrals, and transportation assistance on 1,228 occasions. Our highest volume program, the number of persons assisted by Pathways increased by 17% over the previous year and has more than doubled since 2000.

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION** provided 70 clients per month — who the Social Security Administration determined to be incapable of handling their own financial affairs—with a representative payee, budgeting and money management services, and payment of their bills, thereby preventing homelessness.

## *WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?*

Even as we speak, bulldozers are tearing down the eyesore of a condemned house in our parking lot. It represents focused efforts with our Alliance Hall partners and numerous City partners to address crime, housing, blight, and general malaise in our community. We hope to “green” Alliance Hall inside and out, making it an oasis in the neighborhood and an inspiration to all.

This methodology epitomizes our work with both individuals and systems. A rose can bloom in the desert if in faith we pray, plan and act in concert with likeminded people who seek the welfare of our City and Valley.

Here are a few of the seeds we plant for 2008-9. Will you help us water and grow them?

- Increase from 35 to 55 young people mentored to graduation with partners Communities in Schools and the United Way
- Recruit, train and place in a job 20 chronically unemployable persons via a job training program with United Way and other partners’ assistance
- Recruit, place, nurture, and celebrate our 800 volunteers via the addition of a Volunteer Coordinator
- Our Interfaith in Action Committee will launch a Food Drive from July 4<sup>th</sup> to Thanksgiving advocating all communities of faith work together to feed the hungry
- Begin the creation of a new Long Range Plan to explore what and where God may next be leading us!

Find the experience that stirs your passion, and join us in the joy and challenges of this mission!

*The most common cause of homelessness among families with children is the lack of affordable housing.*

*The most common cause of homelessness among single adults is mental illness.*

*30% of homeless families with children are employed.*

*Lehigh Valley Shelter Census*

*“The difference between doing good for the oppressed and seeking justice for them is that those who seek justice seek to eliminate the causes of suffering as much as they seek to alleviate it.”*

*Joan Chittister*



*There is no good reason in the world to be...*

### *DIVIDED IN FAITH*

Taking seriously the prayer of Christ “that they may be one“ propels the Lehigh County Conference of Churches to develop a sense of unity among Christians throughout our region. The diversity of our 143 member congregations affords uniqueness to the Conference that presents the story of the ministry of Jesus Christ in exciting ways.

Through the Conference, “The Church” gathers to minister to the poor, support the homeless through relational sponsorships, does “hands-on mission” and strengthens local churches through shared worship. The Conference unites Christians of all persuasions via:

- The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service
- Lenten Services
- The Robert K. Campbell Lectures on Christian Unity

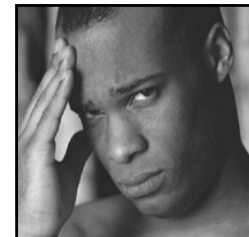
The Conference calls local congregations to put their faith into action through a variety of advocacy initiatives.

- The Conference co-sponsors the Bread for the World Workshop to teach congregations how they can join in the fight against hunger.
- CROP Walk raises funds for hunger initiatives locally and around the world.
- The Peace Pilgrimage in December spreads the message of unity throughout the Lehigh Valley.

The Lehigh County Conference of Churches believes that we must lead the way in uniting God’s children. Join us as we strive to be a sign of God’s grace in the Lehigh Valley.

*There is no good reason in this world to be...*

### *STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH*



**DAYBREAK** prevents homelessness by providing a drop-in center that offers basic services, self-improvement programs and supportive counseling to over 350 persons with mental disabilities, drug or alcohol addiction, or HIV/AIDS.

- 36 free on-site health services opportunities were provided to 828 (duplicated) members who received eye exams, blood pressure screening, diabetes clinics, and flu shots.
- 33 one-hour Life Skills sessions designed to enhance living skills and 18 Power Hour presentations designed to support clients in gaining access to the full range of resources in the community were attended by 1,736 (duplicated) participants.
- It takes a village to raise a child. We are blessed with a whole Valley of community partners: Sacred Heart Parish Nurses (weekly healthcare screenings), Community Music School (weekly music therapy) and St. Luke’s Nursing students, Cedar Crest College students, Muhlenberg College students and Lehigh Carbon Community College nursing students (monthly health and wellness groups).

*“Daybreak is my family”*

*Juan  
Daybreak Member*

*“I would be walking the streets without Daybreak.”*

*James  
Daybreak Member*

*"You opened your heart to me, and I opened mine to you."*

*Jim,  
formerly homeless  
Vietnam vet*

*40% of homeless men have served in the US Armed Forces.*

## *STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH...*

"I shed blood for this country. I watched friends die."

The effects of Jim's experiences in Vietnam resulted in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and, five years ago, Jim and his wife became homeless. All of his military medals were stolen. Outreach workers of the LCCC met Jim outside on a particularly cold December day in 2006. Jim agreed to accept intensive case management, an apartment and health services through Homeless Supportive Services, Linkage, Pathways and Daybreak.

"You met me man-to-man on that cold day and asked me to come inside."

In January, 2008, Jim celebrated living inside his own apartment for one year. Last week, forty years after the war, Jim visited the Department of Veteran's Affairs for the first time and asked to have his medals reinstated and a pension.

As many as 275,000 veterans will likely sleep outside tonight. "Something has to change," says Jim. We believe Jim's heart has already done so, and are proud of him.

### **PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANCE**

Where do you turn when you are sick, without health insurance and living in poverty? The LCCC funds the purchase of prescription medications for applicants for Medical Assistance who have not yet been approved and for people in low-paying jobs without healthcare benefits.

In 2007, 460 persons were served, including 57 children, avoiding emergency room visits that can cost over \$300 apiece, conserving precious community resources.

*There is no good reason in this world to be...*

## *A YOUTH AT RISK*

The **ASPIRES MENTORING PROGRAM** matches 35 at-risk youth one-on-one with a caring adult volunteer with the goal of graduating from high school, continuing education and becoming a valuable, productive member of the community. In partnership with Communities in Schools, Aspires provides a sense of purpose and concrete examples of educational and employment opportunities to motivate students to complete their education.



- Typically, all of Aspires students live in households with incomes below federal poverty guidelines; over one-third live in households where a major illness or chemical dependency is present, and more than one-half live in households in which English is the second language.
- Aspires provides at-risk youth with a sense of accomplishment, twice during the school year awarding students for measured improvement in attendance and academic achievement. Formerly expressing a sense of feeling lost through truancy and absenteeism, over 80% of Aspires students have attendance rates of at least 90% and/or improve their GPA by one full point.
- Since the 2000/2001 school year, every student mentored through his/her senior year has graduated with more than half going on to a community or four-year college.

*"I needed a miracle.  
My mentor was my  
miracle."*

*Anna  
Aspires Protege*