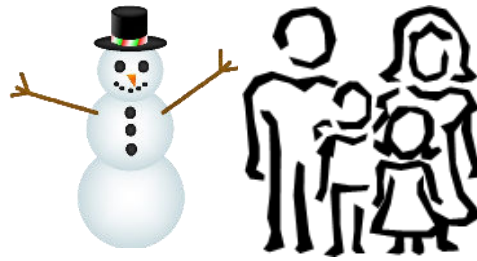


Lehigh & Northampton OBSERVER



Volume 22, Issue 6

November/December
2022

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.

FD/FSS PARTICIPANTS PLEASE NOTE

LEHIGH COUNTY: Easter Seals can only pay invoices submitted within 180 days from date of service. If you are holding onto invoices from July and August please submit them before the end of December for payment. Lehigh County participants have access to their entire allocation for the whole fiscal year.

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY: The deadline for submitting vouchers for services between July 1 and December 31 is January 13, 2023. Participant's allocations are divided in half for each half year. Unused funds from July 1 to December 31, 2022 do not automatically transfer to the second half of the year. Families can request transferring funds by contacting their supports coordinator before November 11, 2022

Dear Families, Friends and Colleagues:

As Fall becomes Winter, it is time to think about the 2023 Celebration Awards, coming in March. The Celebration Awards honor individuals with developmental disabilities who have distinguished themselves in one way or another.

The Celebration Awards, established to help celebrate Developmental Disabilities Awareness month in Pennsylvania, is marking its 17th year.

Someone eligible for a Celebration Award must be diagnosed with a Developmental Disability and receive some kind of disability related service in either Northampton or Lehigh County. Eligible services include supports coordination, any type of Medicaid waiver, FD/FSS, education in public school, private school, charter school, Intermediate Unit 20 or 21 classroom.

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 are accepted until February 1st.

The next Celebration Awards Event is March 22, 2023. The committee is planning an in-person luncheon to celebrate this year's honorees. Please see page 2 of the newsletter for more information.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Maddalon".

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**Seventeenth
Annual**

Save The Date:
Celebration Awards

In-person luncheon will be held March 22, 2023

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: supports coordination, any type of waiver, FD/FSS, education in public, charter school, intermediate unit 20 or 21 classroom.) in either Northampton or Lehigh County. You can nominate someone for an award by either using the form on page 3 or visiting <https://bit.ly/awardnominations2023>.

If you want to nominate an individual in more than one category, use a separate form and narrative for each nomination. Deadline for nominations is January 31, 2022.

- ◆ **Education Achievement** is presented to an individual who made significant educational progress, is motivated to learn, and is a positive influence on others.
- ◆ **Employment Achievement** is presented to someone who has been successfully employed with or without supports over the past year. This may include someone who made great progress over the past year, acquired a new skill, attained a new position/promotion, has good attendance, and a positive attitude about work.
- ◆ **Exemplary Citizenship** is presented to someone who volunteered or made contributions to their family, school, or community, specifically with actions that put others first.
- ◆ **Personal Achievement** is presented to individuals who made great strides in reaching personal goals and who have enriched their own capabilities.
- ◆ **Self-Advocacy Achievement** is presented to someone who has advocated for themselves to make a positive difference in their life and the lives of others.
- ◆ **Transition Achievement** is presented to someone who mastered a significant life transition, which may include transitioning after high school or between different living situations, etc.

PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE FOR AWARD NOMINATION FORM

Important information for people providing family aide or respite service through the FD/FSS program

- Income received from providing respite or family aide is taxable. It is up to each taxpayer to report income less than \$600 in a calendar year.
- If a single provider earns \$600 or more in a calendar year, Easter Seals will send a 1099 tax form showing what the person earned. Use the 1099 form when reporting income from Family Aide or Respite service.
- Checks sent to families reimbursing them for expenses like recreation and camp are not taxable. This reimbursement is not considered income for the household, it is not reported to the state or federal income tax office.

LEHIGH COUNTY FD/FSS

- In Lehigh County, FD/FSS allocations are good for the entire fiscal year (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023).
- Invoices must be submitted to Easter Seals for payment/reimbursement within 180 days (6 months) of the purchase or service date.
- Requests for innovative services must be approved before submitting invoices to avoid the possible rejection of those items. Please check with you supports coordinator or Bob Madden, Lehigh County FD/FSS coordinator if you have questions about services needing approval.
- 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

- FD/FSS funding is attached to the Individual Support Plan (ISP) and is divided into July 1st - December 31st (1st half) and January 1st - June 30th (2nd half) allocations.
- Any unused funds from the 1st half **will not** be automatically carried over to the 2nd half of the year. Participants or their family members can request transferring funds between fiscal halves.
- Requests to move 1st half funds to the 2nd half of the fiscal year must be made to your Supports Coordinator by **November 15th, 2022**.
- Vouchers for services from the 1st half of the fiscal year must be received by Easter Seals by the close of business (4:30 pm) on **January 13th, 2023**.
- Vouchers are accepted on the **date of delivery**. US Postmark will not be used to determine cooperation with program deadlines.
- If you have questions regarding how your funds may be used, please check with your Supports Coordinator (SC). Certain purchases and services will require **prior approval** via a "Request for Innovative Service". Your SC can discuss this process with you. If you have ANY doubts about the use of funds, check with your SC **before** making a purchase!
- Notify your SC and Easter Seals if there is any change in your contact information (new address, new phone number, new contact person, etc.).



School Districts across Lehigh and Northampton Counties continue updating information on safe ways to provide education to students. This is an on-going situation that needs regular monitoring.

Please find a listing and links to public schools in Lehigh and Northampton Counties below. School district links contain information on school district safety 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.nazareth.k12.pa.us); www.nazareth.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

Right to Education Task Force groups are active in Lehigh and Northampton County. Meetings and workshops are held on the Zoom platform for the foreseeable future.

[Carbon Lehigh IU Local Taskforce 21](#) (Lehigh County)

Follow the zoom link for each session you wish to attend: www.zoom.us/join. The Meeting ID for each workshop is 537 838 6005. Meeting passcode is CLIU21.

Zoom Meeting Schedule:

November 9, 10 AM	February 22, 10 AM
November 16, 6:30 PM	March 22, 10 AM
January 25, 10 AM	May 24, 10 AM

Email: localtaskforce21@gmail.com

Chairperson: Amanda Robbins,
mandaphd1@gmail.com.

Visit www.cliu.org/domain/51 for more information.

Follow on Facebook: www.facebook.com/localtaskforce21

[Right To Education Task Force 20](#) (Northampton County)

Visit the Right to education web page at www.ciu20.org. Find the Local Task Force 20 link under the [Families](#) menu for links to join Task Force meetings.

Zoom Meeting Schedule:

November 7, 10 AM	March 13, 10 AM
January 9, 10 AM	May 1, 10 AM

Contact information: Phone: 610-515-6449, Email: LTF20@ciu20.org

Chairperson: Mandy Colville, mcolville@thearcnepa.org

Vice chairperson: Teresa Romano, tromano13@gmail.com

Visit ciu20.edlioschool.com for more information and zoom links.

In order to continue helping people with important information, Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties Advocacy Department maintains an on-going series of virtual workshops, using the Zoom Platform.

Workshops are free. Visit our chapter's Web site at www.arcoflehighnorthampton.org. Choose the Events tab to register, see updates and future workshops. Contact Kodi Berry if you have questions Email: kberry@arcoflehighnorthampton.org or phone: 610-849-8076 ext. 325.

Zoom Workshop Coming Soon

November 9, 2022

6:30 PM EST

IDEA State Complaints vs Due Process

Guest presenters: Heidi Goldsmith, Esq. & Jennifer Bradley, Esq.. *Bradley Goldsmith Law, LLC*

The webinar will cover:

- What is IDEA?
- How to make a State complaint?
- What is Due Process?
- What is the difference between both?
- How they can help individuals and families with their IEP?
- Other hot topics.



Visit our website www.arcoflehighnorthampton.org, for more information about The Arc of Lehigh & Northampton Counties.



The PA Family Network was created under the leadership of Vision for Equality and is supported by the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) as part of Pennsylvania's Community of Practice: Supporting Families Throughout the Lifespan. The mission of the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) is to support Pennsylvanians with developmental disabilities to achieve greater independence, choice and opportunity in their lives.

As part of the PA Family Network's ongoing work, a series of free zoom workshops is available.

Visit www.visionforequality.org/pa-family-network for a calendar of workshops and zoom links to join a free session. Feel free to email the network PAFamilyNetwork@visionforequality.org or call 1-844-PAFAMILY (1-844-723-2645) if you have questions

FDA FINALIZES HISTORIC RULE ENABLING ACCESS TO OVER-THE-COUNTER HEARING AIDES FOR MILLIONS OF AMERICANS

On August 16, 2022, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a [final rule](#) to improve access to hearing aids which may in turn lower costs for millions of Americans. This action establishes a new category of over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids, enabling consumers with perceived mild to moderate hearing impairment to purchase hearing aids directly from stores or online retailers without the need for a medical exam, prescription or a fitting adjustment by an audiologist.

The rule is expected to lower the cost of hearing aids, furthering the Biden-Harris Administration's goal of expanding access to high-quality health care and lowering health care costs for the American public. It is designed to assure the safety and effectiveness of OTC hearing aids, while fostering innovation and competition in the hearing aid technology marketplace.

In 2017, Congress passed bipartisan legislation requiring the FDA to create a category of OTC hearing aids, but it was not fully implemented until now. Consumers could see OTC hearing aids available in traditional retail and drug stores as soon as mid-October when the rule takes effect.

[Close to 30 million adults](#) in the U.S. could benefit from hearing aid use. Individuals with permanent hearing impairment can use hearing aids to help make speech and sounds louder, improving the ability to communicate effectively with others. Many hearing aids can be expensive. The final rule aims to stimulate competition and facilitate the sale of safe and effective OTC hearing aids in traditional retail stores or online nationwide, providing consumers with perceived mild to moderate hearing loss with improved access to devices that meet their needs and are less expensive than current options.

“Hearing loss is a critical public health issue that affects the ability of millions of Americans to effectively communicate in their daily social interactions,” said FDA Commissioner Robert M. Califf, M.D. “Establishing this new regulatory category will allow people with perceived mild to moderate hearing loss to have convenient access to an array of safe, effective and affordable hearing aids from their neighborhood store or online.”

The OTC category established in this final rule applies to certain air-conduction hearing aids intended for people 18 years of age and older who have perceived mild to moderate hearing impairment. Hearing aids that do not meet the requirements for the OTC category (for example, because they are intended for severe hearing impairment or users younger than age 18) are prescription devices.

The August 16 action correspondingly amends existing rules that apply to prescription hearing aids for consistency with the new OTC category, it repeals the conditions for sale for hearing aids, and it includes provisions that address some of the effects of the FDA OTC hearing aid regulations on state regulation of hearing aids.

Concurrently with issuing the final rule, the FDA also issued the final guidance, Regulatory Requirements for Hearing Aid Devices and Personal Sound Amplification Products (PSAPs), to clarify the differences between hearing aids, which are medical devices, and PSAPs, consumer products that help people with normal hearing amplify sounds.

The effective date for the final rule is 60 days following publication in the Federal Register. Manufacturers of hearing aids sold prior to the effective date of the final rule will have 240 days after its publication to comply with the new or revised requirements. For hearing aids that have not been offered for sale prior to the effective date, compliance with the new or revised requirements must be achieved before marketing the device, including obtaining 510(k) clearance if applicable. Originally published: www.content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFDA/bulletins/3284a1b.



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](#)

[Mental Health Education](#)

[Resources](#)

Need Help in an Emergency?

Lehigh County Crisis Line: 610-782-3127

Northampton County Crisis Line: 610-252-9060

Find Help in a Crisis: text NAMI to 741-741

National Suicide and Crisis help line: Call text or chat 98989

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– 10 pm)

Get help in a crisis 24/7 via text message: text NAMI to 741-741



Hope Friendship Dances

Third Monday of the month (September—May)

7:00-9:00 PM

Just North
of
Allentown
on Rt. 248

Welcome back to the Hope Friendship Dances!

Can you believe it's been over 2 years since the last Friendship Dance?

Come and meet up with old friends and make some new friends! Volunteers are welcome!

Hope Lutheran Church
4131 Lehigh Drive, Cherryville, PA
Admission: \$5.00 a person

No need to register. Please park in the rear of the church & enter from the building's left.

Questions or want to volunteer?

Please call Judy Dieter at 610-767-9170 or dietervj@aol.com

2022 Dates: Nov. 21 Dec. 19

2023 Dates: January 16 February 20 March 20 April 17 May 15

Spirit Club Fitness—Remote

[SPIRIT Club](#) is a supportive virtual exercise platform—you will need a device with internet access to participate. The club works with individuals and organizations around the country to help make sure that fitness is accessible to EVERYONE. When the pandemic hit, they transitioned services from primarily in-person to primarily virtual. In order to give members sufficient fitness options that can be done safely from home, the club created *Daily Community Classes* (DCC), which are a set of 9 weekly classes that include Fitness, Yoga, Zumba, Boxing, Meditation, and Healthy Cooking.

Members have unlimited access to all of the DCC which can be watched at any time, with no equipment necessary. The unique teaching style is based on the concept of universal design involves multiple trainers teaching each class, each showing different modifications of every exercise with the goal of maximizing accessibility of our classes. Visit the Spirit Club website for a sample video. In addition to virtual classes, the club offers virtual personal or partner training!

Email the club at join@spirit-club.com if you have questions. Visit www.spirit-club.com for more information or to join. **“We can't wait to train with you!”**



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?

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 follow the [Disposal of Unused Medications](#) link.

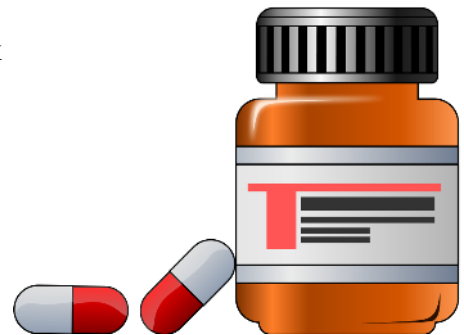
Drug Disposal Guidelines and Locations

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.
- The FDA identified a number of retail pharmacies and local hospitals that will take unused medications. Visit: www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-drug-take-back-locations for a list of locations.
- The US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) occasionally hosts [Nation prescription Take Back](#) events. During these Drug Take Back Days temporary drug collection sites are set up in communities nation wide for safe disposal of prescription drugs.
- Local law enforcement agencies may also sponsor medicine take back events in your community. You can also contact your local waste management authorities to learn about events in your area.

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 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.

The FDA 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.

Disposal of Sharps (needles, Syringes, Auto Injectors, etc.)

Used sharps should be immediately placed in a sharps disposal container. FDA-cleared sharps containers are generally available through pharmacies, medical supply companies, health care providers and online. These containers are made of puncture-resistant plastic with leak-resistant sides and bottom. They also have a tight fitting, puncture-resistant lid.

If an FDA-cleared container is not available a heavy-duty plastic household container, such as a laundry detergent container can be used as an alternative.

Downloaded 10/03/2022. <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know>



- What side of a snow goose has the most feathers? The outside.
- What do you call an old snowman? Water.
- Where does a snowman keep his money? A snow bank.
- ◆ What did the winter hat say to the scarf? You hang around while I go on ahead.
- ◆ Why do lobsters never give to charity? Because they're shellfish.
- ◆ Why do cows wear bells? Because their horns don't work.

Lehigh & Northampton OBSERVER

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

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Thank you for receiving the Bi-County Observer by e-mail. We hope you find the information useful.

Feel free to share the newsletter with people who may be interested.

If you know someone interested in receiving the newsletter, Contact Bob Madden at The Arc.



There is a paper version of the newsletter available in addition to the email.

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

E-mail: bmadden@arcoflehighnorthampton.org