

# LVEDC Honored With Empowering Women Award

by Paul Muschick

LEHIGH VALLEY- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp., along with several of its investors and companies represented on its Board of Directors, was recognized with an Empowering Women Award by Lehigh Valley Business and Central Penn Business Journal.

The awards, presented Nov. 13 during a breakfast event at the DoubleTree by Hilton Reading, recognize companies and organizations that show a strong commitment to supporting and empowering women in central and eastern Pennsylvania. The awards showcase tangible and innovative efforts to advance women in the workplace and community.

Sixty percent of LVEDC's employees are women. Four of the top five staff positions at LVEDC are held by women – the Executive Vice President and all three Vice Presidents – compared to 2014, when only one of the top four members of the executive team was female.

Three of the current female vice presidents were hired at other positions and were given opportunities to display their talents, grow new skills, take on leadership roles, and rise to positions with more responsibility.

"I believe our flexibility and culture has attracted many of our female employees, including myself," said Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff Jaime Whalen. "I started at LVEDC working part-time as a new mother. Over time my contributions have been rewarded and today I am one of the organization's executive leaders. My story is not unique here. LVEDC's focus on discovering talent, retaining talent and persistence in ensuring everyone is provided a space to bring value to the organization is paramount."

Currently, 10 of the 32 members of LVEDC's Board of Directors are women. Two of the 10 are women of color.

"That's been critical in terms of our strategy and to drive action and to hear all voices around the table," said Karianne Gelinas, LVEDC's Vice President of Regional Partnerships & Talent Strategies.

Women serving on LVEDC's Board currently include executives from the manufacturing, education, legal, and public utility sectors of the Lehigh Valley economy, and an elected local government official.

Companies represented on the Board or who are investors of LVEDC that were honored with Empowering Women Awards were Barry Isett & Associates; Cedar Crest College; Fitzpatrick Lentz & Bubba; Fulton Bank; King, Spry, Herman, Freund & Faul; Lehigh Valley Health Network; and OraSure Technologies.

Honorees demonstrate a track record of recruiting, hiring, and promoting women; offer a mentoring program for women; work toward systemic change in society to combat inequality; place women on their board or in the C-Suite; contribute to advancing the cause of women through outside philanthropic or community endeavors; support programs that assist marginalized women; and provide scholarship assistance to women.

Winners were selected by a panel of judges made up of the Lehigh Valley Business and Central Penn Business Journal leadership teams.

"The inaugural Empowering Women Award honorees know the importance of women in the workplace and work to support and advance their leadership," said Suzanne Fischer-Huettner, Managing Director of BridgeTower Media/Lehigh Valley Business and Central Penn Business Journal.

"These businesses support mentoring for women and other programs that are clearly aimed at helping women succeed. Lehigh Valley Business and Central Penn Business Journal are proud to congratulate these organizations for recognizing the incredible value and power of women in the workforce."



Group photo courtesy of Richard and Tara Photography



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:

- Program must be open to any resident of the Slate Belt.
- Program must comply with TGAi's mission and values of inclusiveness and accessibility.
- Program must be hosted in an ADA complaint facility.
- Classes will have no fee.
- Performances will have reduced rates available for students and seniors.
- Preference will be given to group activities over serving individuals.
- Programs will not promote any religious or political agenda.
- 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](mailto:arts@tottsgap.org).

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

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