

Community Action Secures \$1.9 Million for Southside's Tomorrow

By CADB

BETHLEHEM- Community Action Development Bethlehem and its partners announced last week that it has received approval of its new Neighborhood Partnership Program, Southside's Tomorrow. The project will invest \$325,000 annually over the next six years through initiatives that focus on youth development, community engagement, public spaces, housing advocacy, and urban agriculture in South Bethlehem.

Southside's Tomorrow is the successor to the Southside Vision 2020 project and is a partnership between the City of Bethlehem and Community Action Development Bethlehem, a subsidiary of nonprofit Community Action Lehigh Valley.

"As South Bethlehem continues to flourish, it is necessary to incorporate the vibrant voices of the community in the decisions being made about its collective vision" said Yadira Colon-Lopez, Director of Community Action Development Bethlehem. "Empowering the community with strategic and creative placemaking that impacts future development is key to ensuring a vibrant, equitable place to live for all residents."

Through a public input process, Southside's Tomorrow has identified three areas in which to focus its resources over the next six years:

- Housing affordability and quality
- Public and green spaces
- Communication and connectivity

The core of the six-year plan is commitments of \$1.9 million from companies that do business in the Lehigh Valley, supported by 80% tax credits by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development as part of its Neighborhood Partnership Program.

Corporate investors and the annual commitments they made include:

Univest Bank and Trust Co.	\$100,000
Embassy Bank for the Lehigh Valley	\$75,000
Peoples Security Bank & Trust	\$50,000
PPL Electric Utilities	\$50,000
Provident Bank	\$50,000

"We are excited to be partnering on this Neighborhood Partnership Project to continue the revitalization of southside Bethlehem and improve the quality of life for those living and working there," said Michael Keim, President of Univest Bank and Trust Co. "Univest is proud to serve the Lehigh Valley and giving back to the communities we serve has been at the heart of how Univest operates for 145 years. By providing financial support and volunteering time for financial education and mentoring, we are honored to contribute to this important initiative. We look forward to the positive impact that will be made through this focused community development."

Southside's Tomorrow will develop opportunities to expand and support new and



existing community gardens, establish a youth committee that will create programming, continue supporting existing programs such as the Greenway Farmers Market and Southside Ambassadors, and more. Community Action Development Bethlehem is committed to integrating the needs and wants of current residents into long-term, sustainable solutions that both modernize and preserve the integrity of the Southside community.

City of Bethlehem Mayor, Bob Donchez, noted the City is very encouraged that a new initiative will continue on the Southside for at least the next six years. "Because of the partnership with the Community Action Development Bethlehem (CADCB) and the commitment from Univest Bank and Trust, Co. Embassy Bank for the Lehigh Valley, Peoples Security Bank & Trust, PPL Electric Utilities and Provident Bank, Southside's Tomorrow has the resources to continue in the coming years. Southside Vision has been a very important program in Bethlehem, addressing housing, facades, improvements to public greenspace, community building and many other initiatives. We look forward to continuing the good work along with CADCB in the coming years."

About Community Action Development Bethlehem:

Community Action Development Bethlehem seeks to improve the quality of life in South Bethlehem and Northside 2027 neighborhoods by empowering residents and expanding economic opportunity through entrepreneurship training, housing rehabilitation and advocacy, and community development projects. Community Action Development Bethlehem is a subsidiary of Community Action Lehigh Valley.

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