

Advocacy In Action

December 2022 Newsletter - News and Updates from Turning Point of Lehigh Valley

The Spirit of Empowerment

The Spirit of Empowerment is alive this holiday season! Thank you to all of those who already started to drop off gift cards, wish list items, toys, and paying it forward with monetary gifts. Your help of any size makes a difference so we can continue to serve as many families as possible through our holiday program and throughout the year as well as basic necessities at no cost for thousands of individuals and their children receiving our empowerment programs and services, just like this survivor.

"I lived in a house with all I needed and more. In that house my children and I had everything, except love and peace. A friend told me a long time ago I needed to call Turning Point. She told me they helped people who are being abused. I was surprised that she told me that! I told her, "He doesn't hit me." She told me that abuse is not just hitting then proceeded to tell me her story of how Turning Point helped her. So here I am.

I never knew that keeping me from spending time with my family and friends was abuse. He used to tell me that he loved me so much that it made him jealous. Now I know that he was isolating me. When he called me bad names and told me I was not a good mother or wife, I thought he was just mad, having a bad day, or I was just being a bad wife who didn't understand him. When he criticized me and humiliated me I thought I deserved it. When he made me have sex when I did not want too, I thought it was my obligation as his wife. When he threatened to deport me and take my children I was fearful, so, I stayed silent.

Now I know how wrong I was treated. I have been abused for almost eight years, ever since I came to this country to marry him. Prior to him, I never knew abuse of any kind. My parents are loving parents. My family is poor, but we are rich in the love we show for one another. I never thought I would say this, but thank you Turning Point for showing me the way, for believing in me, for helping me understand that true love would never hurt another - not with words or actions.

I feel so good now that I have peace. I am struggling, but I would rather have nothing that live in a pretty prison. The counseling office is a safe place for me, I have shed many tears and found my laughter. I am beginning to find my old happy self. I am working hard and I have hope that I can make a future for myself and my children. I know there is a long road ahead, but I know as you say...I am not alone!"

Advocacy Highlights

During Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence's 2022 Conference in October, our Executive Director was honored to accept the "15 Years of Service Awards" for Millie Aguila, Mobile Advocate, & Theresa Stibrany, Administrative Assistant. They are truly valued members of our team, and we are lucky to have their passion, dedication, and guidance here at Turning Point.

Also at PCADV's Conference, on behalf of their Board of Directors, our Executive Director, Lori Sywensky was recognized and awarded the 2022 Luminary Award. As a luminary she has inspired and influenced others to create positive change. She has the courage to embrace possibilities and recognize that nothing is impossible.



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Nonprofit of the Year Award at the 2022 Golden Latin Awards

We are honored to be the recipient of the Non-profit Organization of the Year award during the 2022 Golden Latin Awards held on Friday, December 9th at the Palace Center! Thank you to everyone who voted for us and for all your support. We are proud to be part of an amazing community of nonprofits in the Lehigh Valley.

We know that everyone knows someone who has been affected by domestic and intimate partner abuse. We are here so that people do not need to go through it alone. The award was humbly accepted by Miriam Rivera, Community Advocacy Director and Andrea Search, Director of Advancement who represented Turning Point at the event. Miriam's heartfelt speech was filled with passion and was felt throughout the entire room.

A huge CONGRATULATIONS to Michelle Laureano Roque, Director of Mujer Lehigh Valley La Revista and a new Turning Point board member for winning the 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award! Michelle's service to and vision for our community have united people together. We are honored to have her on our Board of Directors.

Michelle's magazine, Mujer Lehigh Valley, is the only magazine dedicated to the empowerment of Latina Women in the Lehigh Valley and in the state of Pennsylvania. The magazine focuses on tools to obtain better physical and emotional health, women's stories, and their experiences. Check out the [most recent edition of the magazine](#). Michelle has included Turning Point and our services in each edition of her magazine.

Thank you to the Golden Latin Awards founder, Isa Pereyra for all of her hard work and dedication along with her son, Franis Jimenez-Pereyra, and daughter, Yamelisa Taveras. This was the 24th year for the Golden Latin Gala & Awards Ceremony here in the Lehigh Valley. We appreciate them for recognizing and empowering rising leaders in our community that support inclusion of Latinos.



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20th Year Anniversary for the Christmas Tree Toss for Charity

Join us for an annual Lehigh Valley fun and festive tradition to benefit Turning Point on Saturday, December 17th at 10:00am at More Miles Automotive, 1458 Stefko Blvd., Bethlehem, PA 18017! Get a group together and challenge your friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, faith community, first responders, sorority, fraternity, teammates, classmates, coaching staff!



History of the event from Lehigh Valley With Love:

The original event was first held in 2002 when then Meineke Car Care owner Peter Kearns challenged Mike DeCrosta, currently of More Miles Automotive, to a contest. The resulting yearly tradition became something of a bizarre, but wildly popular, way to celebrate the holiday season. Peter Kearns unfortunately passed away in 2016, but his family continues to attend the event in his honor.

The event originally ended in 2013 after Kearns retired, but was revived in 2015 at the behest of fans and former participants.

"Pete is the one who came up with this wonderful idea and made sure that it was always in the spirit of raising money for charity," DeCrosta said. "We want to continue to honor him by holding the event in his name."

More Miles Automotive, in conjunction with Lehigh Valley with Love Media, will host the 'Peter Kearns Memorial Christmas Tree Toss' with proceeds going to Turning Point of the Lehigh Valley. The public is encouraged to attend and throw Christmas trees for distance in an effort to be this year's champion! Children will also have a small tree to toss. There will also be small giveaways and refreshments.

Donations of \$5 per throw are encouraged. However, donations of all amounts are accepted and can be made in person at the event or by mailing a donation payable to Turning Point of the Lehigh Valley % More Miles Automotive 1458 Stefko Blvd., Bethlehem, PA.

Facebook Event: <https://fb.me/e/3RwmccTYi>

Check out previous event videos: <https://bit.ly/TreeTossVideos>

Child and Teen Advocacy Programs

Our Children's Program in partnership with ArtsQuest Healing Arts Program, provided a fun art activity with pumpkins. There were seven children from our Safe House Shelter who attended and had a nice, relaxing time painting pumpkins for the Fall. The table was full of paint and the pumpkins were proudly displayed in our Safe House Family Room.



Our Child and Teen Advocacy Director, Braley Veras, and Child and Teen Advocate, Geraldine Infante have been busy making connections in the schools and with teens by:

- Facilitating individual and groups sessions in schools and in our Safe House.
- Finding new ways to create safe spaces for students.
- Finalizing agreements with high schools to host empowerment groups.
- Working with school transportation and homeless liaisons.
- Creating a referral process and procedures that will help to streamline services.



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Local Businesses Investing in Survivors



Turning Point has been awarded a Major Grant in the amount of **\$20,000 from The Provident Bank Foundation** to support our Domestic Violence Rapid Re-Housing and Survivor Resilience Program!

"We are pleased to help further valuable initiatives put forth by local organizations who are working every day to strengthen the lives of residents in our communities," said Samantha Plotino, Executive Director, The Provident Bank Foundation. "We will continue to provide support to these important organizations that have identified an immediate need in the community and for the individuals they serve."

We are honored to be partnering again with The Provident Bank Foundation to build on our transformative housing and financial empowerment work with survivors of domestic and intimate partner abuse in the Lehigh Valley.



We are thrilled to share with you that Boyle Construction's Building Better Together Committee selected Turning Point of Lehigh Valley as a recipient of financial support in the amount of \$10,000 in 2022 and will repeat the same level of support in 2023 (another \$10,000) towards our Community Room at our Safe House! These funds will be used to purchase more durable furniture and update the space as needed.

Over last fiscal year alone, we sheltered 165 adult survivors and 157 children at our Safe House, which is 97% higher than pre-pandemic times.

Keystone Savings Foundation

The Directors of the Keystone Savings Foundation unanimously approved a \$10,000 grant to update and service our existing website. We are excited to be making some updates for 2023!

Slots For Charity: Wind Creek Bethlehem



Turning Point staff from left to right: Leah Triber (Advancement Coordinator), Andrea Search (Director of Advancement), and Lori Sywensky, (Executive Director).

We want to give a huge shout out to our friends at **Wind Creek Bethlehem** for choosing Turning Point as one of three local non-profits this quarter for **Slots for Charity**. We are especially grateful for Susan Stachowski, Community Relations Coordinator at Wind Creek Bethlehem, for her ongoing support in helping Turning Point and the Lehigh Valley Community. Picture to the left are Turning Point staff moments after they found that the unused gaming vouchers added up to \$2,525.36 for the month of October!

You didn't know this was happening? Don't worry, you still have a chance to donate your vouchers during the months of November and December. Visit the casino and donate your vouchers in the boxes by the exits. It is amazing what a few cents can add up to!



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Ways to Get Involved and Give Back

The Power of Gift Cards

Give Survivors the Opportunity to Choose a Gift for their Families

Consider donating a gift card to our Annual Holiday Gift Card Drive. A gift card is a powerful way to help survivors regain autonomy and control back over their lives. When someone takes away your ability to make choices about your life, even the simplest of choices, like which brand of soap to buy, can feel like a gigantic step forward for someone who has lived with abuse.

Gift Cards can be mailed or dropped off **Monday-Friday between 8:30am-4:30pm** at our administrative address located at **444 E. Susquehanna Street, Allentown, PA 18103.**

Email leaht@turningpointlv.org with questions.



The Spirit of Empowerment

2022 Holiday Gift Card Drive

Give the gift of empowerment this holiday season.

Giving a gift card that allows survivors to shop and pick out just the right gift is truly giving the gift of empowerment. It may seem impersonal, but it is deeply meaningful to hundreds of survivors who have been trapped financially or made to feel powerless by their abusers. When you give them a chance to shop and make their own choice, it is a huge step in the healing process to regain their sense of control and freedom. The joy and inner strength that comes along with a survivor being able to choose the perfect gift for their own child(ren) is priceless. With your help, you can make the holidays a little brighter and for someone this year.

The Holiday Gift Card Drive runs from November 1-December 19.

Amazon, Giant, Target, Walmart, Wawa, Weis, Wegmans, and Visa
(Amounts of \$25 and \$50 are preferred.)

You can drop off (Monday-Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm) or mail or your gift cards to:
Turning Point of Lehigh Valley, 444 E. Susquehanna Street, Allentown, PA 18103.

Have questions? Contact:

Leah Triber at 610-797-0530, ext. 234 or leaht@turningpointlv.org
Andrea Search at 610-797-0530, ext. 229 or andreas@turningpointlv.org

For more information visit: bit.ly/TPLVHoliday

Last Call for Sponsors!

Highlight Your Business's Commitment to Survivors

By sponsoring our upcoming Virtual Spring Auction, you're helping survivors of domestic and intimate partner abuse while highlighting your commitment to bettering our community. Your business name will be viewed by thousands of people living and working in the Lehigh Valley and you can build brand awareness while supporting an important cause that your customers, employees, and investors can stand behind.

Interested? Visit our auction website [BIT.LY/TPLV2023AUCTION](https://bit.ly/TPLV2023AUCTION) or email leaht@turningpointlv.org to learn more.



TurningPoint
of Lehigh Valley
EVERY1KNOWSSOME1

**THIRD ANNUAL
VIRTUAL SPRING
AUCTION**

**SAVE THE DATE!
MARCH 3-10, 2023**

Interested in donating or sponsoring?
[BIT.LY/TPLV2023AUCTION](https://bit.ly/TPLV2023AUCTION)

Amazon Smile



Click the link below to help fulfill a survivor's holiday wish today from our updated Amazon Smile Wish List! All items are shipped directly to our administrative building.
<https://bit.ly/tplvamazonsmile>

New items that we are in low supply and in need of can be found on our [General Wish List](#).



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Thank You to Everyone Who Donated to our Fall Appeal

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Consider becoming a monthly donor by visiting our donate page by scanning the QR code or going to turningpointlv.org/donate.



**THANK YOU FOR RAISING A
 RECORD BREAKING NUMBER
 ON GIVING TUESDAY!**

\$17,881

GiveForDV

EVERYONE KNOWS SOME



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