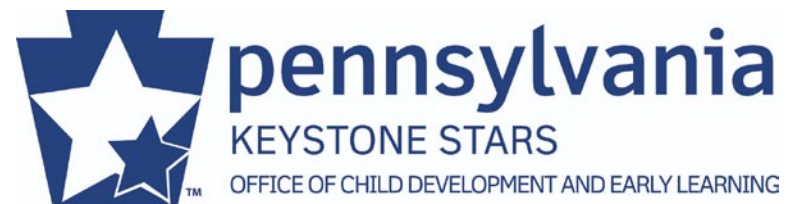


Representative Flood Recognizes The Learning Locomotion Child Care Centers' High-quality Designations

By Jan Schwartz / Outreach Director Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children
LEHIGH VALLEY, PA – On Monday, February 12, 2024, state Representative Ann Flood (R-District 138) will recognize two of three of The Learning Locomotion child care locations for their commitment to continuous quality improvement, as they moved up Pennsylvania's Keystone STARS quality rating system to a STAR 4, the highest quality designation in the state.

Keystone STARS builds upon state child care licensing regulations by focusing on the essential elements of quality, including physical environment, instructional materials, program support structure, and most importantly, interpersonal relationships and daily interactions. The acronym "STARS" stands for "standards, training/professional development, assistance, resources and support."

While parents will always be a child's first and most important teachers, high-quality programs like The Learning Locomotion, offer opportunities for children to learn through play in safe environments that are developmentally appropriate for their age level while their parents work. In Pennsylvania only 46% of licensed child care programs have a high-quality designation, and in Northampton County only 39% of child care programs are considered high-quality.



Out and About Listening to You

By Senator Rosemary Brown

MONROE COUNTY - TOP LEFT: Last weekend, I attended the Marshalls Creek Fire Company's annual banquet to thank and honor these amazing volunteers. I was so pleased to specifically honor Norm Fish, for 55 years of service and Tom Rode, for 45 years of service.

TOP RIGHT: This week, the Kiwanis Club of the Stroudsburgs honored Lou Vento for his years of dedicated service and steadfast support to volunteerism within the community. Lou also recently celebrated his 80th birthday.

BOTTOM LEFT: Northampton Community College – Monroe hosted a ribbon cutting today, opening their "Zen Zone". Offering a space to support mental health and wellness.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Quality childcare is extremely important to our families and community. Last week, I stopped to congratulate Inch by Inch Childcare in Mt Pocono for their achievement of 3 starts with our state's Keystone Stars Program.



Dine-in dinner is back!

Knights of Columbus Spaghetti Dinner

Sunday, March 10, 11 am - 4:30 pm, 1860 W. Bangor Rd. **All tickets must be purchased in advance.**

Come and join us for a delicious meal in a friendly environment. Our meatballs and sauce are hand-made on the premises. All you can eat for \$12. Children under 8 are free.

Dinner includes spaghetti w/meatballs, sauce, salad, bread, coffee/tea and dessert. **Take-out is available!**

For tickets, call Jim Rose 610-533-9974 or Joe DeFranco 610-751-2330 by March 4.



Totts Gap Arts Institute (TGAI) is now accepting grant proposals from organizations presenting arts programming in the 10 municipalities of the Slate Belt region.

Founded in 2006, the mission of TGAI is to nurture artists of all ages, and to awaken the excitement, passion, and possibility of the fine and performing arts by supporting classes, helping to showcase talent, and supporting events that will infuse our community and the region with a love and respect for the creative process.

Grants will be awarded to qualifying organizations for programs that provide educational opportunities, or support cultural events, such as performances.

Granted programs can be for any age group, and are open to any federally-designated (501)(c)(3) non-profit organization that agrees to follow the grant requirements and stipulations.

Individuals seeking to present programs are advised to seek a partner organization to host the event.

Program requirements:

- i) Program must be open to any resident of the Slate Belt.
- ii) Program must comply with TGAI's mission and values of inclusiveness and accessibility.
- iii) Program must be hosted in an ADA complaint facility.
- iv) Classes will have no fee.
- v) Performances will have reduced rates available for students and seniors.
- vi) Preference will be given to group activities over serving individuals.
- vii) Programs will not promote any religious or political agenda.
- viii) Program staff, performers, etc. do not need to be residents of the Slate Belt, but the event must take place in the community.

Grant value: up to \$5,000. To apply, follow the link below, and email the completed application to arts@tottsgap.org.

<http://tottsgap.com/apply-for-funding>