

Bethlehem Morning Star Rotary Club Awards Community Grant to Boys & Girls Club of Bethlehem Teen Initiative

By Janet Kolepp

Bethlehem, PA – The Bethlehem Morning Star Rotary Club is thrilled to announce the recipient of its 2024 Community Grant: The Teen Experience Improvement Project by the Boys & Girls Club of Bethlehem. This initiative will address critical gaps in resources for local teens, focusing on technology access, life skills development, and food security.

The Boys & Girls Club's application highlighted pressing needs in the community, as identified through feedback from teens, staff, families, and local schools. With 79% of club members qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches, food insecurity remains a top concern. The project will directly address these challenges by providing:

- Technology Access: Funding for iPads, Apple Pencils, and a desktop computer to support digital learning and creative exploration.
- Life & Career Skills: Expanding proven programs like Career Launch and Money Matters to empower teens with essential knowledge for their futures.
- Food Security: Ensuring regular meals and snacks for Club members to meet basic needs.

The Teen Experience Improvement Project builds on the success of existing initiatives while filling critical gaps in resources, ensuring teens have the tools and support they need to thrive.

"This project reflects our club's commitment to improving education, economic development, and community well-being," said Rodney Conn, President of Bethlehem Morning Star Rotary. "The Boys & Girls Club's comprehensive proposal demonstrated a clear understanding of the challenges faced by local teens and a thoughtful plan to address them."

Bethlehem Morning Star Rotary awards this annual grant to a local organization that aligns with Rotary International's focus areas. This year's emphasis on education and economic/community development guided the selection of the Teen Experience Improvement Project.

Bethlehem Morning Star□



**BOYS & GIRLS
CLUB**



Paone

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Family and friends greeted the riders as they road into the park. "We set up rides for the children and activites" said Paone, "we wanted it to be a family event to remember Nicholas."

Other donors to the event were: Hriczak Electrical, The Bagelsmith, Naeville Materials J. V., H&K, Custom Decorative Concrete, Werner & Sons Well Drilling, Kneebone & Sons Farm, G. Miller and Sons Welding.

"I want to thank everyone that helps out and the local businesses that donate to make this possible. It was really a great day with great food and weather. Hope to see everyone back next year" Said Frank Paone.

The Slate Belt Veterans Association (SBVA) is a 503c3 not-for-profit foundation based out of Bangor, PA. The SBVA all volunteer Board is mostly made up of veterans, including those with service-connected disabilities. The current members of the Board are Leon Vanderpool, President; Tegwyn Hughes, Vice President; Toni E. Lynch, Treasurer; Terry DeGroote, Civil Engineer; Brad Kennedy, Financial Adviser, and Cindy Beck, Secretary, Michael Ortoski Advisory Board Member.

The primary purpose of the SBVA is to honor those who have served and to support and assist those who have returned home, especially those who returned with service-connected disabilities. SBVA has purchased the property situated at 428 Market Street (4th and Market) in Bangor, Pennsylvania for the future project. The project is in large part possible due to the generosity of Brian Perin. Brian passed away in 2017, and his generous gift is the cornerstone to move the project forward. Brian was co-owner of Grand Central Sanitation.