

# Chamber CHATTER



**MECHANICSBURG**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
*The Strength of One. The Power of Many.™*

4.11.24

6 West Strawberry Avenue, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055 (717) 796-0811 [www.mechanicsburgchamber.org](http://www.mechanicsburgchamber.org)

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News, Events & more!

## Seeking HOSTS for 2024 EVENTS

- Business Women's Networking Luncheon
  - After Hours Mixer
- Business Leaders Discussion Group

BE A HOST and showcase your business,  
service and more...

## CHAMBER EVENTS

*Watch for Weekly Updates!!*

### *April*

**23 - AM Strategies... for Business Success -**  
Lunch edition and networking - Heather Holloway -  
**SCOPE: The System for Social Media Mastery.**  
Sponsored by UPMC.  
Location sponsor - **Buhrig's Gathering Place,**  
25 E Main St, Mechanicsburg. 11:30am - 1:00pm.

**25 - Business Leaders Discussion Group -**  
Sponsored by PaySmart Payroll Services, 650 Wilson  
Ln, Ste. 100, Mechanicsburg. 7:45 - 9:00am.  
Members only event.

### *May*

**2 - 14th Annual Cinco de Mayo Regional Fiesta  
Mixer -** Location - **Volvo CE,** 200 Rowe Rd.,  
Shippensburg, 4:30 - 6:30pm. RSVP requested.

RSVP to [info@mechanicsburgchamber.org](mailto:info@mechanicsburgchamber.org)

For a full calendar of chamber and member events,  
visit [www.mechanicsburgchamber.org/events](http://www.mechanicsburgchamber.org/events)

## Thank You For Renewing Your Membership!

Devercare Insurance Group  
GFWC Mechanicsburg  
Glessner Technologies, Inc  
Law Office of Debra R. Mehaffie, LLC  
Mechanicsburg Area School District  
Schnader's Concessions LLC  
Wendell's Performance Truck Shop

*You're Invited...*



Please join the Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce as we celebrate the 1st Anniversary and expansion of one of our members with a Ribbon Cutting.

You are welcome to come see what they have to offer as they have expanded their 'flavors'.

Friday, April 12th  
**Revolutionary Hot Sauce Eatery & Brewpub**  
30 South Market Street  
Mechanicsburg, 17055  
Ribbon Cutting at – 1:00pm

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*Chamber Chatter* is published on-line every Thursday.

We encourage member businesses to send us information on sales, promotions, news and events. It is a great way to promote your business or organization.

*Chamber Chatter* advertisements will remain for up to 4 weeks, or as space permits.

If you have something to share, please submit it by Wednesday at noon to  
[info@mechanicsburgchamber.org](mailto:info@mechanicsburgchamber.org).

**\*\*Chamber Chatter advertising is a FREE member benefit.\*\***

**Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce presents:**

# A.M. Strategies ... for Business Success

**Tuesday, April 23**

**11:30 am - 1:00 pm**

**Lunch Edition**

Presented by:

Heather Holloway  
Holloway Media Services

## **SCOPE: The System for Social Media Mastery**



- **Understand the fundamentals of social media marketing and its impact on brand building.**
- **Learn strategies to attract new customers through effective content diversification.**
- **Discover tactics for engaging and retaining existing customers.**
- **Explore the power of storytelling in social media marketing and how it contributes to brand loyalty.**
- **Gain insights into the latest trends and innovations in social media marketing and how to leverage them for business success.**

### **Location Sponsor:**



Buhrig's Gathering Place -  
25 E Main Street, Mechanicsburg -  
Parking Available (any Buhrig lot) -  
off Strawberry Avenue

Sponsored by:

**UPMC**  
LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE

Complimentary light lunch included.  
RSVP required to [info@mechanicsburgchamber.org](mailto:info@mechanicsburgchamber.org)  
or call 717-796-0811

**Mechanicsburg Chamber of Commerce presents:**

# **Business Leaders Discussion Group**

**Thursday, April 25**

**7:45 - 9:00 am**

**Sponsored by  
PaySmart Payroll Services  
650 Wilson Ln, Suite 100  
Mechanicsburg**



RSVP to [info@mechanicsburgchamber.org](mailto:info@mechanicsburgchamber.org) or call 717-796-0811.  
This members-only event is free to attend!

**Bring your questions and business topics and hear what others have to say!**

## **Seeking HOSTS for 2024 EVENTS**

- Business Women's Networking Luncheon
  - After Hours Mixer
- Business Leaders Discussion Group

**BE A HOST** and showcase your business, service and more...

For more information - on HOSTING AN EVENT  
contact the Chamber office at 717-796-0811 or email - [info@mechanicsburgchamber.org](mailto:info@mechanicsburgchamber.org).

**Our calendar is WIDE open.**



14th Annual



REGIONAL  
FIESTA MIXER

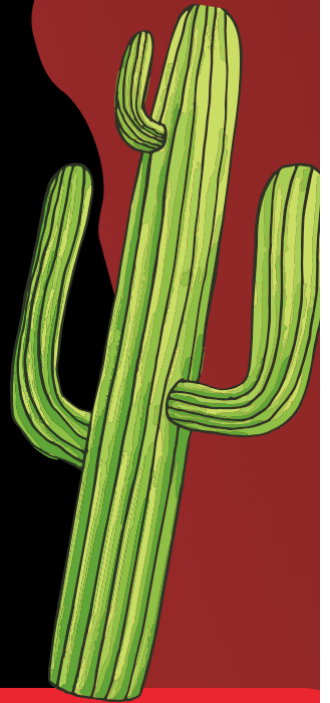
THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2024  
4:30 - 6:30 PM

Volvo Construction Equipment  
Customer Center  
200 Rowe Road, Shippensburg

RSVP: [tinyurl.com/2024-Cinco-Mixer](https://tinyurl.com/2024-Cinco-Mixer)



Volvo Construction  
Equipment





# 14th Annual Regional Fiesta Mixer

Thursday, May 2, 2024

4:30 - 6:30 pm

Volvo Construction Equipment  
Customer Center  
200 Rowe Road, Shippensburg

## **SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE!**

**Take advantage of this opportunity to connect with 350+ business professionals!**

### **Exclusive Event Sponsor (SOLD)**



### **Event Partner (\$500)**

- Logo promoted in all event advertising
- Booth space

### **Food Sponsor (\$1,000)**

- Logo promoted in all event advertising
- Booth Space
- Display Business Banner (provided by Sponsor)



### **Table Sponsor (\$250)**

- Booth space



Volvo Construction  
Equipment

### **Beverage Sponsors (\$500)**

- Logo promoted in all event advertising



Sponsorship Information: [chamber@shippensburg.org](mailto:chamber@shippensburg.org)



# Jubilee Day

## Save the Date

On June 20, Jubilee Day returns to the streets of downtown Mechanicsburg. This year marks the 94th Annual edition! Don't miss your chance to be exposed to nearly 70,000 attendees from across the midstate.

Booth space is available at a discounted rate for Chamber members. Contact the chamber for an application. 717-796-0811 or [info@mechanicsburgchamber.org](mailto:info@mechanicsburgchamber.org)

# Mechanicsburg Lions Club



*Invites you to attend:*

## **Lions Club Open House April 16, 2024**

### **Free Dinner!**

**In 1925, Helen Keller challenged the Lions to be the “Knights of the Blind”. Lions International accepted that challenge and have been helping the blind ever since. The Lions have grown to be the largest service organization in the world with 1.4 Million members in 48,000 clubs in 200 Countries!**

Would you like to **give back** to your community through service?

Would you like to learn more about the Lions?

Join the 79 men & women of our club to better our community!

### **Reply if Interested!**

Where: Buhrig’s Gathering Place - 25 E. Main Street - Mechanicsburg, PA

When: **Tuesday, April 16, 2024** 5:45-6:15 Arrival Time 6:30 Dinner

**RSVP: by April 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Email: [mechanicsburglionsclub@gmail.com](mailto:mechanicsburglionsclub@gmail.com)**

**Phone: 717-516-8401**

**You must RSVP to reserve your place for dinner!**

This event is sponsored by the Lions Club of Mechanicsburg PA-Membership materials will be distributed during the evening.





This event could be right up your alley! The BIGGEST BOWLING PARTY in the region is back to ignite the power and promise of youth. Bowl for Kids' Sake raises funds for Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Capital Region. Gather your friends, family and coworkers to bowl for a cause! Raise funds to connect youth across 5 counties with caring mentors who inspire kids to dream BIG! The more you raise, the bigger your impact! Multiple event dates are available. Register today at [CAPBIGS.ORG](http://CAPBIGS.ORG).

Bowl for Kids' Sake is sponsored by Hershey's Chocolate World.

Event has multiple dates/times/locations (additional event dates may be added):

- Thursday, April 18th at 6:00pm. Palmyra Bowling, Palmyra.
- Thursday, April 25th at 6:00pm. Midway Bowl, Carlisle.

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**LEMOYNE SPRINGFEST**  
**VENDOR FAIR AND KIDS FUN DAY**

**Saturday, April 20**  
**10am-2pm**

***Grace United Methodist Church Parking Lot***  
309 Herman Ave | Lemoyne

Shop our vendor fair, order food from our food trucks.  
FREE kids games and activities

Sponsored by Musselman Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Inc.  
and Grace UM Church.

# Third Friday **FOOD TRUCKS**



**APRIL 19 • MAY 17 • JUNE 21 • JULY 19  
AUG. 16 • SEPT. 20 • OCT. 18**



135 W. Simpson St.,  
Mechanicsburg  
717-766-4611  
[fumchurch.com](http://fumchurch.com)



**MULTIPLE TRUCKS /// VARIETY OF FOOD**

## SAVE - THE - DATE

94th Jubilee Day  
Thursday, June 20th

20th Annual Golf Outing  
Friday, September 20th

Interested in sponsorship - email  
[info@mechanicsburgchamber.org](mailto:info@mechanicsburgchamber.org)

**DEATH  
DYING  
& GRIEF:**  
AN HONEST CONVERSATION

**APRIL 20, 2024**  
**11 AM - 3 PM**  
**THE ENGLEWOOD**

4 PRESENTERS  
LUNCH  
RESOURCES  
FREE ADMISSION

The Englewood, 1219 W End Ave Suite B, Hershey, PA 17036

If the idea of talking about death, dying, and grief makes you cringe, you're not alone! Join Attorney Jessica Greene at Death, Dying & Grief: An Honest Conversation – an event designed to explore these topics in a safe and uplifting atmosphere. Learn how to navigate and nurture this essential part of our collective journey.

We promise, it's not going to be as scary as it sounds. This isn't your typical event. We're breaking the silence around these challenging subjects, offering a space for open dialogue and understanding. Come armed with your questions and leave with valuable resources provided by locally-owned businesses. This event is designed to be informative, comforting, and even uplifting. Let's break the silence and learn together!

[\*\*REGISTER HERE\*\*](#)

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# For The Health Of A CHILD

**Sunday, April 28th, 2024**

**4:30 to 7:30 P.M.**

**The Willows at Ashcombe Mansion**  
1100 W. Grantham Road, Mechanicsburg

Alicia Richards, ABC27 Anchor, Evening Emcee  
Mix & Mingle | Delicious Food & Drinks  
Silent Auction

*Proceeds to benefit children's  
medical & dental services at*



## Sponsorships Available!



A Benefit For 

**Sunday, April 28th, 2024**

**The Willows at Ashcombe Mansion**

For more information and event details, visit  
[www.SadlerHealth.org/Support](http://www.SadlerHealth.org/Support).



**100 N. Hanover St.  
Carlisle, PA 17013**

# ACCOUNTABILITY WEBINAR




Saturday  
May 11, 2024  
11:00 AM

The seminar will cover topics such as setting clear expectations, communication strategies, and goal tracking techniques. This webinar is a great opportunity to enhance your skills and boost productivity in a professional environment. So, don't miss out on this chance to learn and grow - sign up today and take the first step towards a more accountable and successful future!

**FACILITATOR**  
**LATOYA WASHINGTON**

**REGISTER ONLINE**

 717-554-0981

 [www.rhemacreationz.com](http://www.rhemacreationz.com)



Accountability is a crucial aspect of success in any organization. By attending a virtual webinar focused on accountability, you can gain valuable insights and practical tips on how to remain accountable in your personal and professional life. The seminar will cover topics such as setting clear expectations, communication strategies, and goal tracking techniques. This webinar is a great opportunity to enhance your skills and boost productivity in a professional environment. So, don't miss out on this chance to learn and grow - sign up today and take the first step towards a more accountable and successful future!

Visit <https://www.rhemacreationz.com/event-details/accountability> to register online

# ONE NIGHT ONLY

Live At  
The Englewood

May 19th

Doors: 3pm  
Show: 4-6pm

Listen to the new  
music, with a special  
announcement...

**Tickets:**  
[EnglewoodHershey.com](http://EnglewoodHershey.com)



CHRISTIAN YEAGER

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## Report Potholes to PennDOT

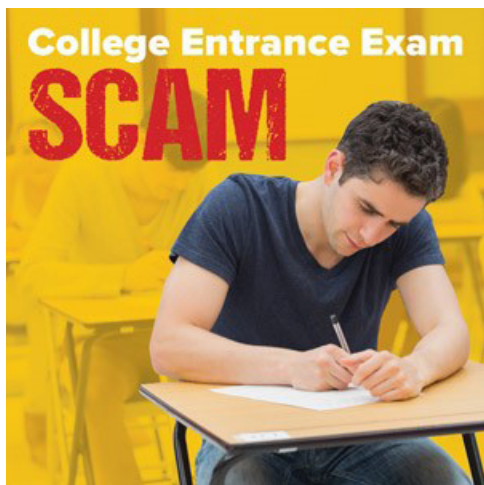
While it's always great to welcome the spring thaw, it also brings with it more potholes on our roads and bridges. Extreme fluctuations in temperatures can contribute to more potholes on our roads.

To help combat potholes and prevent them from becoming a danger to vehicles and drivers on the road, you can report potholes to PennDOT. Simply call 1-800-FIX-ROAD or [click here to file a report online](#).





## Beware of Scams for College Entrance Exams



The Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General is warning of scams targeting parents of students who will soon be taking PSAT, SAT and ACT exams.

The scammers claim to be associated with the College Board or other educational organizations while offering preparation materials, duping the target by using their student's name, address, school and test details, and other personal information.

The scammer starts the call by confirming the student's address, then asking for parental permission and a deposit for the test prep materials. The scammers claim the deposit will be refunded after the test materials are used and returned. The materials are never sent and the scammer now has your credit card information.

### Tips to Remember:

- Always be wary of unsolicited phone calls and emails requesting a payment.
- Never give personal or financial information over the phone or via email to an unsolicited phone call or email.
- Tell the caller that you need to check with your child or partner first and hang up.
- The College Board will never ask for bank or credit card information over the phone or email.

Consumers who have questions or feel they have been victimized by this scam may submit a complaint with the Office of Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection by [visiting the website](#), emailing [scams@attorneygeneral.gov](mailto:scams@attorneygeneral.gov) or calling the office at 1-800-441-2555.

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I am excited to announce my 12th annual Tribute to Veterans Breakfast will be held Thursday, May 30, at 8 a.m. (doors open at 7:30 a.m.) at the Mechanicsburg First Church of God Community Center, 201 E. Green St. in Mechanicsburg.

The 88th District's veterans, active-duty military personnel and their families are invited to this free program and breakfast to pay tribute to their service. This year, our theme is the veteran's families as we know when a soldier serves, so does the family by keeping the home life going while they defend our liberties. We thank them for all the sacrifices made while their loved ones served our country.

RSVPs are required. Please call my office at 717-761-4665 or [click here to let us know you're coming](#).



# JAZZ ME BAND

KIRK WISE UPCOMING  
SOLO, DUO & BAND  
PUBLIC DATES

Thur. 4/11 – Food Truck Rally,  
New Cumberland ...Kirk solo 5-8

Sat. 4/13 – Captain Bob's Steamed Crabs,  
Railroad/ Shrewsbury...Kirk solo 6-8 Tue.

4/16 – Greystone Brew House@  
Range End, Dillsburg...Kirk solo 6-9

Thurs 4/18 – Grace United Church  
Luncheon, Lemoyne....Trio Noon-2

Fri. 4/19 – Captain Bob's Steamed Crabs,  
Railroad/ Shrewsbury...Kirk solo 6-8

Sat. 4/20 – Reid's Wine & Cider House,  
Gettysburg...Kirk & Dave Duo 7-10

Tue. 4/23 – Greystone Brew House@  
Range End , Dillsburg...Kirk solo 6-9

Fri. 4/27 – Hemauer Brewing,  
Mechanicsburg...Kirk solo 6:30-9

Sun. 4/28 – Captain Bob's Steamed Crabs,  
Railroad/ Shrewsbury...Kirk solo 1-3

For complete up-to-date  
schedule, information,  
and photos go to  
[www.jazzmeband.com](http://www.jazzmeband.com)

**Bookings:** call Kirk at 717-979-0341 or  
E-mail [wisemotors@aol.com](mailto:wisemotors@aol.com)

**Tour sponsors:**  
FARNHAM INSURANCE,  
MEMBERS 1st F. C. U.,  
CLASSIC DRY CLEANERS, STUDIO D &  
LANDON WISE PHOTOGRAPHY



**We Serve**

*Lions Club of Mechanicsburg, PA*

## **4th Annual Mechanicsburg Lions "We Serve" Golf Tournament**

**Friday, July 12, 2024**



**Tee Off: 8:00am Shotgun Start**

*Proceeds Benefiting*

*Lions Club of Mechanicsburg, PA Charities*



**We Serve**

The Mechanicsburg Lions Club will host the 4th annual "We Serve" charity Golf Tournament on Friday, July 12, 2024 at Mayapple Golf Club in Carlisle. 8am shot gun start with lunch to follow at Fiddler's Bar & Grill at the golf course.

We hope you will join us again this year and help us support our many charitable organizations. Click [here](#) for registration forms. Limited to the first 108 golfers that sign up and pay. We look forward to seeing you on the course. Thank you for your continued support.



# THE FOUNDATION FOR ENHANCING COMMUNITIES

## THE FUND FOR WOMEN & GIRLS ANNUAL GRANTEE RECOGNITION BREAKFAST TO HONOR 15 ORGANIZATIONS AND \$60,000 OF COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Fund for Women & Girls (FWG) is delighted to be at the West Shore Country Club on Tuesday, April 30, 2024, for the Annual Grantee Recognition Breakfast. This year's event will honor and recognize 15 local organizations making a positive impact supporting the women and girls in Central PA. Attendees will hear these organizations' powerful stories of making real change and how they are creating opportunities for female health, safety, education, and inclusion right here in our region.

The organizations being recognized were awarded a combined total of \$60,000 in grant funding. They include:

- Boys and Girls Club of Central PA, SMART Girls
- Boys and Girls Club of Chambersburg and Shippensburg, SMART Girls
- Brethren Housing Association, Ongoing Homelessness for Single Mothers and their Children
- Bridge of Hope Harrisburg Area, Rental Assistance for Single Mothers and their Children Facing Homelessness
- Community CARES, Family Emergency Shelter
- Community Check-Up Center of South Harrisburg, Providing Long-Acting Reversible Contraception for Uninsured Women
- Cumberland Valley Breast Cancer Alliance, Inc., Lymphedma Sleeves, Breast Protheses, and Related Items for Survivor of Breast Cancer
- Girls on the Run Mid State PA, The Confidence Suite: Programming to Meet the Current Physical and Mental Needs of Adolescent Girls
- Girls on the Run Lancaster-Lebanon, Empowering Girls in Lebanon County
- Greenlight Operation, Restoration Home Project
- Healthy Steps Diaper Bank, Ending Diaper Need and Period Poverty in South Central Pennsylvania
- Lebanon Valley Volunteers in Medicine, Basic Primary Health Care Management for Uninsured Women that have low household income residing in Lebanon County
- Perry County Literacy Council, Women's Education Initiative
- Shape of Justice Inc., Menstrual hygiene products for Join Hands Ministry
- YWCA Carlisle & Cumberland County, Sexual Assault & Anti Human Trafficking Services for Women & Girls

To learn more about each of The Fund for Women & Girls grantees visit

The Fund for Women & Girls Annual Grantee Recognition Breakfast will be held on Tuesday, April 30, 2024, from 7:30–9:00 a.m. at the West Shore Country Club. Proceeds from this event directly support future grant making from The Fund for Women & Girls.

To purchase your tickets, visit [www.tfec.org/breakfast](http://www.tfec.org/breakfast).

## ABOUT THE FUND FOR WOMEN & GIRLS

The Fund for Women and Girls, a special initiative of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (TFEC), was created in 2000 to broaden the awareness of, and respond to, issues affecting women and girls through the power of collective philanthropy. Women and girls around the world are inordinately represented among the poor, uneducated, and abused. Without a focused effort to combat the issues that face them, they will remain among the underserved. Our vision is of a region where women and girls are afforded the right to live in safety, meet their basic needs for living, have the opportunities to pursue their dreams, and are inspired to experience the value of philanthropy.

## ABOUT THE FOUNDATION FOR ENHANCING COMMUNITIES

The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (TFEC), the 18th oldest community foundation in the United States, inspires giving by partnering with donors to achieve their charitable goals, and strengthens our local communities by investing in them now, and for future generations. TFEC has been serving the South-Central Pennsylvania counties of Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lebanon, and Perry, and the Dillsburg Area for more than 100 years. Regional foundations of TFEC include the Greater Harrisburg Community Foundation, the Franklin County Community Foundation, the Mechanicsburg Area Community Foundation, the Perry County Community Foundation, and the Dillsburg Area Community Foundation.

For more information on TFEC, please visit [www.tfec.org](http://www.tfec.org).



**Big Brothers  
Big Sisters.**  
OF THE CAPITAL  
REGION

**We're Hiring!  
APPLY TODAY**



## Director of Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Capital Region is a leading nonprofit organization dedicated to providing programs that create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth. We are committed to fostering justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) in all aspects of our work and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

**Position Overview:** We are seeking a dynamic Director of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to lead our organization's initiatives to advance equity and inclusion

in our programs, policies, and practices. The Director of JEDI will be responsible for developing and implementing youth programs and events, partnership development and serve as the primary JEDI spokesperson representing the agency at various community outreach opportunities.

The ideal candidate will be an excellent communicator with the ability to inspire and engage diverse audiences while effectively conveying the mission and impact of our organization.



## Key Responsibilities:

- Ensure the implementation of BBBSCR 's strategic initiatives.
- Present agency's JEDI initiatives and programming to community through various outreach opportunities.
- Collaborate with senior leadership to integrate JEDI principles into all aspects of the organization's operations, including program design, recruitment, training, and partnerships.
- Lead training and educational efforts to increase awareness and understanding of JEDI concepts among staff, mentors, mentees, and volunteers.
- Partner with community organizations, schools, and other stakeholders to enhance the organization's impact on underserved and marginalized populations.
- Stay informed about current trends, research, and best practices related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusivity, and integrate relevant insights into the organization's strategies.

## Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in a relevant field (such as social work, sociology, diversity studies, or related disciplines).
- Experience in a leadership role focused on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusivity initiatives, preferably in a nonprofit or community-based organization.
- Strong understanding of JEDI principles, social justice issues, and systemic inequities.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to engage with diverse groups of stakeholders.
- Experience in implementing youth programs
- Collaborative and inclusive approach to leadership, with the ability to influence and inspire others.
- Demonstrated project management skills and the ability to work effectively in a fast-paced environment.
- Passion for the mission of Big Brothers Big Sisters and a strong commitment to promoting equity and inclusivity.

## How to Apply:

If you are passionate about advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion and are dedicated to making a positive impact in the lives of young people, we encourage you to apply.

Please submit your resume and a cover letter outlining your qualifications and interest in the position to [adunn@capbigs.org](mailto:adunn@capbigs.org).

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Capital Region is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our organization.

Job Type: Full-time

Pay: \$45,000.00 - \$50,000.00 per year

## Benefits:

- 401(k)
- 401(k) matching
- Dental insurance
- Health insurance
- Paid time off
- Vision insurance

Schedule:

Monday to Friday

Work Location:

Hybrid remote in Harrisburg, PA



CHERYL HOCK  
WEB DEVELOPER

## Is your Website ADA compliant?

### *Websites & Accessibility*

Accessibility compliance for a website? Most of us are aware that regulations exist to make brick & mortar locations accessible. We're familiar with ADA compliance to include things like ramps, elevators, and access points. It's less commonly known that there are compliance guidelines for online businesses, too. Our business websites should be useable by people of varying abilities and disabilities. We often don't realize that what seems "okay" to us might be a barrier to someone else. It's really a social AND legal responsibility to make our online locations welcoming to all.

What about an overlay tool? You'll find that option quickly suggested if you do a Google search, and accessibility overlays are common. Overlays add features on top of the existing website to modify it based on the user's needs. Surprisingly though, when surveyed, the majority of disabled users say that an overlay actually makes their experience worse, not better. The best way to have an accessible website is to address the root issues, not attempt to fix them with a Band-aid.

So, what should we look for? Here are ten things you can check on your website today.

1. Do all images have helpful, descriptive alt text?
2. Is semantic HTML structure set up so a screen reader moves through the webpages in a logical order?
3. Are fonts dyslexia friendly?
4. Does all text meet minimum color contrast standards?
5. Are captions provided for any video or audio elements?
6. Can movement (animations or video) be stopped at will by the viewer?
7. Can the site be effectively navigated with a keyboard?
8. Is the viewer alerted when a link will open in a new window?
9. Do buttons have specific, descriptive text instead of generic phrases like "Read More" or "Learn More"?
10. Do all forms have labels that remain visible while the form is being completed?

Accessibility is complex and covers a wide variety of issues, much more than what we can cover here. The legal risks are huge. In 2022, more than 3,200 lawsuits were filed in federal court. Non-compliance can result in staggering fines. They range from several thousand dollars to millions. And ignorance isn't a defense. Unless you are well-versed in the guidelines, it's important to consult with an accessibility specialist to make sure that your website complies with accessibility guidelines.

### **About the Author**

**Cheryl Hock** is a freelance web developer and website accessibility specialist. She loves working with small business owners to reduce legal risk by addressing website requirements you never even knew existed. You can learn more about her services at <https://cherylhock.com>.



## **How to support Autistic people in your community this Autism Acceptance Month**

*Dr. Thomas Pineo, UPMC Community Osteopathic*

April is Autism Acceptance Month. This is a time to reflect on the experiences of Autistic people everywhere and to consider ways to create more autism affirming spaces. I'm a doctor who was diagnosed with autism in my early 50s. My journey with autism has given me the privilege not only to help other Autistic adults get diagnosed, but also to see the ways that simple things, like acceptance, can help Autistic people.

Autism isn't just for children. About 7 million U.S. adults are Autistic and may have lived years knowing they are different without knowing why.

Autism acceptance in the community can take many forms including discussing sensory concerns and avoiding triggers to reduce anxiety, increase comfort, and improve focus. Burnout can be prevented with breaks, quiet places, and scheduled time for recovery in busy schedules. Predictability and routine can be reassuring for Autistic people. Stick to the plan, and if the plan must change, give as much warning as possible.

Just because an Autistic person is not looking at you does not mean they are not listening. Walking, tapping, fidgeting, shaking, running, biking, and many other repetitive behaviors are an Autistic person's way of focusing and relaxing. Managing sensory needs, providing rest and predictability, and allowing movement are simple ways to support Autistic people.

Employers can make workplace accommodations to support Autistic people. A private workspace with fewer distractions could help Autistic employees that struggle with interruptions. Creating dimmer and quieter environments or flexible working arrangements could help those struggling with sensory overload.

As a physician, it concerns me that Autistic people often do not meet their routine healthcare needs, have twice the rate of diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease, and have higher rates of hearing loss, autoimmune disease, and sleep problems. As a result, the average Autistic person's life is shortened by 16 years compared to non-Autistic people.

It doesn't have to be this way. Healthcare providers can offer simple sensory accommodations, like ear plugs, headphones, or sunglasses. Lowering the lights, closing a door, or offering a weighted blanket can be soothing also.

Predictability is important for Autistic people, where surprises can cause distress. Detailed discussions about planned tests or procedures is critical. Communication differences between Autistic

people and staff are common and asking questions to confirm understanding helps close communication gaps.

The goal is to allow Autistic people to be themselves. Acceptance is the foundation from which Autistic spaces grow. Acceptance is about breaking down stigma, changing environments, and building positive perceptions about Autistic people. Celebrating Autistic people and helping us reach our potential is what Autism Acceptance Month is all about!

Online Autism screening tools that you can use on your own such as the [Autism Quotient \(AQ\)](#) or the [Ritvo Autism & Asperger Diagnostic Survey-14 \(RAADS-14\)](#) are available. Helpful resources can be found at the [Association for Autism and Neurodiversity](#) and [The Autism Society](#). For a formal autism diagnosis, contact your primary care or mental health provider to start the conversation.

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