



Greater Latrobe-Laurel Valley Community Chamber of Commerce

THE CHAMBER PAGE

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Joseph Horency, Greater Latrobe Program Coordinator for the Directions Program from The Advisors LLC, and David Martin, GLLV Chamber President.

GLLV Chamber's Education Committee presents Directions program

It's been a staple of the Greater Latrobe-Laurel Valley Chamber of Commerce's Education Committee for over 20 years. That's a long time for anything to last, but the Directions program, presented by Pace Industries - Airo Division, has not only lasted, it is flourishing.

The purpose of Directions is to help students understand that the decisions they make today have a significant impact on future opportunities, including education, career and potential income.

And while the program has great longevity and the basic message remains the same, Directions has also kept up with the times.

"We have similar content, but the presentation is different," said Tim Bates, head of the Chamber's Economic Education Committee and the Business Analyst for the Small Business Development Center at Saint Vincent College. "It has morphed into a lot of things over the years. But it has kept its core and we try to adapt as much as we can but stay with the core. Students learn differently today than they did in the past."

The two and a half hour program is for Greater Latrobe ninth graders and Derry Area eighth graders. Area business and industry leaders - 15 or 16 at Latrobe and six or seven at Derry - make presentations about how they reached their positions, what sort of opportunities are available in the area, and to get students thinking about their futures.

"The students have become more interested, they're curious," said Taylor Kilmer of the Education Committee and Marketing Specialist at Lesco Federal Credit Union. "We've adjusted as the times change. Hard work never changes, neither does a good attitude and work ethic."

One of the basics of the program is "interaction, experience, student involvement" and that was very much evident in preparation for this year's program. Several years ago, four local business people - Dino DeCarlo of Dino's Sports Lounge, Randy Redinger of Randy Redinger & Sons Auto Service, Chris Reddick of State Farm Insurance and Sarah Crispin-Thomas of State Farm Insurance, were interviewed and videotaped discussing the program.

The decision was made to update that video and the task was accomplished by students in the Digital Media program at the Eastern Westmoreland County Career and Technology Center. "The kids did that as part of a project," Bates said. "They asked each of the business people 18 questions, and edited it. We have to give a shout out to the students and kudos to the business owners who agreed to update the video. This is just another way of us getting more involved with EWCTC."

Directions is not a four-year focused program, but is more future-focused. It has become a part of the curriculums at both schools and is welcomed in both places. "I think we have a good thing going in both districts," Bates said. "For them to allow us to come in and be part of the learning process is great. We've had great volunteer participation through the years as well. We get a lot of repeat volunteers, too." Kilmer seconded that. "We really couldn't do this without our chamber friends and the community," she said. "It's really neat to see people do this, it's so positive."

"This Chamber's commitment to career-focused programs for students in our local schools has been a long standing tradition," said GLLV president David Martin. "Directions is a special program. It gives local business leaders a chance to talk with area students and get them thinking about career options and creating pathways to success. We are very thankful for Pace Industries in Loyallhanna and TSI Titanium in Derry supporting the program again this year."

"This is one of the educational programs that the Greater Latrobe-Laurel Valley Chamber of Commerce is most proud of," commented Don Orlando, director of public relations at Saint Vincent College, and chair of the GLLV board. "It gives students a very practical view of the area business community and brings them in direct contact with leaders of those businesses. It initiates a relationship that will last their entire lives."



David Martin, GLLV Chamber President, Ann Emmerling, Executive Director of Blackburn Center, Denise Martin, GLLV Chamber Director of Membership, Jerry Supko, Vice President, Commercial Bank & Trust of PA, and Mike Dudurich, GLLV Chamber Media Writer.

Chamber makes check presentation to Blackburn Center

It was a beautiful late September morning when 20 women gathered at Glengarry Golf Links for the Greater Latrobe-Laurel Valley Community Chamber of Commerce's inaugural Golf & Gab. Plenty of golf shots were hit, lots of gab and laughter was had and money was raised for a good cause.

During January's edition of Good Morning Latrobe radio show on WCNS 1480, GLLV president David Martin and director of membership Denise Martin presented Ann Emmerling, executive director of Blackburn Center, with a check for \$500 from the golf event.

"This is just wonderful and we are so grateful to those who participated and contributed to this," Emmerling said. "This money will go directly into the services we provide for continuing support to people in the most need." Blackburn Center, located in Greensburg, is an organization that serves 3,000 women, men and children who are victims of abuse. It offers support with shelter, counseling and advocacy. The organization, originally known as the Westmoreland Alliance Against Rape, answered its first phone call locally Dec. 6, 1976.

"We thought the Golf & Gab would be

a fun ladies event," said Denise Martin, the chamber's director of membership. "And when we were deciding on a non-profit, we just thought the Blackburn Center was a great one. The work they do and issues they deal with affect all of us in some way and we just felt strongly about supporting them. The bottom line was we knew what we were doing was bringing attention and value in their work with such serious issues."

Thirty-two people make up the staff at Blackburn Center today, and that staff provides top-flight service to victims involved in very unfortunate and tragic situations. And as much as hands-on service is a top priority for the organization, education holds the same sort of value.

Emmerling touched on that when speaking about Golf & Gab. "I think people had a great time that day. It also gave us the opportunity to get information out in front of people," she said. "With an event like that, it's a win-win. It's a nice day, a fun day and we're able to get the word out to people."

She said they reach 15,000 people a year through their education efforts. That not only makes people aware of

what Blackburn Center does and offers, but also helps them raise funds. "We realize that people may have heard about us, but if they didn't need our services, they may not have retained much of what they heard," she said. "It's not at the top of their minds. These sorts of things enable us to share information."

Blackburn Center's biggest fundraiser of the year is the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event. It will be held April 16 at St. Clair Park in Greensburg. The signature event for the center is Westmoreland County's march to stop rape, sexual assault and all forms of gender violence. Participation has grown from 300 to 900 in 2014 and 1,100 in 2015.

Registration is available online at www.blackburncenter.org or by calling 724-837-9540, ext. 144.

"We're so grateful to the Chamber for their efforts with the golf event," Emmerling said. "It's hard for us to do something like this because we just don't have the staff. We've had a long-standing relationship with the Chamber and Denise and David have been wonderful. There are different opportunities now in terms of visibility and it's great."

EVENT CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- 2 - 1 Year Anniversary of The Neighborhood Visitor & Information Center! ALL DAY!
- 10 - Business After Hours presented by First Commonwealth Bank @ Dino's Sports Lounge, 5:05pm - 6:35pm
- 16 - Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting @ Cadillac Laser Center 10am Photo Only
- 18 - Chamber AM Networking Breakfast @ Denny's (Route 30, Latrobe) 7:30am - 9am
- 23 - Chamber University @ Aristotle Auditorium (Kennametal Technology Center) 9am - 10:30am
- 24 - Open House Tour & Mixer @ Greensburg YMCA & J Corks 5pm - 6:30pm
- 25 - YPG I Heart Networking Event @ Lesco Federal Credit Union (Latrobe) 5pm

MARCH

- 9 - Business After Hours presented by First Commonwealth Bank @ Ligonier Tavern 5:05pm - 6:35pm
- 17 - Chamber AM Networking Breakfast @ Hampton Inn Greensburg 7:30am - 9am
- 19 - Grand Opening Celebration @ Colour Magic (Greensburg) 12pm Ribbon Cutting

APRIL

- 13 - Business After Hours presented by First Commonwealth Bank @ (TBD) 5:05pm - 6:35pm
- 21 - Chamber AM Networking Breakfast @ Bethlen Communities (Ligonier) 7:30am - 9am
- 26 - Chamber University @ Aristotle Auditorium (Kennametal Technology Center) 9am - 10:30am

WELCOME New Members!

LIGONIER TAVERN LIGONIER	WOODFOREST NATIONAL BANK UNITY TOWNSHIP
PLANET FITNESS LATROBE UNITY TOWNSHIP	CADILLAC LASER CENTER LATROBE
HANSLEY'S PUB & GRILLE LIGONIER	GRIFFIN MAINTENANCE SUPPLY LATROBE
CASTLE CO-PACKERS LLC LATROBE	HOWARD HANNA REAL ESTATE SERVICES SHARON SALVADOR GREENSBURG
GINGERBREAD MAN RUNNING COMPANY GREENSBURG	HUMMINGBIRD MIND- BODY-SPIRIT STUDIO LATROBE
DMHI HOME INSPECTIONS DERRY	LHTC MEDIA INC. LATROBE
S&S COMMUNICATION SERVICES, INC. ACME	

February & March Business After Hours (presented by First Commonwealth Bank) set

Join us on Wednesday, February 10th at Dino's Sports Lounge in Latrobe, and on Wednesday, March 9th at Ligonier Tavern in Ligonier.

Business After Hours has become the MUST ATTEND monthly networking event. FREE appetizers, cash bar, spotlight tables, GIVEAWAYS, and networking! January's BAH brought in over 100 Chamber Members.

Don't forget to bring plenty of business cards to hand out, as well as to get stamped to win prizes.

Spotlight tables are also available on a first-come first-serve basis and typically SELL OUT! Contact the Chamber to reserve yours today.

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