

Carbon Collaborative Minutes  
November 8, 9 AM-10 AM  
Carbon County EMA/911 Office  
1294 Emergency Lane  
Nesquehoning, PA 18240

1. Welcome
2. Approval of [September, 2023 Minutes](#) Cindy Lynd and Julie Mann
3. Treasurer Report: Cindy Lynd (AHEC): \$4,146.64 (9.13.23)
4. Speaker: Maison Allen, [Raising the House](#): nonprofit that services the community in the Palmerton Area School District. Originally formed to honor the legacy of Towamensing Elementary teacher Blaine House, an organization that offers a variety of services to families in Palmerton such as food and financial support to families, teacher grants, and Scholarships HS Seniors
5. Old Business:
  - a. Carbon County Community Foundation: Sharon Alexander
    - i. Dashboard to highlight county nonprofits services, data, gaps, opportunities
    - ii. Funding and webpage opportunities
  - b. [Grandparents Raising Grandchildren supports](#) Wednesday's at 9:30, BHA
  - c. Subcommittees: additional meeting notes below in partner updates
    - i. Transportation: Larissa Kimmel; meeting directly after collaborative meeting
    - ii. Kids Zone: Jill Geissingner on behalf of Mindy Graver
    - iii. Early childcare education: status of existing services and how we can further connect families in Carbon
    - iv. Literacy: [Dolly Parton Imagination Library](#), [Reach Out and Read/Brush, Book, Bed, Talk-Read-Sing](#), Ready4K, [Palmerton Library Baby and Me](#)
6. New Business:
  - a. In person and virtual meetings: propose Sept, November in person; January, March, May virtual since the breakfast in in person in April
  - b. 2024 Annual Human Services Breakfast, April 19, 2024; need to determine theme
7. Self-introductions and agency reports
  - a. Chat updates: chat updates can be placed in meeting chat and then saved into minutes
  - b. Email updates to Secretary and include "Carbon Interagency Collaborative" in title
8. Next meeting:
  - a. **Wednesday, January 10, 9:00 AM, guest speaker: Larissa Verta, Vice President, Academic Affairs, Lehigh Carbon Community College**
  - b. The committee meets five times a year (September, November, January, March, May) on the second Tuesday of each month from 9-10 am. During the November 2023 meeting, in person members discussed having speakers only every other meeting to allow for more partner discussion and alignment during the meeting.
  - c. **March 13, 9 am virtual with no speaker to allow for discussion/alignment**

**The following are the partner updates from the Chat, In person meeting, or email updates:**

- **Larissa Kimmel: Transportation Committee and Transportation Ambassadors Committee** [larissa.kimmel@cmssystemsofcare.org](mailto:larissa.kimmel@cmssystemsofcare.org). Public Meeting to discuss public transportation Monday November 13, 10 am at Carbon Co. Elections Building 44 Susquehanna Street, Jim Thorpe.
- **Shawn Bariana, The Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley** is helping Panther Valley School District collect gifts for their students this holiday, through our program Holiday Hope Chests. We are hoping to cultivate new donors, specifically Carbon County businesses & orgs who have a vested interest in helping the children and families in our community. **One shoebox filled with \$25 in gifts is all it takes to bring joy during the holidays. Every box is important.** If you could please share this information with your networks. You can easily pledge your boxes [using our Carbon County pledge form](#). The drop off location will be the Panther Valley Elementary School at 1 Mermon Ave, Nesquehoning, PA 18240. If you are new to Holiday Hope Chests, we invite you to visit our website to learn more and get gift ideas at [www.volunteerlv.org/holiday-hope-chests](http://www.volunteerlv.org/holiday-hope-chests). **For questions regarding gift drop-off**, contact Nicole Pollinger at 570-645-0584 / [pollingern@panthervalley.org](mailto:pollingern@panthervalley.org).

**For questions regarding the Holiday Hope Chests program**, contact the Volunteer Center at 610-807-0336 / [vc@volunteerlv.org](mailto:vc@volunteerlv.org) (mention Carbon County Holiday Hope Chests).

- **Theresa Hall: Rep Heffley's office** held two successful Senior Scam Seminars. Thanks to Sue Zeigler from the Carbon County Area Agency on Aging for your assistance in setting up these seminars. We would love to do more of these as they were very informative with a great presentation from David Shallcross with the PA Attorney General's Office on scams targeting our seniors. Rep. Heffley's office is planning our November 21 Drug and Alcohol Awareness and Abuse Prevention Expo at Weatherly Area High School from 4pm to 6:30 pm. If your agency would like to be at the Expo, please contact me at [thall@pahousegop.com](mailto:thall@pahousegop.com) or call our office at 610-377-6363.
- **Fatima Nabavian, LVCIL:** If anyone would like information on an adaptive toy drive for all Pennsylvanians run by TechOwl, feel free to reach out to me. Toys are adapted for children with mobility disabilities and provided for free. Also, for information about Assistive Technology and funding for AT with PATF, contact me any time. [fatimanabavian@lvcil.org](mailto:fatimanabavian@lvcil.org). Fatima also works with PAFT and technical programs. If you have any questions about assistive technology and funding, reach out.
- **Cindy Lynd, Eastcentral AHEC** has programs to support students interested in the healthcare field. Please go to our website at [ecpennahec.org](http://ecpennahec.org) for information about our SEARCH, SAT/ACT, Scholars and Community Health Worker programs.
- **Terry Knox Ramseur, Humanistic Change in Allentown.** I'm not able to attend please visit our website to see the most recent newsletter and the info on the consortium next week. We have info and presentations/sessions on prevention topics, family strengthening, and youth programs.
- **Terry Berger, Behavioral Health Associates-** We do offer a wide range of psychiatric and mental health services in the office. We're looking for a licensed psychologist to join our staff and do have openings for part-time licensed people in other disciplines. For a topic for the breakfast could I suggest LGBT resources available here in Carbon? The only tangible resource that I know of here in the area is NOVUS, a sexual health clinic. Terry Berger, Behavioral Health Associates- We do offer a wide range of psychiatric and mental health services in the office. We're looking for a licensed psychologist to join our staff and do have openings for part-time licensed people in other disciplines.
- **Marsha Macalush:** If I can just piggyback off Terry's suggestion - it would be extremely helpful to have information on resources for youth along with adults. One of my AmeriCorps members in a district here in the county was working with a transgender student last year so knowing what resources are out there would certainly benefit everyone. Marsha Macalush: United Way update - new Community Resource Navigators AmeriCorps program started in August and is going well in Carbon, Lehigh & Northampton counties. In Carbon, we have members with Weatherly Area SD, Lehigh Memorial Library, and Lehigh Valley Children's Center in Palmerton. Our members help community members connect to local resources so please feel free to refer them to any of our locations. Also, if anyone would like to host a member in Carbon, please reach out to me at [marsham@unitedwayglv.org](mailto:marsham@unitedwayglv.org) We have 9 members in the Lehigh Valley.
- **Kerri Quick, St. Luke's Community Health:** Lansford Stand Down event hosted by VALOR Clinic, Saturday, November 18th from 10 am -1 pm at the St. Luke's Lansford Health Center on Patterson Street. They provide food, clothing, and hygiene items.
- **Megan Beste, District Director, Office of Congresswoman Susan Wild (PA-7),** [megan.beste@mail.house.gov](mailto:megan.beste@mail.house.gov), (202) 805-0443, Federal grants & loans, Carol Etheridge, [Carol.etheridge@mail.house.gov](mailto:Carol.etheridge@mail.house.gov), (570) 807-0333, Issues or questions related to any federal agencies (SSA, VA, IRS, USCIS, Dept of State - passports, visas) . Carol Etheridge staff all of Lehighon district also a reminder: Congressman Wild represents all of Carbon County on Federal Issues just like Senator Fetterman and Senator Casey; you can reach out to any of those three offices anytime with an issue with any federal agency—grants updates: The Palmerton Fire Department for a recruitment and retaining grant. The Lehigh Valley Children's Center (childcare) in Jim Thorpe and was assisted with some funding. Supported applications for a couple of grant federal programs: The school Violence Protection Program, both in Jim Thorpe, police department, and the Panther Valley school district- police resource officers have applied for funding through the Department of Justice for equipment and training programs. The Alliance for Building Communities is working on a project in Weatherly to transform the school building into affordable apartments. Some earmarks~ waiting for the US House of Representatives to pass a budget for the Second Harvest Food Bank to support the Carbon County food pantry and wrap-around services that will be happening in Lansford. The Lansford, Summit Hill Sewer system improvements continue supporting the authorities' efforts to continue to replace, and the same goes for the fire hydrant improvements in Lansford and Coaldale.

- **Robyn Plesniarski, Lehigh Valley Health Network:** We have two new surgeons as part of our continued commitment to our community. I also wanted to thank the community who participated in our flu drive. We had over 200 people attend. <https://www.lvhn.org/locations/lehigh-valley-hospital-carbon> for more specialty care, right here LVH– Carbon is proud to provide the highest-quality care to you and your loved ones. Our services include Advanced laparoscopic surgery Breast and colon surgery Biologic mesh procedures Colonoscopy and upper endoscopy Fistula and infection treatment Melanoma surgery Pancreatic surgery.
- **Kim Minor:** Regional Housing Coordinator with Self Determination Housing of PA (SDHP). We are a program of Inglis Community Services. I'd be happy to present at a future meeting to share more information on our programs. Link to SDHP trainings that we offer free to anyone who would like to attend. We also offer to hold these trainings as in-person or virtual staff trainings at no charge to your organization. If this is something you'd be interested in, you can email me at [kim.minor@inglis.org](mailto:kim.minor@inglis.org) <https://www.inglis.org/programs-and-services/inglis-community-services/self-determination-housing-of-pennsylvania-sdhp/sdhp-calendar>
- **Sharon Alexander:** The Carbon County Community Foundation is planning our schedule for 2024, including workshops and learning sessions for nonprofits and community organizations. Past sessions have been on social media, marketing, grant writing, etc. If your organization is looking for education on specific topics, please let me know so we can try to work that into the schedule. You can also be added to our email list for our Nonprofit Resources newsletter which includes links to grant opportunities, webinars, and advocacy updates. Contact me at [director@cccfoundpa.org](mailto:director@cccfoundpa.org) or 610-730-2526 to be added, with your topic suggestions, or for any other questions. We had our 2020 Circle Annual Meeting and grants luncheon last week; we had three nonprofits finalists that presented to the group Peaceful Knights for the emergency shelter to furnish it, Nesquehoning Memorial Church for their Summer Food Program, and Penn Kidder, after school tuition program. They were competing for a grant of \$4,000.00, and thanks to two anonymous group members, we funded all three projects. We are looking at planning for next year and what events and workshops. If your organization wants to learn about specific topics, we've done workshops in Marketing and social media; we can do something about fundraising or grant writing. Update on CCTI- we started a new nonprofit called Share and for students of CCTI called Friends of CCTI. We are supporting students who may need some extra materials to help them succeed in their careers at CCTI. Follow us on Facebook.
- **Fatima Nabavian:** Coordinator at Lehigh Valley CIL, outreach specialist for PATF and we are a regional center for TechOwl programs. If anyone would like information on an adapted toy drive for all Pennsylvanians run by TechOwl, feel free to reach out to me. Toys are adapted for children with mobility disabilities and provided for free. Also, for information about Assistive Technology and funding for AT with PATF, contact me any time. [fatimanabavian@lvcil.org](mailto:fatimanabavian@lvcil.org)
- **Megan Rodgers, Carbon Country Right from the Start (CCRTS):** working to help families throughout the county. We are a Parents as Teachers home visiting program providing families with support in all areas of parenting. We are rebuilding our numbers after the September kindergarten start. We have a new Home Visitor trained and in homes now. We are still looking for a small space to house our program so if anyone has any leads or ideas for us, we would love to hear from you. [megan.rodgers@jtasd.org](mailto:megan.rodgers@jtasd.org). Today is National Parents Teachers Day, which is exciting for our program and celebrates home visitors. We are working hard on getting enrollment back up, and we are about 90% full. Have a new home visitor trained. We are continuing our partnership with all different programs and the county to help families, and we are still looking for a space for our program to be housed.
- **Kim Minor, the Regional Housing Coordinator with Self Determination Housing of Pennsylvania (SDHP):** Needs help in connecting me with Landlords and Property Managers in the areas you serve. I would like to share information on Landlord/Property Manager trainings and funding opportunities we offer for those folks as well. I am reaching out for any help you might be able to give for the following housing need within Carbon County... Our Landlord Risk Management team received a referral for a woman that is looking for housing in Carbon and/or Lackawanna County in need of an accessible unit that can accommodate a wheelchair, so first floor or elevator access is needed. As this is through the Landlord Risk Mitigation Fund, any landlord enrolling in our program with this tenant will have access for up to \$3000 for damages. Please see the attached flyer with more information. \*Feel free to pass this along to your contacts as well. We are Statewide, and we advocate for accessible, affordable housing for individuals who are disabled as well as an aging population. I will be happy to do a presentation giving more details of the program and what is offered. We also work with landlords and property managers, and I am looking for help and connecting with those individuals – we have some funding for landlords and property owners across the state and free training to help them understand how to better serve disabled and aging adults.

- **Jill Geissinger, Children and Youth:** Reported having 94 children in their care; about 45 percent are in Kinship care - They are trying to promote Kinship care for children and have them in the least traumatic setting. They are seeking to fill 19 positions. On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, Santa will be visiting the office, having a Christmas Party with our foster kids so they can have some fun.
- **Amanda Wessner, Case Manager for the Elect Program:** We assist pregnant and parenting teens to stay in school and earn their high school diploma and GED if they're already out of school. We are based out of Schuylkill County and have many referrals and students in Schuylkill County but also service Carbon County. I am the case manager for Carbon County. We do service the males as well- the fathers. It's not just for the females.
- **Julie Mann, Pennsylvania Link to Aging and Disability Resources:** We had a successful grandparent-raising grandchildren workshop in Luzerne - The Possibility of doing it every other year at the convention workshop due to the number of people showing up. On January 10, we will be doing a virtual hoarding with Linda Showmarker from Optimizing Age. The cut-off number is 130; she works in different populations, not only for aging.
- **Amber Zuber, LCCC Tamaqua:** LCCC Tamaqua - azuber2@lccc.edu Job Fair Thursday, Nov 16, 2023. From 10:30 A.M. – 1:30 P. M. Lehigh Carbon Community College – Morgan Center, 234 High Street Tamaqua, PA. Few updates: We hosted Carbon College and Career Opportunity Day on Friday in partnership with the Carbon Chamber Business and Education Committee, funded by a First Federal Community Foundation Grant. Nearly fifty students from Carbon County High Schools and CCTI came to the Morgan Center at LCCC. They participate in breakout sessions. - We had an employer networking lunch, and all their guidance counselors joined them. We are looking to repeat that program in the future. We are interested in connecting with some of the county's service agencies. Our Vice President, Larissa Verta, is interested in coming to a future meeting to discuss the opportunities, partnership possibilities, and Carbon. We received a PA Hunger Free Campus Grant that allowed us to open a food pantry and had at least 39 guests visit our food pantry. Some are repeat visitors, so they come every week, and we are a client choice pantry. We are also offering our students a Thanksgiving gift card program and partnering with Boyers in Tamaqua. We are also partnering with Schuylkill Lifelong Learning Center and have an in-person GED class running now. We are also exploring possibly transitioning that program from GED to ESL. People are requesting ESL services, if anyone knows of any ESL teachers- that is one of the challenges in getting an ESL teacher.
- **Kelly Cummings, Share Housing and Resource Exchange Program through the Department of Aging.** Kelly wanted to see if anybody has an interest for an agency presentation so they could learn more about Share. Also, we are accepting applications for home hosts and home seekers, so if you know anyone who in need of housing or has an extra bedroom in their home and is willing to share it, this is what the program is about. For anyone 18 and older, SHARE has a Facebook page, that shows the availability listed for Carbon County, and the Department of Aging also has the availability for Carbon County and all 14 counties that the Share Program offers.
- **John Nespoli, President, St. Luke's Carbon and Lehighon Campuses** shared recent the Senior Expo at the hospital had approximately 80 people attend. There were 12 Health and Wellness Booths for blood pressure, lab work, and education on prevention such as colonoscopies and breast screening. We will be happy to engage if other Community Agencies are interested in that kind of educational activity. We started a new meals program for seniors and veterans, Mondays through Fridays, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM in our hospital café. We're serving about 150 meals a week for \$3.90 for a hot meal, a dessert, and a beverage. At the network level, St. Luke's is starting a genetic testing service; it's a partnership with Helix, a national company that will provide free genetic testing to the community for breast cancer, colon cancer, and family related to cholesterol. Every year, the Leapfrog Hospital rating agency creates a list of the safest hospitals in America, its top 1 percent, and St. Luke's Carbon Campus was recognized as one of the safest Community teaching hospitals in America.
- **Cathy Lamm, Family Promise:** We had five families graduate from our program last week; I've five families moved in this week. We are getting capacity and have a long waitlist. We're starting to plan to open a warming center in our adjacent church building.
- **William Getz, CareerLink:** works specifically with veterans with barriers.
- **Jen Drake, United Disability Services** trying to continue working with Sue and the team and anybody that needs assistance getting signed up for the waiver program, also, providing non-medical in-home care and home modifications and we're starting to dip into the housing market.