

NCC to Hold Financial Aid Nights

By Katherine Noll

ETHLEHEM - Take the mystery out of the financial aid process!

Current and prospective students at Northampton Community College (NCC) and their parents as well as members of the general public are invited to attend a financial aid information session. Attendees will learn how to apply for federal, state and institutional aid using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) with the 2019-2020 form available at fafsa.gov, which uses 2017 income tax information. Staff will explain application procedures and eligibility requirements.

Financial Aid Nights will be held: Bethlehem Campus Feb. 6, 6 p.m., David A. Reed Community Room, College Center, Second Floor.

Snow date: 2/13

Monroe Campus Feb. 7, 6 p.m., Room 202, Keystone Hall.

Snow date: 2/21

NCC's financial aid priority application date for the fall is March 31, 2019, although students may still apply after this date.

View Online: <http://northampton.meritpages.com/news/ncc-to-hold-financial-aid-nights/7087>

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Jan Marie Schwartz

This column is exclusive to the **Blue Valley Times**

Since my mother-in-law died in early December, I have been thinking about support networks. After her death I felt overwhelmed, not only with the loss of someone who meant so much, but also because we needed to move my now-widowed, eighty-five-year-old father-in-law into our home while we searched for a care facility. Her death also meant that we had to travel over an hour each way, on multiple occasions, to my husband's childhood home, to clean out forty-five years worth of memories to get the house ready to put on the market.

Only one childhood friend of my husband's remained in his hometown, so we had limited access to help near his old neighborhood. When we moved to Pennsylvania fifteen years ago, for my husband to pursue a job opportunity, the reverse was true. All of our support networks: family, friends, work colleagues, and caring neighbors were in the town we left behind. Now the majority of support surrounds us in the community we moved to years ago. Meals were prepared and delivered to us in the weeks after her death and offers to help box up the house, despite the distance, were made. Sadness permeated the holiday season for our family, but these acts of kindness buoyed us. Just knowing that people cared enough to drop off a meal or forego plans with their own family to help our family put slivers of light into what often felt like a dark room.

Big life changes like birth and death require support. Support from family and friends is usually time limited as the flood of assistance initially offered slowly recedes. I looked out to the broader community for information on an independent living facility for my father-in-law and was surprised to realize finding a quality facility in the area wouldn't be so difficult if I applied the same principals I advise families to use when looking for high quality child care.

Jan Marie Schwartz is an Outreach Coordinator for the Pre-K for PA campaign. The campaign is supported by individuals and organizations across Pennsylvania who believe that investing in our children is the right choice and an urgent necessity. She also serves as VP of Public Policy for the Lehigh and Northampton Chapter of PennAEYC



I looked at what was available in my area, asked for recommendations, and most importantly, relied on the U.S. government ranking of every Medicare and Medicaid nursing facility at medicare.gov. I found out over 15,000 nursing facilities have a 5-star ranking. Luckily, some of those recommended by people I respect made the list. The star ranking of nursing facilities is similar to the Pennsylvania Keystone STARS (<http://www.pakeys.org/keystone-stars>) continuous quality improvement system for child care centers. When a family is looking for high quality care for either the youngest or oldest member of their family they should remember the higher the number of stars designates program quality.

After narrowing down choices we toured a local 5-star facility and my husband and I, and most importantly, my father-in-law, liked what we saw. When I returned to drop off paperwork I arrived prior to my scheduled appointment – giving me the opportunity to sit and observe staff and resident interactions. The staff, ranging from administrators, nursing and support, was kind and friendly to the residents, the residents were socializing and engaging in activities, and the place was as clean as I remembered it from my initial visit. You would want the same for your infant, so make sure you tour the child care center, see how staff engages with children (and how staff interact with each other), so you can spot any red flags with your own eyes prior to enrolling your child.

Remember that STAR 3 or 4 child care centers might have a wait list. We found this to be true with highly rated nursing care facilities too. Ideally, so you don't feel overwhelmed with finding care to help support your family during a major life change, prior to giving birth, or even before beginning a job hunt, is the time to start looking for a center.



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Slate Belt Young at Heart Club Honor WWII Veteran

By Michael Ortoski

PEN ARGYL - At their monthly meeting in St. Elizabeth's Catholic Church in Pen Argyl the Slate Belt Young at Heart Club honored WWII Veteran Paul Pissante with a certificate of recognition from Senator Scavello and Rep. Marcia Hahn for his military service.

The president of the club Mary Lou Lohman did the presentation reading aloud the certificate. "In recognition of your exemplary military service and dedication and protecting the citizens of this great nation" were just part of the printed words honoring Pissante.

Also at their meeting by their request were Chair John Mauser and Vice Chair Michael Ortoski from 'Friends of Minsi Lake' to give a presentation on their groups plans for the rehabilitation of the lake and an update on the dam construction.

"I have had requests from several people in our group concerning the Minsi Lake project" said Lohman so she reached out to inquire if they would come and give a talk and slide show presentation.

After the Slide show presentation Mauser and Ortoski did a Q and A to help understand who Friends of Minsi Lake are and the overall plan for the lake.



President Mary Lou Lohman presents WWII Veteran Paul Pissante a certificate of recognition from Senator Scavello and Rep. Marcia Hahn for his military service.



Chair John Mauser of 'Friends of Minsi Lake' hands out literature about all the plans for the lake including over 800 fish habitat structure to be put in the lake.

Donation Jars for 'Friends of Minsi Lake' that are at business in the Slate Belt



The Color Of Justice

A Forum on Criminal Justice Reform

By Michael Ortoski

BETHLEHEM - Local chapters of the NAACP, along with the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley (CACLV) invite you to join us in a discussion on the criminal justice system and the disparities it creates in our communities 'The Color of Justice.'

Featured speakers: Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro

Edward Reibman, President Judge, Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas; Craig Dally, Judge, Northampton County Court of Common Pleas; Nancy Dischinat, Executive Director, Workforce Board Lehigh Valley and others.

The date will be Monday, March 11, 2019 11:45 AM to 1:30 PM. \$25 includes lunch.

The event is being hosted at the Wood Dining Room at Lehigh Universities Iacocca Conference Center located at Iacocca Hall Second Floor, 111 Research Drive Bethlehem, PA.

For more information or questions please call CACLV at (610) 691-5620. You can register online at <http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp>.

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