

Disability Friendly COMMUNITY

Information Sheet 2011 - 2012

Who We Are

The Partnership consists of persons with disabilities, representatives from service provider agencies & organizations, caregivers, family members, government and community leaders as well as anyone in the greater Lehigh Valley area of Pennsylvania who is interested in advocacy effecting people with disabilities.

Our Vision

Partnering and building on the rich resources already present, the Lehigh Valley will be a disability-friendly community which is inclusive, accessible and welcoming.

Our Background

In 2008, Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network, headquartered in Allentown, PA, underwrote the expenses to conduct an intensive survey of the unmet needs of people with disabilities in Lehigh and Northampton counties as well as current research of best practices other communities employ to address similar unmet needs. Twelve cluster areas of need were identified. These were: information and referral; health and healthcare; employment; transportation; housing; perceptions and attitudes; opportunities & discrimination; education; community participation; technology and assistive devices; emergency preparedness and the needs of caregivers.

Two well-attended community forums were held, one in November 2008 to encourage input into the research process and survey instrument, and a second in December 2009 to announce the findings from the research.

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The 139-page report entitled “The Lehigh Valley Disability Community: A Survey of Needs and Opportunities” is available online at the following link to the website of the Lehigh Valley Research Consortium (LVRC), the group that conducted the research: http://www.lehighvalleyresearch.org/disability_study

Our Goals

- To make a measureable difference in the disability-friendliness of the Lehigh Valley
- To raise the level of awareness about the unmet needs of persons with disabilities in the Lehigh Valley by promoting and making the findings from the LVRC research study easily available to everyone.
- To advocate for equal access to life activities for all people without regard to ability.
- To influence public policy and programs through advocacy and relationships with public officials.
- To seek, encourage and endorse funding for priority projects.
- To continually publicize the existence and work of the Partnership both internally (with members) and externally (with the general public) via print and electronic means such as a Fact Sheet, a Newsletter, a Facebook page and a website.

Our Work

We are currently working in Committees for Change that are focusing on specific ways to make the Lehigh Valley more disability friendly in the unmet need cluster areas of transportation, education, employment, housing and perceptions and attitudes about persons with disabilities.

For more information about the Partnership, please visit our website www.disabilityfriendlylv.com , or call Cynthia A. Lambert, secretary to the Partnership, at (610) 776-3323.