

# Bridging the Gaps



## It Takes A Village: The Inside Scoop on Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley

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### COMMUNITY PARTNER

#### Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley (PNLV)

“Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley (PNLV) is a Black-led, anti-racist, liberation-based grassroots community organization that is led and staffed by neighborhood residents in Allentown, Pennsylvania. PNLV comprises a unique network whose role in our community is to promote consistent public health messaging, delivered by trusted community messengers. The mission of PNLV is to foster cooperation among residents within the Greater Lehigh Valley to create safe, healthy, vibrant, inclusive neighborhoods, where children succeed in school and where adults and families thrive and want to live.” <https://promiseneighborhoodslv.org/>

### EXPERIENCE

- Engaged in enriching events to learn about the needs of the community ranging from the Blue Zones Conference to the Gun Violence Prevention talk with the Mayor, Allentown Police Department Chief, and Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania.
- Organized events based on the needs of the community gathered from the community assessment.
- Implemented a heart health day event to discuss cardiovascular health, oral health, smoking cessation and offered free blood pressure screenings.
- Collaborated with St. Luke’s Emergency Medicine and Trauma Surgery Departments to implement Stop the Bleed program.
- Created health care bags for the community containing health essentials ranging from pads, socks, hand sanitizer, chapstick, ibuprofen, and toothbrush kits.
- Worked with community members to help them create job resumes and assisted them in the job search process and mock interviews.
- Volunteered at the Wellness Center to organize and facilitate orders at the food bank.
- Assisted staff at the James Lawson Freedom School Program.

### BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

Within the first few minutes of my initial visit to PNLV, I felt a deep sense of community which continued to build during my time there. PNLV is focused on building a bright future for community members and bringing an end to gun violence. The organization serves the city of Allentown with a population of 125,094 (US Census Bureau, 2022). Allentown is 54.5% Hispanic or Latino, 53% White, 14.1% Black or African American, 3.1% Asian, 14.3% two or more races, and 0.8% Native American (US Census Bureau, 2021). Being at PNLV, I developed deep relationships with the Allentown community members and now better understand the needs of the community. This is reflected in my narrative medicine piece and the events that I organized at PNLV.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS/ CHALLENGES/ LESSONS LEARNED

Challenges included organizing the community events by myself. There were a lot of small details that I had to coordinate to ensure the success of the planned events. My two most cherished accomplishments were the Heart Health Day and Stop the Bleed events. I planned these events after speaking with community members about what they thought the community would benefit from. Through my internship experience, I learned more about myself and have grown intellectually and emotionally and have learned how to be an advocate for my community and myself.



### REFLECTION

#### Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley

*“My experience through this internship has shaped my understanding of community and impacted my goals for the future. I plan to continue participating in this advocacy program and giving back to the community. Gun violence significantly affects the safety and well-being of our future generation, and we must all be a part of the mission to stop gun violence.”*