

NETWORKS

DIGITAL NEWS

Leadership Blair County Alumni — Gifts of Hope 2026

This year Leadership Blair County (LBC) Alumni will be supporting Easter for Eli's Christmas Stocking program as their 2026 Gifts of Hope project.

Elias "Eli" Garrett was a loving 3-year-old boy who lost his courageous and lengthy battle with Non-Hodgkin's T-Cell Lymphoma on May 7, 2009, just shy of his fourth birthday.

During Eli's hospital stays, his father, Martin Garrett, and his coworkers brought Eli Easter baskets, and when extra baskets were available, they shared them with other hospitalized children. This small act of kindness inspired the creation of the nonprofit, which now delivers gifts nationwide

In Eli's memory, his family began collecting Easter baskets to be delivered to children who are hospitalized over the Easter Holiday. Their initiative has grown to include an overall total of 94,941 baskets and bags, gift cards totaling \$90,000+, over 4,000 miles traveled in 2026, 7,410 smiles delivered in 2026 to sick children and their families at hospitals in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, West Virginia, Delaware, and DC.

They have now added Christmas Stockings to the items they delivered to children hospitalized over the Christmas holiday, with 100 stockings as an initial goal and 250 as a goal for 2025. The goal was exceeded in 2025, with 350 sponsored stockings and \$2,545 in gift cards were delivered to children in hospital over the Christmas holiday.

Kaleigh Garrett, Eli's sister and Vice President of Easter for Eli was quoted in a recent article saying "Through the organization, we raise funds and awareness for families affected by cancer while honoring Eli's legacy through compassion and community support."

LBC Alumnus, Sherri Stayer, shared that "Each Alumni donation, no matter how big or small, combines with all of others to contribute to the Christmas Stockings, to make a difference that no one single person alone could make."

Please help by contributing coloring books, small children's books, activity books, crayons, Play-Doh, or other small stocking stuffer items," including gift cards for Sheetz, Google Play, iTunes, Amazon, or VISA. NO FOOD or CANDY! Items can be delivered to the Chamber from September 1 - 18, to be included in the Gifts of Hope donation to be presented to the Easter for Eli organization at the Annual LBC Alumni Breakfast on September 25th.

LBC Alumni – Let's show Easter for Eli, our community, and hospitalized children and their families how we can make a difference!



The ultimate Canadian excursion

Experience Canada's stunning landscapes with the Chamber and Epic Journeys in 2027! Canadian Maritimes and Coastal Wonders, August 29 through September 8, will feature stops in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Peggy's Cove in Halifax, and more.

This adventure will fully immerse you in ancient Gaelic culture with stops at the Millbrook Cultural and Heritage Centre and Gaelic College. You'll even pick up a few Gaelic phrases as you join in the fun of a "milling frolic".

Rugged landscapes, quaint fishing villages, and bustling waterfront areas are ready for you to explore.

The Chamber will be hosting an informational meeting on Monday, July 27, at 1:00 p.m. at the Devorris Center for Business Development. There is no cost or obligation to attend. Travel experts will be on hand to answer your questions. RSVP by calling the Chamber at 814-943-8151 or emailing chamber@blairchamber.com.



PIDA interest rates for third quarter announced

Do you have a project that could use some special financing? Consider Pennsylvania's PIDA program through the Altoona-Blair County Development Corp! The PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) released third quarter interest rates for the PIDA program effective July 1. For real estate projects, rates are as low as 4.50%. Equipment projects can secure a loan at 5.50%. Eligible borrowers include manufacturing, industrial, healthcare, daycare, warehousing and logistics companies and more, who commit to creating or retaining jobs in



Blair County. If your business has a real estate or equipment project coming up and are in need of financing, contact [Tom Seasoltz](#) at ABCD Corporation to learn about your options today!

Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program deadline extended

The deadline to apply for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program has been extended to December 31, 2026. The Department of Revenue will begin issuing automated telephone calls to claimants in advance of rebate checks and direct deposit payments. These calls will notify claimants that their application has been approved and that no further action is required. The call will also provide information on how claimants can track the status of their



rebate using the "Where's My Rebate?" feature available through my-PATH. [More information on the program can be found here.](#)

Welcome! new members!

The Chamber would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members who share our vision of building a strong business community:

[7 Brew Coffee](#)

[Adelphoi Foster Care & Adoption Services](#)

[Robert Latoche](#)

[Roaring Spring Borough](#)

[Tam's Treasures](#)

Introducing...

WE-LEaD Scholarship Fund

through Central PA Community Foundation



\$500 award will be given to a high school senior female

1-2 scholarships awarded annually

Please donate now!

Donations can be made to CPCF (note: WE-LEaD)



AFTER HOURS

Summer Series

JULY 16

5-7 PM



LCBC Church - Pleasant Valley Shopping Center

You will be AMAZED

LIFE-SIZED REPRODUCTION OF AN ISLAND PARADISE!

FAMILY FRIENDLY!

\$5 per person / Kids 12 & under - FREE

RSVP HERE

Congratulations

...to [Kish Bank](#) on their record-breaking results from their participation in the American Bankers Association (ABA) Foundation's "Teach Children to Save" program. This initiative delivered banker-led financial education to more than 3,300 elementary students in Blair and other local counties.

...to [Holland Brothers Meats](#), who won several awards at the Pennsylvania Meat Processors Convention. They won Grand Champion boneless ham, Grand Champion lunch meat, Reserve Grand Champion small diameter cooked sausage, and Reserve Grand Champion bone in smoked ham.

Gifts of Hope

Making a difference.

Each year Leadership Blair County Alumni searches for a cause in which they can truly make a difference in the lives of others. In response to these efforts, the Alumni created Gifts of Hope.

This year the Alumni has chosen to support the Easter for Eli Stocking initiative. Known nationwide for delivering thousands of Easter baskets to hospitalized children and families, this amazing charity also delivers thousands of stockings to children spending winter holidays in the hospital.

Help us make a difference!



Items needed...

Gender neutral...

Coloring books

Small Books

Activity books

Crayons

Play-Doh

Small stocking stuffers

Gift cards...

Sheetz

Google Play

iTunes

Amazon

Visa

NO food or candy

Donations accepted:

September 1 - 18

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Donation location:

Blair County Chamber, 3900 Industrial Park Drive, Altoona

Monetary donations: 100% used to purchase stocking items

Checks payable to: Blair County Chamber Foundation

For more information:

Email Sherri Stayer

sherris@lungdiseasefoundation.org