

A partnership with the Altoona Mirror and the Blair County Chamber of Commerce

## LBCY program kicks off with session in Altoona

By Brittany Mayer

While the 30th class of Leadership Blair County Adult began with an orientation session, the 22nd class of Leadership Blair County Youth began their sessions as well.

"It was fun, and it was nice to learn about new things," said Raina Alexander, student at Williamsburg Community High School. "I'm excited for the sessions and to meet new people because the people that I've met here have been so fun to talk to."

There are 23 tenth-grade students in Leadership Blair County Youth this year from surrounding Blair County high schools.

"It's an awesome opportunity for young people's eyes to be open to not just all that's involved in the community but to be able to network with different schools, develop friendships with



people from other schools, learn about all the servant leadership opportunities," said Tami Chadick, program facilitator. "You don't have to leave Blair County to do exciting things or see exciting things."

The purpose of this program is similar to the adult class but has an added component. Teaching servant leadership is the goal, but also showing the next generation that they can live, work and stay in Blair County.

"I'm excited to expand more on going to different places and learning about different things around here. Even though we learn about history as a whole, it's very

rare that we learn about history that's around here that's right in front of us," said Brianna Clossin, student at Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School. "It's been a very great experience thus far and it's only our first session."

There will be eight more sessions from now until May 2025, and each session will focus on a different aspect of Blair County.

"The LBCY program is important because of how it positively impacts students by helping them to develop a foundation of leadership skills and experience they can use within both their school and community involvement," said J. Butch



Abigail Kayser (right) and Brianna Clossin (left) exploring the Railroaders Memorial Museum during the first Leadership Blair County Youth session.

Dillen, member of the LBCY Advisory Group. "It also enables them to hear about their county's history,

culture, issues of the day and potential career opportunities."

To see more of the Lead-

ership Blair County Youth class of 2025, follow the Chamber on all social media platforms.

## Annual Business Excellence program pays tribute to business leaders

For over two decades the Blair County Chamber of Commerce has recognized a business leader in the community with the Lifetime Achievement Award. The award is presented at the annual Business Excellence Dinner. The evening's program includes testimonials from former co-workers, friends and family members of the honoree.

The Blair County Chamber is proud to announce that Joe Hurd will be the 2024 recipient of the Blair County Chamber's Lifetime Achievement Award for Business Excellence. After 27 years with the Blair County Chamber of Commerce Hurd retired on August 30. He will be honored at the Business Excellence Dinner to be held on Monday, October 7th at the Blair County Convention Center.

Hurd joins a long list of respected award recipients. The Lifetime Achievement

Award recognizes a business leader in the region who has positively impacted the Blair County business community for an extended period of time. Many of the recipients were instrumental in the success of the business or organization where they worked, but the award is about more than professional success. It is also about serving as a business leader and making a positive impact in the business community in Blair County.

A number of the past recipients are expected to be in attendance at the event. Doors open at 5:30pm for the VIP Reception which includes hors d'oeuvres and a beer and wine open bar. A sit-down dinner will be served at 7pm and the program begins at 7:45pm. Cost is \$95 for the VIP reception and dinner, and \$65 for the dinner only. Reservations are required and can be made online at blair-chamber.com.

### Award Recipients

**2002**  
Ernie Wissinger

**2003**  
G. William Ward

**2004**  
Steve Sheetz

**2005**  
Don Devorris

**2006**  
Bill Campbell

**2007**  
John Wolf

**2008**  
Lee Hite

**2009**  
Don Detwiler

**2010**  
Michael McLanahan

**2011**  
Barry Smith

**2012**  
Fred Imler, Sr.

**2013**  
Ben Stapelfeld

**2014**  
Bill Thompson

**2015**  
Tim Sissler

**2016**  
Marty Marasco

**2017**  
Harry Sickler

**2018**  
Ann Benzel

**2019**  
Rex Kaup

**2021**  
Mark Barnhart

**2022**  
Joe Keller

**2023**  
Dan Hoover

## Breakfast to feature healthcare expert

The October Breakfast Club will be on Thursday, October 10th. The Chamber is excited to have Dr. Zeev Neuwirth coming to speak. He is a Healthcare Executive, Author and Podcast Host.

In his presentation, "Humanizing Healthcare & Restoring The American Dream", Dr. Neuwirth will discuss the challenges in our healthcare system and describe how Gloria Gates CARE presents a sustainable, equitable and scalable solution for American healthcare. Dr. Neuwirth will be giving attendees a copy of his book, "Reframing Healthcare: A Roadmap for Creating Disruptive Change". He will be signing the book for those who would like a personalized copy. Dr. Neuwirth says his goal is to reorient the way individuals and organiza-



Dr. Zeev Neuwirth

tions think about healthcare.

The sponsor for the October Breakfast Club is Kish Benefits Consulting. It will be held at The Casino at Lakemont Park. Doors open at 7:45am with the presentation starting at 8am. Online registration is encouraged. Or you can register by calling the Chamber at (814) 943-8151. The cost is \$20 for Chamber Members and \$30 for non-members.

## Meeting to be held on Scandinavia trip



Copenhagen's history is highlighted in Indre By, the city's historic center, featuring an 18th-century rococo district.

The Chamber will hold an informational trip meeting on Thursday, October 17th at 6pm at the Devorris Center for Business Development that will focus on the "Highlights of Scandinavia". That tour, scheduled for August 2025, includes stops in Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The Chamber is partnering with

Ketrow KURTZ Travel for this trip. Ketrow KURTZ will share details about the trip itinerary. There is no cost or obligation to attend Chamber trip planning meetings. There are a limited number of seats available. If you plan to attend, please call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 to reserve your spot!

## YEA! graduate returns to Chamber

The Blair County Chamber is honored to have a former Young Entrepreneurs Academy graduate back in our office as an intern. Isaac Kuntz, graduated from the YEA! program in 2020 when he was a senior at Hollidaysburg area High School. He recently graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown and is now looking to gain additional experience while searching for his first professional job. Kuntz knew the Chamber would serve as a great resource for him, "it also provides opportunities to get more involved in my community, while developing my professional network with local businesses." Kuntz learned about maintaining a professional network from his YEA! mentor, Alex Seltzer. "Since my

sophomore year of college, we would try to connect over summer breaks to catch up. Many times, I would ask him for advice when looking for internships, etc. He even got me a summer job through his company, Manpower," said Kuntz. All YEA! students are paired up with a mentor from the business community. One role of the mentor is to help guide the student through the process of becoming an entrepreneur.

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) is a program for students in grades 6 - 12. Students accepted into the program generate business ideas, conduct market research, write business plans, pitch to a panel of investors, and launch their very own companies. Kuntz says his time in the program also helped prepare him for



Alex Seltzer of Manpower catches up with Intern Isaac Kuntz at the Blair County Chamber's new office space.

college. "The expectations in class were a good transition to college style. I enrolled in a class at UPJ called Entrepreneur's Idea Lab, where students would come up with a business idea, plan it out and develop it, then present the idea to a

panel of local business owners. This was nearly identical to what I learned through YEA! Plus, I got college credit for enrolling." Kuntz looks forward to meeting with other members of the business community throughout his internship.



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