

# Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. **ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019**

[www.svurbanleague.org](http://www.svurbanleague.org)



# Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Executive Committee

Christine Burger, Board Chair

Autumn Johnson, Esq., Vice Chair

Denise Jarrett, Treasurer

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### Members

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Mark Malcolmson



# MISSION AND VISION

The mission of the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. is to ensure equal access and opportunity for African-Americans and others in need to empower individuals to cultivate and exercise their full human potential. The Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. implements its mission through advocacy, bridge building and program services.

Our vision is a community where all citizens have equal opportunity to achieve their fullest potential, where everyone contributes to improving the quality of life and shares in prosperity.



# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR & PRESIDENT/CEO

The Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. prides itself on being an outlet for individuals in need through our health, housing, and education services. As it is our mission to encourage and empower individuals in Mercer County to reach their full potential, we will continue to advocate for social justice and equality for all individuals. Through our programming, we will continue to make great impacts on youth and adults and provide them with the education and resources that are necessary during their time of need. With many obstacles such as unemployment, and lack of food, the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. strives to provide supportive outreach initiatives and programs in the areas most needed by the community. Furthermore, the partnership with the United Way of Mercer County is invaluable and through co-branding efforts we will collectively work toward lifting families out of poverty. Through these efforts, the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. Board of Directors and staff will continue to focus on serving diverse populations throughout Mercer County.

# ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Dr. Erin R. Houston, President/CEO

Raymond Bianco, Fiscal Director

Tami Hammond, Housing Director

Corwin Somerset, Education Director

Kelly Rodrigues, WIC Director

Nichole Craig, WIC Fiscal Administrator

Teresa Hall, HLRP Coordinator

Chardenee Freeman, HLRP Advocate

Lori Graham, Administrative Assistant

## **Maintenance**

Bruce Barfield



# WIC STAFF

## WOMEN, INFANTS, & CHILDREN

Joyce Harrison, Administrative Assistant

Orenda Underwood-Johnson, CPA

Patrice Lee, NT

Emily Campbell, CPA/BFC/PCM-OM

Erica Peiffer, CPA

Pamela Shepard, NT

Lauriethel Ward, RS/OC-CIT

Marci Cirell, CPA,

Stephen Gaetano, CPA

Lori Kocholek, PC

Jessica Struthers, PC



# WOMEN, INFANTS, & CHILDREN (WIC)



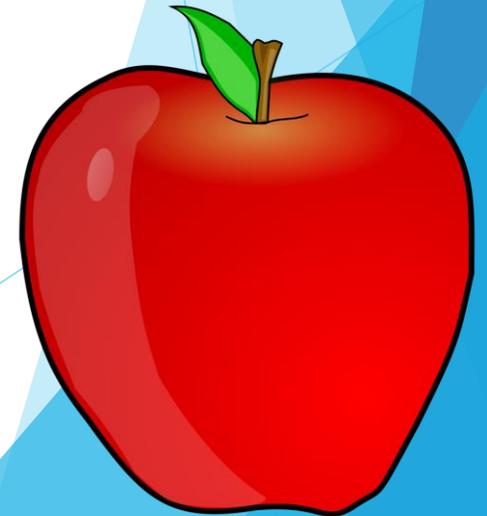
# WOMEN, INFANTS, & CHILDREN (WIC)



- ▶ The Pennsylvania WIC Program is committed to improving the health of eligible pregnant women, new mothers and children providing nutrition education, breastfeeding support, healthy foods and referrals to health and social programs during the critical stages of fetal and early childhood development.
- ▶ WIC funding comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and was authorized by Congress in 1972. WIC was implemented in Pennsylvania in May 1974.
- ▶ WIC is made possible in PA through contracts with county and private nonprofit agencies and is administered by the Department of Health. WIC services locally in all 67 counties at about 250 sites. SVUL has been providing WIC services since April 1, 1978.

# HOW DOES WIC HELP FAMILIES?

- ▶ 1. Offers referrals to health and social service programs.
- ▶ 2. Gives advice for healthy eating with nutrition materials and one-on-one nutrition education.
- ▶ 3. Provides monthly food packages, which includes nutritious foods from all food groups.
- ▶ 4. Improves duration of pregnancy and growth of nutritionally at-risk infants and children.
- ▶ 5. Reduces iron deficiency anemia in children.
- ▶ 6. Reduces low birth weight and fetal deaths.



# WIC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



- ▶ Received continued funding from Pennsylvania Department of Health in the amount of \$732,610.00 For the WIC and Peer Counselor Project for fiscal year October 2018-September 2019.
- ▶ Provided service in Mercer, Venango & Forest counties with an average participation of 3,000 clients per year.

# NUTRITION EDUCATION, BREASTFEEDING & OUTREACH GOALS

## Nutrition Goal

- ▶ FFY 2020 Goal: To evaluate how staff are doing with conducting WIC assessments in PENN and determine needs to help improve their confidence, competency, and/or efficiency.

## Breastfeeding Goal

- ▶ FFY 2020 Goal: To complete a needs assessment to evaluate how staff are conducting breastfeeding assessments using the PENN system over the past year.

## Outreach Goal

- ▶ FFY 2020 Required Statewide Goal: Increase local agency caseload after the eWIC rollout.



# WIC BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELING PROGRAM



## **“A Breastfeeding Support Program for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women”**

- ▶ The WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program is a support program for pregnant breastfeeding women to help women initiate and continue breastfeeding with the help of Peer Counselors who are trained to assist by offering breastfeeding education, support, and role modeling.
- ▶ The breastfeeding peer counselors are mothers who have breastfed and have personal experience with breastfeeding and are trained to provide valuable support to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates.
- ▶ The program is funded by USDA using the “Loving Support Model” for a successful Peer Counseling Program for WIC.
- ▶ To learn more about the WIC and Peer Counseling Program, check online at [www.health.pa.gov](http://www.health.pa.gov) or [www.pawic.com](http://www.pawic.com), or call 1-800-WIC-WINS (1-800-942-9467)

# EDUCATION



# REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF REMEMBRANCE BREAKFAST

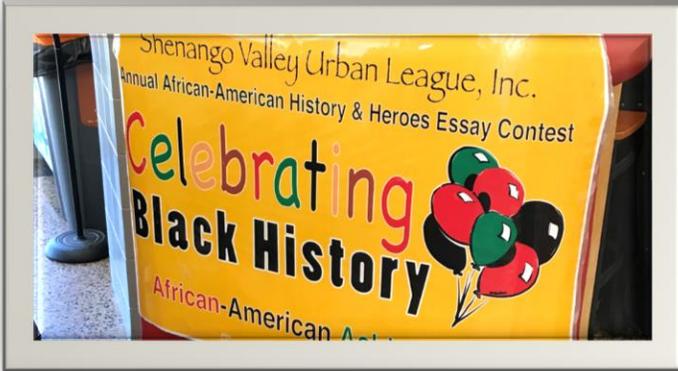


- ▶ The Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. observed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day with the MLK Day of Remembrance Breakfast. We invited the community to join with us to honor the work, life, and legacy of Dr. King. Our guest speaker was Rev. Patricia Tatum, Pastor of New Life Covenant Church, Sharon, PA who addressed social injustices of past and present. Youth participants on the program included: Kalik Butler, Maria Haynes, and Camryn Gipson who shared their thoughts on how Dr. King has impacted their lives.

# Black History Essay Contest & Luncheon

*Celebrating 45 years!*

- ▶ The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Black History & Heroes Essay Contest was held throughout several local school districts in Mercer County. This contest provides an opportunity for students, parents, and the community an opportunity to learn about many civil rights leaders and African American inventors. Fifth and Sixth grade students submitted essays on their favorite African American heroes and detailed how they have impacted the culture and society overall. This year the luncheon was held at Hickory High School in which first place and honorable mention winners were honored for their essays.



# FRANK J. NAGY SCHOLARSHIP FUND ESSAY CONTEST

- ▶ The Education Department conducted its sixth essay contest for a \$1,000 scholarship award. Mercer County high school seniors could submit an essay responding in 500 words or less about how they have demonstrated leadership ability both academically and socially and what role they have played in making a positive impact in the urban community. Madison Houck, Sharpsville High School Senior was the 2019 recipient and winner of the Frank J. Nagy Scholarship and was recognized and awarded at the Shenango Valley Urban League's 51<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Banquet. The scholarship funds provides financial support to a deserving Mercer County student and highlights our commitment to education.



# SUMMER YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

The Summer Youth Apprenticeship Program provides Mercer County students (age 12-15) an opportunity to job shadow different career fields and earn a stipend. Components of the program include, one-on-one interviewing, weekly enrichment group sessions, lunch with leaders series, career camp, and job shadowing. Students who successfully complete the program receive a stipend, achievement awards, commemorative t-shirt, and certificate of completion at the conclusion of the program.



# FALL GIVE BACK



**Secret Santa**   
**Gift Collection**

Donations Accepted at:  
Shenango Valley Urban League  
601 Indiana Ave ~ Farrell, PA 16121 ~ 724-981-5310  
2nd Floor ~ Mon- Fri 8am-4pm

 **To Benefit:**   
**AWARE Inc**

**Deadline**  
**Monday, December 17th**  
**By 4:00pm** 

Gifts will be wrapped by the NULITES youth leadership program

**Suggested Items:**

- New Socks (adult women all sizes)
- New Underwear (adult women all sizes)
- Deodorant
- Shower Gel
- Tooth Brush/Paste 
- Baby Formula 
- Diapers 

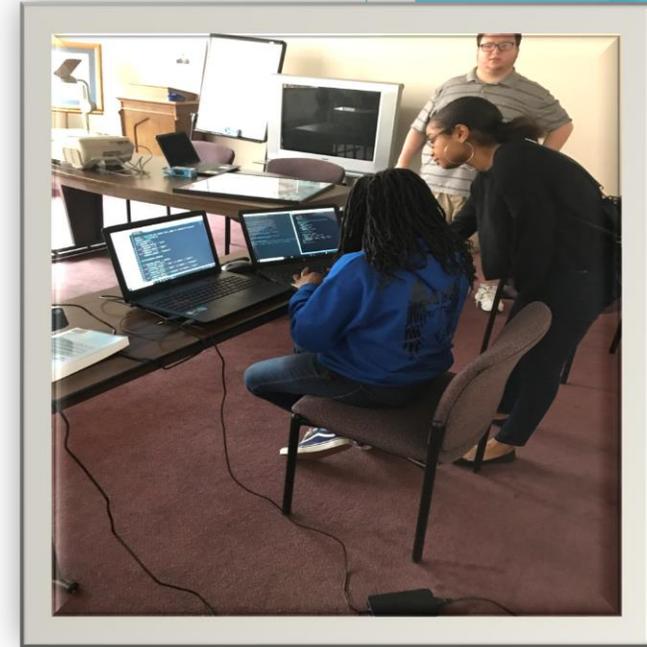
The Shenango Valley Urban League and students participated in the annual community service project that focused on the importance of service learning. Specific items were collected for AWARE, an organization that assists women of domestic violence. The items were a part of AWARE's wish list.

# MOBILE COMPUTER LAB

The Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. received a \$23,000 Digital Education grant from Spectrum for a mobile lab to teach Senior Citizens about broadband and how to use a computer by teaching basic computer skills. Computer technology was purchased from the grant which allowed us to be able to take the computer lab mobile. We visited 9 zip codes throughout Mercer County servicing 45 Seniors. They learned the basics of Microsoft Word and internet. The grant concluded October 2018.



# CODE 4 YOUR FUTURE PROGRAM



The Code 4 Your Future Program was a collaboration with the Shenango Valley Urban League, Youngstown State University, and Farrell Area School District. The purpose of the program was to teach computer programming to students in grades 9-12. There were three cohorts of students which included a 12-week Spring 2019 session at Farrell High School, an 8-week session at the Urban League, which was open to any school district, and a Fall 2019 session at Farrell High School. The sessions concluded with a presentation by the students of what they learned.

# EDUCATION DEPARTMENT BY THE NUMBERS



- ▶ Summer Youth Apprenticeship Program: 23
- ▶ African American History and Heroes Essay Contest: 520
- ▶ Frank J. Nagy Scholarship Essay Contest: 27
- ▶ Mobile Computer Lab: 45
- ▶ Code 4 Your Future Program: 15
- ▶ NULITES: 7

# HUMAN RELATIONS & EMPLOYMENT



# HUMAN RELATIONS

- ▶ The purpose of this program is to provide service to clients in Mercer County seeking human relations assistance in the areas of employment, education, public accommodation, and housing.
- ▶ Total number of complaints received: 6
- ▶ Total number of cities and municipalities where complaints were: 3

## **Program highlights:**

- ▶ Continue to assist the community, providing human relations services
- ▶ Act as mediator to work out an amicable solution between parties involved in a complaint
- ▶ Continue to provide up to date information regarding human relations issues to the general public and cooperate with the PA Human Relations Commission and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

# EMPLOYMENT

- ▶ The employment department addresses the job needs of the community. Resume and cover letter development, job search, and skills assessments are provided to individuals seeking full or part time employment.

## **Program highlights:**

- ▶ Performed ongoing job search and placement for 20 individuals
- ▶ Served as a resource for 7 employers
- ▶ Resumes and cover letters were prepared or updated for 20 individuals
- ▶ Total number of cities and municipalities where clients resided: 3

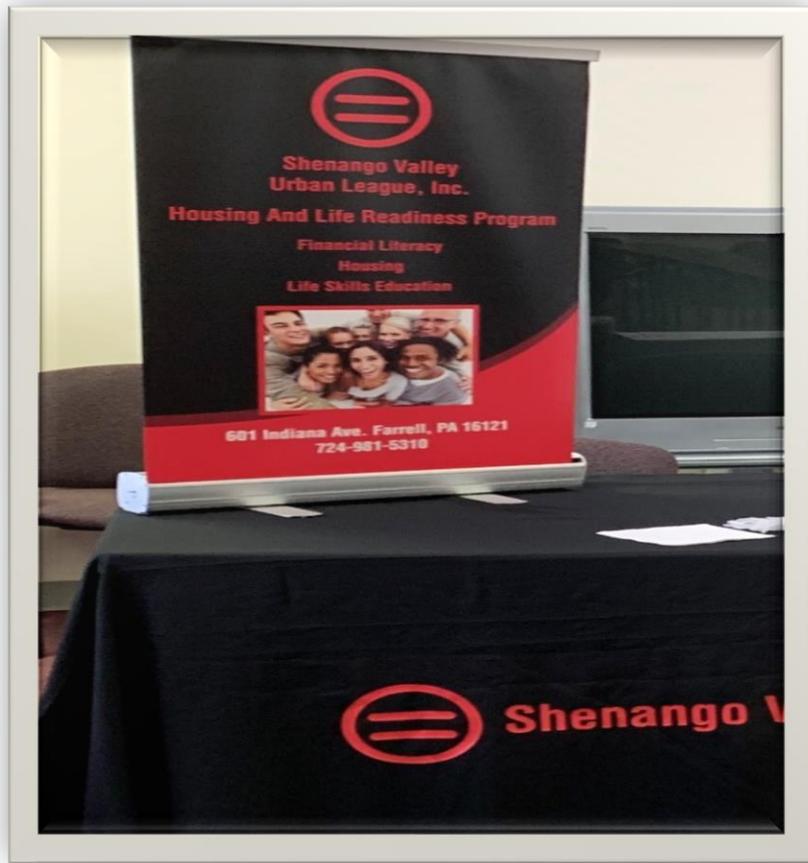
# HOUSING

Housing and Life Readiness Program (HLRP)

Homeless Assistance Program (HAP)



# HOUSING AND LIFE READINESS PROGRAM (HLRP)



The purpose of the Housing and Life Readiness Program (HLRP) is to address the issues of Mercer County Children and Youth Services families to keep children and families housed through crisis by assisting families with finding employment, finding and securing adequate housing, providing financial literacy with life skills education. All participants are referred by a case manager through Mercer County CYS.

# Life Skills Education

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior, which enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Individuals referred to the HLRP program participate in life skills education workshops that cover the following topics:

- ▶ Decision making
- ▶ Problem solving
- ▶ Creative/lateral thinking
- ▶ Critical thinking
- ▶ Effective communication
- ▶ Interpersonal relationships
- ▶ Self awareness
- ▶ Assertiveness
- ▶ Goal setting



# Financial Literacy Education



Families are assisted with finding and securing adequate and affordable housing. In addition, participants undergo financial literacy education to better understand and manage their personal finances. The goal of teaching financial literacy is to help them develop a stronger understanding of basic financial concepts and also learn how to balance a household budget as well as receive help finding and keeping gainful employment.

# HOUSING & LIFE READINESS PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

32 families  
served

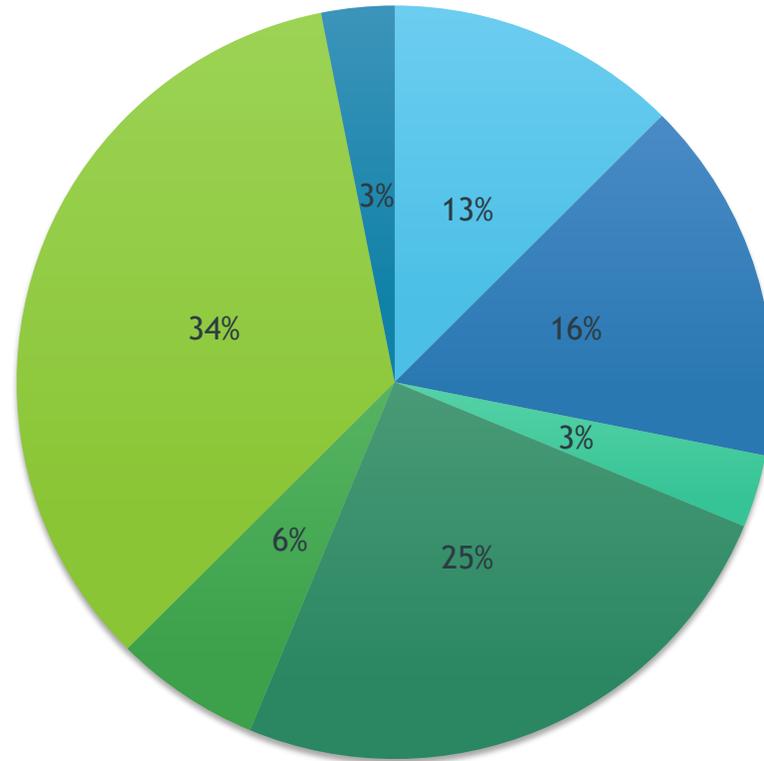
75 children  
impacted

22 families  
received utility  
assistance

16 families  
received rent  
assistance

# HLRP DEMOGRAPHICS

## Areas Participants Resided



■ Farrell ■ Greenville ■ Hadley ■ Hermitage ■ Mercer ■ Sharon ■ Transfer

# HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HAP) RENT ASSISTANCE

The Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. has been designated by the Mercer County Commissioners to administer the HAP Program. The purpose of the HAP program is two-fold;

- 1.) the program assists Mercer County residents in need of acquiring or maintaining rental housing.
- 2.) the program provides funding to the Emergency Shelter Program administered by the Salvation Army.

The types of assistance consist of rental counseling, budget counseling, and a financial grant toward the first month's rent or the delinquent rent. All applicants must have a face-to-face interview with the Housing Counselor.



# HOMEOWNERS EMERGENCY MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEMAP)

The Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. is certified by HUD (Housing and Urban Development) to provide mortgage default counseling to homeowners facing foreclosure. During the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. processed 39 Applications to the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) for emergency mortgage loan assistance through the states Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program.



# EMERGENCY SHELTER



In the Emergency Shelter Program administered by the Salvation Army, emergency shelter is defined as housing individuals facing imminent crisis with temporary overnight housing up to a period of one week. For the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the Salvation Army provided housing for **108** Mercer County adults and children. The amount of money sub-granted from the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. to the Salvation Army was \$7,741.00.

# HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

- ▶ Received continued funding in the amount of \$112,794.00 for the 2018-2019 fiscal year.
- ▶ Emergency shelter assistance provided by the Salvation Army, sub-recipient of the Urban League, to 108 Individual households that supported a cumulative total of 285 adults and children.
- ▶ Provided financial support of \$40,300 in rental assistance and \$7,741.00 for emergency shelter.
- ▶ From July 2018-June 2019, 1,305 Housing inquiries came in to the Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc.



# HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

123  
Households  
served for  
rent  
assistance

Provided  
Mortgage  
Foreclosure  
Assistance to  
39 families

249 adults  
and children  
served in  
total