

# ProJeCt

Helping People Help Themselves



**2017-2018**  
ANNUAL REPORT

## MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to build a better community by helping people help themselves. ProJeCt improves the community and helps economically and educationally disadvantaged adults and children by assisting them to meet their most basic emergency material needs, developing their capacity to care for themselves, and mapping a path toward self-sufficiency through education that builds real-life skills and opportunities.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Executive Committee

President – JoAnn Bergeron Nenow, retired

Vice President – William Proehl, BB&T

Treasurer – Cary Giacalone II, Concannon, Miller & Co., P.C.

Secretary – Rev. Susan D. Ruggles, St. John's Lutheran Church

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William Bryson, Attala Steel Industries

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Daniel E. Cohen, Hof & Reid, LLC

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## FROM OUR LEADERSHIP TO YOU

*People often ask us, "What does ProJeCt do?" We think the better question to ask, however, is "Why do we do?"*

To all of us here at ProJeCt, it's about what we provide, what we change, that matters. Going further, we often will ask ourselves other questions: If we were charged with helping just five families or 50 families or 500 families, could we as an organization, and as a community, assist them to help them thrive as members of the community? And if not, why not? And what can we do to change that?

These are the questions that drive our service and our success, not just this fiscal year but throughout our history. We are proud of the work that we have done for more than five decades to combat the struggle that is poverty.


All too often, people not affected by poverty fail to recognize what it means to be poor. It's a vortex with one problem leading to others, eventually holding people down no matter their willpower and desire to improve their lives. In our 50 years of service we have recognized and believe in the power of collective effort. We know that it takes a comprehensive and persistent system of services to help families break the cycle of poverty.

We work every day to ensure that every person and every family at risk receives the whole of our services, including linkages to other local social service organizations, school districts, and county, state and federal governments. Your support is essential to helping us build this integrated service model.

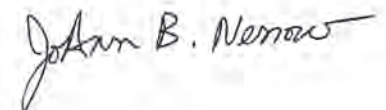
For people to escape poverty and cross that seemingly impossible economic threshold, they need a true ecology of support and as much of that support as possible. When people choose to help themselves, we believe it's a community's moral obligation to provide them with every resource at our disposal. ProJeCt is committed to meeting that obligation.

We're in this work with serious intentions. We are able to do what we do thanks to your support. We ask for your continued involvement in our mission, be it financial or talent-based and/or other form of support, so that we can continue to provide meaningful change in our community. Thank you for all that you do for ProJeCt.

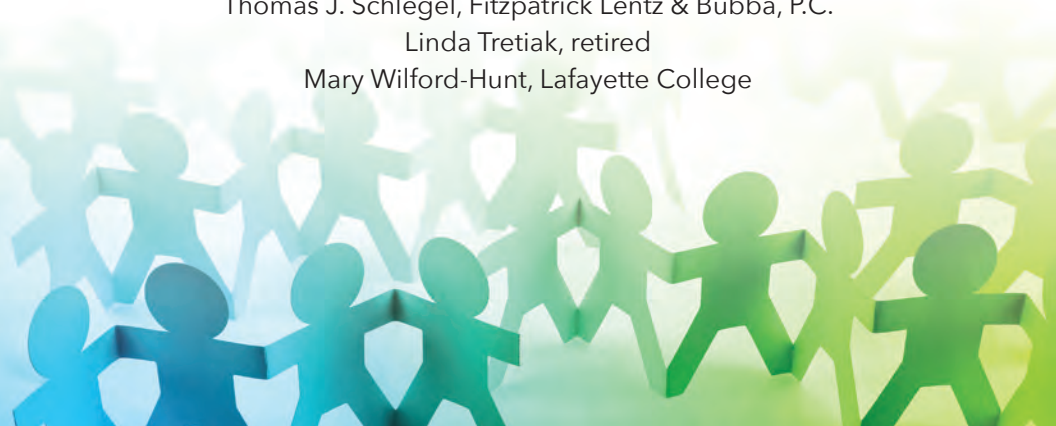
Sincerely,



Janice D. Komisor  
CEO



JoAnn Bergeron Nenow  
President, Board of Directors



# THE ADULT STUDENT

Guadalupe is a loving wife and mother who re-enrolled at ProJeCt. She initially was taking classes before needing to take time off for a high-risk pregnancy prior to the birth of her third child. She took a hiatus from classes for a few years but has returned to ProJeCt and has completed English as a Second Language (ESL). She is currently attending GED and Family Literacy classes.

After just two months in Adult Basic Education class, she advanced to a higher level where she enjoys working with Mrs. Roman. Guadalupe loves everything about the education she has gained at ProJeCt.



"I feel very thankful to have this opportunity. I really appreciate all the support from all the teachers and the tutors. I feel great.

"Education is the most important thing in life. You have to try. ... It's not easy, I understand. You need to work hard to push yourself to get in there."

Guadalupe's track is Business Administration – clients choose one of multiple career paths when they enroll at ProJeCt – and while her short-term goal is to find a job once she has earned her GED and completed her classes here, her dream is to open her own restaurant.

Guadalupe's two older children also participate in SIZZLE!®, our seven-week, literacy-based summer program for low-income students in kindergarten through fifth grade. "They have improved a lot in their reading," she says. "They look forward to coming back every year."

*"I always had dreams to achieve and do this for my kids."*

Guadalupe is one of 269 students who enrolled in our adult education classes this past year. She encourages more people to take advantage of what ProJeCt offers.

"ProJeCt is a wonderful place. It is very helpful for people, and there are different programs for everybody."

## Literacy Highlights 2017-2018

269 students enrolled

72% of Adult Basic Education, ESL and GED students made language and literacy gains

31 adults earned their GED



# THE YOUNG STUDENT

Gage has participated in our Student Success Program (SSP) for the past three years. He is a good example of what happens when a student's hard work is combined with a solid support system that focuses on the student's overall growth.



SSP is for students in grades 5-8 in the Easton Area School District. This important program provides life skills training, which strengthens students' ability to make healthy decisions in school and life, as well as mentoring for those students who have higher levels of risk factors for school failure.

Gage says that some of his favorite life skills that he has learned are "how to get along better with others and treat my teachers more respectfully." He is proud of the improvements that he has made in his attendance and school behavior.

*"My favorite part of being in the SSP program has been the improvement I have seen to my grades."*

Sarah Pulcini, ProJeCt's School-Based Programs Coordinator, says that Gage "became more involved with school activities, demonstrated more self control within the classroom, and also showed more respect for his teachers and peers. Overall, his attendance increased, his behavioral issues decreased and his grades improved.

"Gage is a wonderful example of how our combination of life skills training, along with guidance using the Check and Connect mentoring model, can truly benefit students," Sarah says.

Gage was one of 437 students who participated this past year in SSP, which includes fifth grade students at Paxinosa and March Elementary schools as well as students at Easton Area Middle School. In all, 423 students completed 80% or more of SSP's life skills training units. This high completion rate means that students are able to make better and more appropriate decisions that, in turn, increase their chances for success in school.

And of the students who were mentored through Check and Connect, 64% had fewer absences, while 86% scored 70% or higher in their academic classes.

# THE ALUMNUS

ProJeCt is proud to have been a part of so many people's success stories. It's especially wonderful when one of those great success stories becomes a great employee.

Holly Davis-Hockman is an administrative assistant who handles all of the agency's program-based data entry and is also a proctor when clients take their assessments. Holly graduated from ProJeCt this past summer.

"I love it. I love what I do," Holly says. "I have the best co-workers. Everyone is like family here. We all have such an important role to do. I've never had a better job."

How Holly came to be a student at ProJeCt is not unlike other stories.

She got pregnant when she was a junior in high school, so she dropped out of school to get a full-time job to take care of her baby. She later married and had two more children, but even though the years passed, she always knew she wanted to get her GED.



"It was important for me to show my kids the importance of an education and of achieving your goals. It was time for me to show them that it's never too late to help yourself."

She found ProJeCt online and enrolled in January 2018. Holly's initial placement in the GED program put her on a fast track to completion, and it took her just 3 weeks to begin GED testing. "Erin (Roman, her teacher) pushed me. I was less confident in myself back then, but she believed in me. She has a great understanding of when people are ready to take their GED tests."

Holly then completed a digital literacy program (Microsoft Office Suite) in 2 months, learning skills that serve her well in her new role.

Holly says her life experiences help her connect with current students. "It makes me relatable to where they are at. I've taken the same tests they are taking. I hope they see my achievement as an open door for them to achieve what they want to achieve."

# THE DONOR

When Bill Miles and Pat Smiley looked for volunteer opportunities as a way to spend time together, they saw ProJeCt as a natural fit.

"Teaching is a big part of our lives," Bill says. "It was a natural fit for us to volunteer as tutors."

Bill and Pat, who have been married 34 years, are both retired educators. They have volunteered as tutors at ProJeCt's Fowler Literacy Center since September 2017. Every Tuesday and Thursday they work with small groups and help students learn English as a second language.

Not only do Bill and Pat give their time to ProJeCt, but they also have been major donors for years. "You've heard the phrase, 'Live locally; give globally.' We think the opposite. We want to contribute locally and give back to our community."

"Now that we have volunteered here, we have even more of a belief in the mission of ProJeCt. The teachers and volunteers here are passionate and compassionate and are great people."

After their first visit to ProJeCt, they were hooked. "We sat in on classes, and we were so amazed by how many eager students there were," Pat says. "They came here to learn and spend 4 days a week doing that, while trying to balance other things in their lives. It was incredible."

Pat encourages potential donors and volunteers to experience ProJeCt's mission in action:

*"This is a special place. People should come here and see what's going on. If people came for a tour here, they would be impressed."*



# THE VOLUNTEER

Don and Joan Church moved to Easton from New Jersey in 2015. Upon settling into their new community, they looked for volunteer opportunities where they could give back as well as spend time together.

They found ProJeCt on Facebook and then came for a visit. They have been volunteering ever since.

"It has been phenomenal," says, Joan, a retired nurse. "I've never done anything that has been so rewarding like volunteering here. The people really appreciate what you do for them; they know I'm here to help them and to teach them."

Don, a retired project engineer with Bell Labs, started his first summer in Early Childhood Education (ECE) as a teacher's aide before becoming a science and social studies tutor for students working toward their GED. He says his job as a tutor is "to allay fears and get them to know they can do it."

Both Don and Joan have loved their volunteer experience so much that they actively recruit people they know to volunteer at ProJeCt. They agree that the experience of making a difference in students' lives and helping them achieve the success they are working toward at ProJeCt is truly worthwhile.

*"Students here have lofty goals. They want to learn a new language, or they want to go to college. It's our job to help them achieve their goals."*





# A YEAR OF HIGHLIGHTS

## Graduation

Our graduation ceremony is the highlight of every year. It's the culmination of our students' hard work and dedication to improving themselves. Here is ProJeCt's Class of 2018:

### U.S. CITIZENSHIP (4)

Mariela Grullon  
Surinder Gurm  
Maria Eva Lazo de Granados  
Masako Togawa

Natalie Stocker  
Charissa Suranofsky  
Michael Tigar  
Tatchiana Woods

### GED GRADUATES (31)

Shannon Buck  
Andres Carter  
Brandon Cooper  
Curry Sequoia  
Jillian Davis  
Holly Davis-Hockman  
Vianna Duran  
Josiah Farber  
Angelica Figueroa  
Katie Fisher  
Jameia Foster  
Christopher Grant  
Raheem Gumbs  
Alexis Hall  
Andrew Hunter  
Jaileen Irizarry  
Osualdo Jimenez  
Amanda Johnson  
Crystal Kee  
Melissa Lora  
Antonia McMillian  
John Merino  
Ramon Mesa  
Jessica Ortega  
Joshua Pierce  
Kathleen Ramos  
Efren Rodriguez

### ESL GRADUATES (4)

Leticia Corado  
Jonathan Martinez  
Ana Pacheco  
Xiu Hong Sun

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION GRADUATES (7)

Annali Fernandez  
Katheryne Munoz  
Yahaira Villalobos  
Gianna Breitfeld  
Mhret Gebreleul  
Daniel Ramos  
Carla Tamayo

### DIGITAL LITERACY CERTIFICATES (9)

Stephanie Belon  
Holly Davis-Hockman  
Josiah Farber  
Amanda Johnson  
Lei Lu  
Mario Sanchez-Flores  
Natalie Stocker  
Xiu Hong Sun  
Katherine Velez



## Other Highlights

**SIZZLE!®**, our literacy-based summer program, welcomed 175 students in grades K-5 from the Easton Area School District. **SIZZLE!** also went from a 4-day, 6-week program to a 5-day, 7-week program.

**SIZZLE!®**'s goal is to prevent the "summer slide" and engage students in meaningful and research-based instruction that can result in academic gains during the summer. In 2018, 92% of enrolled students gained or maintained reading skills over the course of the summer program.





Our **ASSIST** program continued to identify needs and solutions for people living in poverty. In 2018, we connected 1,761 people to services here at ProJeCt or at other community agencies with whom we partner. Here is a list of services people requested through ASSIST:

- AAA Senior Fuel
- Child care
- Driving school information
- Eyeglasses
- Food pantry information\*
- Furniture
- Job assistance
- Literacy information
- Medical/health insurance
- Rental assistance
- Shelter
- Utilities

\* For more than 30 years, our **Food Pantry** has provided supplemental food assistance for people at risk of hunger in our community. We served 4,155 households during Fiscal Year 2018.



**Volunteers** are critical to our mission, from the tutors who help students improve their language and academic skills to the food pantry volunteers who welcome and help clients with their selections, and so much more. This year, we were fortunate to have BB&T, Comcast and Victaulic among our corporate supporters who gave of their time and talents to assist with various efforts.

Our signature event, **Simply Savory**, netted more than \$27,600 and welcomed nearly 160 attendees to the Hampton Inn Easton in October 2017.

We participated once again in the **Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community** at DeSales University in June. The weather cooperated this year, and we netted more than \$6,000 thanks to our sponsors and walkers.

ProJeCt received \$700 from the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce's **Young Professionals Council** through YPC's "WineK Race for the Glass" in May.

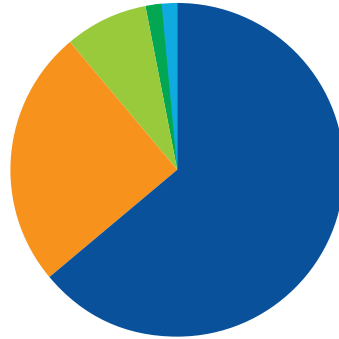


## REVENUE

Year ended June 30, 2018

Contributions	63%	\$1,147,321
Government Contracts	25%	\$465,155
United Way	8%	\$140,439
Special Events	2%	\$33,927
Investment income	2%	\$38,155

**Total** 100% \$1,824,997

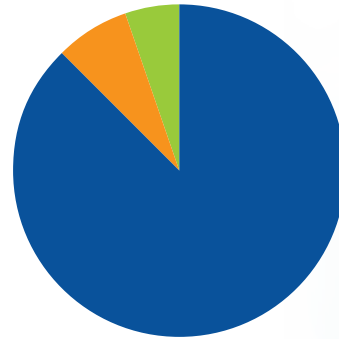


## EXPENSES

Year ended June 30, 2018

Client Services	86%	\$1,340,051
Administration	7%	\$111,046
Fundraising	6%	\$99,659

**Total** 100% \$1,550,756

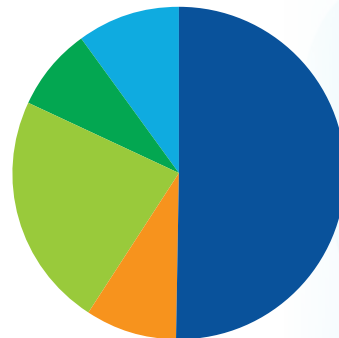


## CLIENT SERVICE EXPENSES BY PROGRAM

Year ended June 30, 2018

Adult and Family Literacy	51%	\$685,120
SIZZLE!® - School Age Literacy	9%	\$119,488
Food Pantry	23%	\$302,824
Emergency Assistance	8%	\$101,273
Student Success Program	10%	\$131,346

**Total** 100% \$1,340,051



# DONOR GIVING

Thank you to everyone who generously contributed to ProJeCt during 2017-2018. For a full list of donor giving, please visit our Web site at [www.projecteaston.org](http://www.projecteaston.org).



# SAVE THE DATES:

**Daniel E. Cohen Award Presented  
to Alan Abraham**

Thursday, May 9, 2019  
Hampton Inn Easton

**2019 Highmark Walk for a  
Healthy Community**

Saturday, June 1, 2019  
DeSales University

**2019 Simply Savory**

Hampton Inn Easton

More information to follow!

**[www.projecteaston.org](http://www.projecteaston.org)**

Admin Office: 610-258-4361

Fowler Literacy Center: 610-258-1100



Facebook: ProJeCt of Easton



Twitter: @projecteaston



Instagram: @projecteaston

**ProJeCt**

Helping People Help Themselves

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