Early childhood education is essential in helping to build a child’s academic foundation, but for many families the cost of programs are financially out of reach.

Ashlee wanted her daughter to attend a good program she could trust. When she learned about Third Street Alliance’s Pre-K Counts program, she was excited to enroll her daughter in a quality program with teachers she trusted, at no cost to her.

Pre-K Counts is a state-funded early childhood education program that prepares 3- and 4-year-olds and their families for the transition to Kindergarten. Students are introduced to the school setting, what is expected of them, classroom routines, as well as learning academics needed for Kindergarten.

“Pre-K Counts was my and Jenesis’s first introduction to school,” Ashlee said. “It taught her what school was, and I was able to work on her skills at home.”

The impact of school was very obvious. Jenesis went from being shy to confident and is able to communicate with others, especially adults, Ashlee said.

“It changed my daughter so much. She was learning all day long and she enjoyed it. It’s fun for her,” Ashlee said.

“It was beneficial for me, too.”

Parents are encouraged to meet with Fresia Mayoria, Family Engagement Specialist, monthly to talk about how to be an advocate for their child’s education or about resources they may not have known about before.

“The parents are respected as their child’s first teacher,” said Nancy Frederick, Director of The Learning Center. “We work together to create a working plan for each family.”

The classrooms partner with the Easton Area School District and transition plans are made to ensure students are ready for their next school when they leave the Pre-K Counts program.

In August, Third Street Alliance was granted an additional classroom that will benefit 20 families within the Easton Area School District. One of those students will be Ashlee’s 3-year old son.

For more information about enrolling your child in Pre-K Counts, contact Fresia Mayoria at 610-438-9429 or at FMayoria@thirdstreetalliance.org.
A Note From the Executive Director’s Desk
Focusing on Education To Achieve More

Learning is a core value for Third Street Alliance and we always look to tie our mission-driven programs to learning opportunities for the families we serve, our staff and our volunteers. This fall offers us some unique opportunities that I am excited to share with you.

We opened our second Pre-K Counts classroom in August, increasing the number of children served in our Learning Center by 20 new faces. We also are looking to increase the number of students in our afterschool program. Currently the enrollment capacity of our Learning Center is 165 children.

Also, this fall, a second cohort of shelter residents are enrolled in the micro-credentialing program at Northampton Community College. And we anticipate launching a new series of parenting and financial literacy workshops for shelter residents. We strengthened partnerships with local school districts to provide them with information and resources for families who might be at risk for homelessness, with the end goal of maintaining educational stability for children in school.

We’re welcoming back volunteers from local colleges and universities, including Lafayette, Moravian and Northampton. And we are proud to say that four of the teachers in our Learning Center are currently enrolled in college classes for early childhood AA, BA and Center Director credentials.

Sarah Panovec, our Grants and Contracts Manager, will be participating in the 2018-2019 class of Leadership Lehigh Valley, and Zenayda Alicea, Regional Manager for Coordinated Entry, will be a presenter at the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania’s Fall 2018 Homes Within Reach Conference. In September, our Board of Directors will conduct a board retreat focused on governance and planning, and we’ll follow that up with a staff retreat in October.

This focus on learning brings new perspectives to all levels of our organization and challenges us to keep our programming fresh and relevant to the community.

This Summer, A Special Thanks Goes To

-The community for your response to our urgent need for fans, water and ice pops for our shelter families during the first very hot weekend in June.

-Facebook Fundraisers: With a simple few clicks, anyone can organize a fundraiser for friends to donate on Facebook to Third Street Alliance in honor of their birthday. To find out how, go to thirdstreetalliance.org/donate for a guide.

-Volunteers: Individuals and groups, tackled projects large and small, painting shelter spaces and preparing the new Pre-K Counts classroom. Learn how you can volunteer at Third Street Alliance, go to thirdstreetalliance.org/volunteer.

Volunteers help prepare the Pre-K Counts classrooms and and volunteers from Concannon Miller during United Way’s Day of Caring.
Summer S.T.E.A.M. Learning

Our students in each classroom enjoyed learning throughout the summer with different activities in many areas, including visits from the Da Vinci Center and high school student volunteers.

Learning about gasses with the Da Vinci Center!

Making ice cream the old-fashioned way, without the churn!
Assembling a Brighter Future

There wasn’t an opportunity for Rita*, a mother of three, to advance in her jobs of flipping burgers and stocking shelves. She realized she needed a better job to be able to support her family. While at Third Street Alliance, Rita was presented with the opportunity to create a new career path. That’s when she decided to prepare for a better future by enrolling in the Micro-Credentials in Manufacturing class through Northampton Community College in Easton.

During the spring semester, NCC opened up a few spots in its micro-credentials class for residents at Third Street Alliance giving women the skills needed to prepare for positions in manufacturing jobs where there is potential to make higher wages. The 9-week course is designed for people who may have barriers to finding employment. The college also has support specialists to help students prepare them for meaningful employment and/or further education.

“It really did work out for the women to take the class. I know it’s going to help a lot of families,” said Janice Thomas, director of homeless services.

Rita started the class by passing an assessment, and over nine weeks learned an overview of manufacturing processes and a focus on workplace safety. The class included some hands-on learning but then used online modules for learning. Students needed to pass the modules with 100 percent before moving on to a new subject in class the next day. There were many times Rita came back from class and spent additional time finishing the module on the computer at Third Street Alliance. Rita worked hard and successfully completed the class.

“Working with Third Street Alliance is just the type of community partnership that will help us meet our commitment to providing exceptional and accessible learning to the communities we serve,” said Michele Salkin, NCC Outreach Coordinator and Career Coach. “The positive feedback we have received from the residents who have gone through the program and its positive impact on their lives reinforces the importance of having accessible learning opportunities in downtown Easton.”

*NIC Name has been changed for privacy.

School Supplies and Hair Cuts Given to Area Students

The line outside Third Street Alliance started long before opening the doors to the No Child Left Behind event. Parents and grandparents with kids of all ages anxiously awaited their turn to prepare for school by selecting a free backpack and school supplies.

Organized by Stephen Flowers, owner of Suddenly Samantha hair salon, the event included barbers and stylists who volunteered their time and talent to give free haircuts. More than 300 backpacks were distributed and more than 100 haircuts were given.

Thank you to the individuals, groups and businesses that donated, and to the many volunteers that gave their time. The impact of this generous event was seen in every smile of both children and adults.

For information on how you can help next year, contact, Lynn Ondrusek, Community Outreach and Communications Manager at londrusek@thirdstreetalliance.org or at 610-438-9434.
No Child Left Behind
For volunteer Patti Price, the YWCA at the Simon Mansion was where she grew up. Here she learned to swim, took ballet classes and became a member of the Y-Teens group during her high school years. For her generation, the YWCA was a place where teens could come together on a Saturday night to dance and spend time with old friends and make new friends.

That involvement brought Patti back to enroll her children in The Learning Center. After a few more years Patti began her volunteer career, following the footsteps of her mother, who was an active member of the YWCA ladies’ clubs for many years.

Serving as a board member for 16 years, Patti led the board as president during the time of the transition from the YWCA to Third Street Alliance. “I truly believe in the mission and want to contribute to its continued success,” Patti said. “TSA’s role in our community is invaluable, benefitting hundreds of individuals and families every year through childcare, educational, social and residential programs.”

While she currently doesn’t serve on the board, Patti remains active on the development committee serving as the chair of the Sock Hop committee, an event she has chaired for the last four years. “We wanted to add a fun event that would be smaller than the Bistro and attract a different audience into the building,” Patti said. “A few of us who had been Y-Teens suggested a dance modeled after the Y-Teen dances, except, we hoped the ‘boys' wouldn't all hang by the back wall.”

The night includes music from the 1950s to the 1980s spun by DJs Mayor Sal Panto and Brad Scott Smith. The gym gets blasted back in time with retro décor. Snacks from the Caramel Corn Shop, pizza from Colonial Pizza and cupcakes from Sweet Girlz are available for purchase.

“Each year we've had attendees who are first-time visitors, former Y-Teens and, what I think is especially neat, three generations joining in to dance the night away,” Patti said.

$20 ticket includes drinks and snacks
Additional refreshments available for purchase

Dress in your favorite era from the ’50s to the ’80s!

Tickets can be purchased at the door or online at www.thirdstreetalliance.org/sock-hop
Individuals and families facing homelessness often don’t know where to turn for help. Through United Way, the 2-1-1 system provides a link for services like food pantries, clothing, employment resources and health care.

With one phone call to 2-1-1, people that are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness will have a representative interview them over the phone and place them in the Coordinated Entry system. Once in the system, through community resources, people will be assisted into emergency, transitional housing, or diversion programs that could help in them being able to stay in their homes.

This valuable resource is not widely known. Third Street Alliance has been helping to bridge the information gap about 2-1-1 and Coordinated Entry between agencies and local school districts. TSA staff first met with administrators and guidance counselors to present the information. Staff will also speak with parent-teacher groups and organizations throughout the Easton and Wilson school districts.

“It’s important to have these conversations because homelessness is real. There isn’t a checklist that teachers can use to identify a homeless child,” Janice Thomas, director of Homeless Services said. “If we can stop just a fraction of it through our diversion and prevention efforts, then we will have done our job.”

For more information on the 2-1-1 system visit pa211.org

What We’re Reading

We asked the Third Street Alliance staff what books they are reading currently. Even though life can get busy, it’s still important to take some time out and read a book or two. Here’s what we’re reading:

- The Hidden Messages in Water by Masaru Emoto
- The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz
- Standing at the Edge by Joan Halifax
- Lincoln in the Bardo by George Saunders
- The Cabin at the End of the World by Paul Tremblay
- The Buried Giant by Kazuo Ishiguro
- The Handmaid’s Tale by Margaret Atwood
- Dietland by Sarai Walker
- The Six Women of Salem by Marilynnne K. Roach
- I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb
- New and Selected Poems by Mary Oliver
To receive the newsletter electronically, please contact londrusek@thirdstreetalliance.org. Visit our website to find an enhanced version of the newsletter at www.thirdstreetalliance.org/newsletters-reports.

Thank you Crayola for supporting our school-age summer art program!
Our students showed off their creative sides through various art projects inspired by shapes, colors and lines.