EXPANDING WITH PURPOSE



2024 HIGHLIGHTS







Growth for the Patrick P. Lee Foundation is more than increasing investments or reaching more people. It's about deepening impact, fostering meaningful connections, and staying true to our mission.

For 16 years, our expansion has been focused and intentional. We invest in opportunities that broaden minds through education and strengthen mental health by increasing access to care and supporting the workforce.

In 2024, this meant engaging with new communities, forming strategic partnerships, and amplifying opportunities for students and professionals in engineering, technology, and mental health.

This year's report highlights how our purposeful growth is driving meaningful change. Thank you for joining us on this journey.

A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDATION

Each year, the communities and individuals we serve are confronted with different and often unexpected challenges. In 2024, the Foundation collaborated with a wide range of partners — both longstanding and new — to help them seize opportunities that bolstered their efforts and accelerated our shared impact.

Supporting college students pursuing degrees in engineering, computer science, and other technology-related fields remains a cornerstone of our educational mission. In the past year, we expanded our reach by welcoming four new academic institutions, bringing our total to 15 STEM scholarship programs supporting 121 students annually. Our support reduces financial burdens through minimized student loan debt and connects recipients to the Lee Scholar Network — an engaged community of over 600 emerging leaders navigating careers in industry and academia.

In the area of mental health, we identified a critical opportunity to address systemic challenges affecting behavioral health crisis response in Erie County. Like many regions across the United States, Western New York has faced persistent difficulties in ensuring that individuals experiencing behavioral health emergencies receive timely and appropriate care.

Our initial step involved convening providers, community leaders, and stakeholders with a shared vision for systemic reform. We also engaged national experts to evaluate the current crisis response infrastructure and inform the development of a comprehensive improvement plan.

Most importantly, we listened to those directly impacted by the system's shortcomings to root the work in the lived experiences of the community. Addressing systemic issues requires time and persistence, and the Foundation is committed to this long-term effort. We look forward to communicating more about this initiative in the year ahead.

To ensure the success of our investments in mental health, we must build and sustain a well-trained, resilient mental health workforce. In 2024, we expanded our scholarship offerings, supported paid internships for undergraduate and graduate students training with local providers, and broadened professional development opportunities for clinicians throughout Western New York.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our colleagues, partners, and grantees for their ongoing dedication and collaboration.

With appreciation,

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Patrick P. Lee Founder

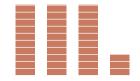


Jane M. Mogavero Executive Director

20 24

The Big Picture

\$3.3+ million awarded



158 Lee Scholars

121 in stem

37 IN MENTAL HEALTH



3 convenings

BRINGING TOGETHER
STUDENTS, ALUMNI, AND
BOARD MEMBERS

Our Cumulative Impact **\$26+ million** awarded since 2008

600 Lee Scholar alumni throughout the country

Lee Scholarships: Investing in the Future of Engineering and Technical Fields

As the Foundation's longest-standing initiative, the Lee Scholarship Program supports students pursuing engineering and other STEM degrees, helping those whose financial circumstances might otherwise limit their educational opportunities. Beyond providing financial aid, the Foundation is committed to fostering a professional network that empowers students throughout their academic and career journeys.

In 2024, the Foundation strategically expanded its Lee Scholarship Program by developing new partnerships with institutions that align with our educational priorities. These partnerships strengthen scholarship opportunities in both engineering and other technical fields.

Partnering with Boston Universities

This year, the Foundation introduced scholarships at Boston University, Northeastern University, and Wentworth Institute of Technology.

These institutions were selected for their rigorous engineering programs, strong industry connections, and well-developed co-op and internship programs, often leading to jobs in high-demand engineering sectors.

Scholarship Launched at OCC

Additionally, the Foundation established a STEM scholarship program at Onondaga Community College (OCC), focusing on direct-to-career Associate of Applied Science degrees. The inaugural cohort includes students from six select majors, ranging from computer information systems to surgical technology.

The Foundation is thrilled to welcome these new academic partners to the Lee Scholar Network and looks forward to expanding the program further in 2025. ■



Lee Scholars at the Saint Louis University convening.

Academic Partners

Alfred State College

Boston University

Canisius University

Clarkson University

Monroe Community College

Northeastern University

Onondaga Community College

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Rochester Institute of Technology

Saint Louis University

SUNY Erie (Erie Community College)

SUNY Niagara (Niagara County Community College)

Syracuse University

University of Rochester

Wentworth Institute of Technology

EDUCATION

Uniting the Lee Scholar Community

The Lee Scholarship Program is about more than financial support. Our goal is also to foster meaningful connections among scholars, alumni, and industry professionals.

These connections help students build relationships with current and former Lee Scholars, strengthen bonds between scholarship recipients and the Foundation's board of directors, and expand the Lee Scholar Network, which now includes more than 600 alumni nationwide.

2024 Convening Highlights

The Foundation hosted three Lee Scholar Convenings in 2024, providing students with networking opportunities, mentorship, and professional development.

Boston

The first-ever convening for Boston-area scholars provided an opportunity for students to engage with Foundation representatives, deepen their connection to the Lee Scholar community, and explore career pathways.



The Patrick P. Lee Foundation has made a huge impact on my career. From the financial support for continuing my education to the connections I've made that will further my career, I am so thankful to be a Lee Scholar.

JULIA KUBES
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

improved my college and career trajectory. Thanks to the Foundation's support and wide network of students, graduates, and supporters, I now feel confident in my future as an entrepreneur and engineer!

JACOB THOMAS
WENTWORTH INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY



Saint Louis

Held at Saint Louis University in October, this event brought together 24 current Lee Scholars and alumni. Through discussions and networking sessions, students shared their aspirations and forged lasting professional connections.



66 It is a great honor to receive the generous Patrick P. Lee Scholarship that will help fund the expenses of my education. I am most grateful for your belief and support. Receiving this scholarship will allow me to continue chasing my dreams.

OCTAVIA THOMPSON SUNY ERIE Being a Lee Scholar has helped me realize the importance of young leadership and what it means to be a good leader. Attending the convening was an amazing experience that has inspired me to be more mindful of my community and to seek further ways to give back. I'm honored to be a part of this foundation and to be a Lee Scholar!

MEGAN KELSCH CLARKSON UNIVERSITY

Solving Real-World Challenges Through Civil Engineering: Carly Sear

As an engineer,
I can do anything because
I can think like an engineer
and develop a way to proceed
to tackle any problem.

Carly Sear, a Lee Scholar and graduate of Saint Louis University, views engineering as a tool to serve humanity and solve real-world problems. Her passion for humancentered engineering led her to civil engineering, a field she describes as "engineering for civilization."

Carly's dedication to leveraging engineering for social good led her to pursue a doctoral degree in Environmental Water Resources Engineering at Virginia Tech. Her research focuses on an often-overlooked issue: private well water quality.

Despite the reliance of millions of Americans on private wells, little is known about their exact numbers or water quality. "As an engineer, I want to solve all the world's problems — but I can't do that," Carly admits. "What I can do is take my research one step at a time and see how my work affects individuals and communities."

Her ultimate goal is to use her civil engineering expertise to drive practical solutions for water access and quality. "In the end, it is important that my research gets beyond the scientific audience and into the hands of people who can do something directly with it," she adds.



Carly presenting graduate research at a conference.







Carly credits the Lee Foundation for its instrumental support in her journey. "The Foundation values the whole person, the whole Lee Scholar. That made me feel understood and justified in my community involvement and helped me see myself as a servant leader."

With the support of her fellow Lee Scholars, she looks forward to a time when she can design a better tomorrow for individuals and communities.

From Media to Medicine: Michael McCann's Journey

Michael McCann's path into the medical field was forged through sheer determination and hard work. After earning an undergraduate degree in media studies and spending several years in media production, he found himself driven by a deeper calling to help others.

In 2016, Michael made the bold decision to pivot careers and enrolled in Erie Community College's (ECC) Radiation Therapy program. The transition wasn't easy. "When I chose to go back to school, my wife was pregnant with twins, and I was working full time," he recalls. "I would have class from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., then go to work from 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. I was lucky to get three or four hours of sleep a night."

Despite the challenges, Michael's resilience never wavered. After a full year of sleepless nights and grueling schedules, he became a Lee Scholar in 2017 - his final year of academic study. "I do not know if I could have gotten through school without it," he reflects. "It was a big help for my family."



Today, Michael is a board-certified Medical Dosimetrist, a career he loves and one with deep personal meaning. "I lost my dad in 2007 to cancer, and that inspired me to enter the field and focus on patient care," he says. "Bringing my patients joy brings me joy."



Michael with his newborn twins.





Michael with his wife and sons.



Distinguished Lee Scholar: Jade Carter

Each year, the Foundation selects a Distinguished Lee Scholar from among its bachelor's and associate degree scholarship recipients. This prestigious honor recognizes exceptional students who exemplify the Foundation's core values of integrity, leadership, and service to others.

In addition to receiving this distinction, the award provides grant funding to eliminate the recipient's qualified student loans, allowing them to launch their careers without financial burden.

Since 2017, the Foundation has awarded over \$260,000 to seven Distinguished Lee Scholars. This year, we are thrilled to welcome Jade Carter to this esteemed group.

Jade Carter, Distinguished Lee Scholar

Jade Carter, a 2024 graduate of Syracuse University with a degree in Biomedical Engineering, is committed to developing devices and technologies that improve mobility and enhance the quality of life for individuals with physical challenges.

Jade demonstrated strong leadership on campus, serving in various roles, including vice president of the Biomedical Engineering Society. According to an academic mentor, "Her intellectual curiosity, coupled with a solid ethical foundation, positions her as a leader not just in the classroom but in all facets of life. Her integrity is unimpeachable; she approaches every task with honesty and a robust moral compass that inspires her peers."

Currently enrolled in a master's degree program in Motor Learning at Columbia University, Jade is exploring the intersections of human movement and wearable technology to develop innovative solutions for mobility challenges



for my career is to increase independence and quality of life for individuals through engineering and technology.

Jade Carter

My overall hope

Jade in a lab at Columbia University.

Being a Lee Scholar did more than just alleviate a financial burden—it's given me the freedom to fully embrace my education.



Expanding Opportunities for Mental Health Professionals

The nationwide shortage of mental health professionals is having a profound impact on communities across the United States. According to research conducted by the Health Resources and Services Administration, more than 155 million Americans — including approximately six million New Yorkers — live in areas with insufficient access to mental health care.

Despite the urgent demand for professionals in the field, rising education costs and low wages discourage many from pursuing careers in mental health. Those who persist are often saddled with student loans, large caseloads, and demanding work schedules.

Ensuring Western New York has access to highly trained mental health professionals is a top priority for the Foundation. In 2024, we expanded our scholarship program to include Niagara University's Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program, awarding scholarships to five students. In total, the Foundation supported 37 students pursuing degrees in psychiatry, psychology, psychiatric-mental health nursing, social work, and counseling.

We also continued our partnerships with BestSelf Behavioral Health, Compeer Buffalo, Envision Wellness WNY, and Jericho Road Community Health Center, providing stipends for graduate interns as they train to become the next generation of mental health professionals.

\$939,000 awarded
in mental health scholarships and

University of Rochester graduate students.





Cassidy Tennity

The UB doctoral psychology internship has been invaluable in helping me achieve both my academic and professional goals. This training has honed my clinical and forensic skills and deepened my commitment to improving mental health outcomes for underserved populations.

Following the completion of my internship and obtaining my PhD this summer, I am thrilled to be transitioning into a role as an Assistant Professor in the Forensic Division at UB, where I will continue to provide forensic and clinical services, fulfilling my career aspirations and contributing to the Buffalo community.



Dr. Tara P. Rezza

The Patrick P. Lee Foundation provided me with the opportunity as a psychology intern to receive robust training experiences focusing on serving underserved populations with diverse clinical needs across the lifespan, which is unique to the training program in Buffalo.

The internship also provided me with the experiences and skills needed to help me achieve my role as a psychologist at John R. Oishei Children's Hospital of Buffalo. Thanks to the support of the Lee Foundation, I am able to continue serving the diverse needs of youth and families in Western New York



Dr. Austin Milbrand

The Patrick P. Lee Scholarship took a significant load off of my medical school debt, which let me dive into residency with less weight on my shoulders. I had confidence knowing that the Lee Foundation believed enough in me to invest in my future. Thanks to their support, I've been able to focus on giving these last four years of training my all, and I feel better prepared for my future career.

Focus on Family: Creating a Supportive Network

Families and caregivers play a critical role in a loved one's mental health recovery. Studies have found that individuals with family support are more likely to engage in treatment and adhere to medication, leading to reduced risk of hospitalizations and improvement in overall quality of life.

Providing care to a loved one with mental health issues can be overwhelming and complicated, which is why ensuring families and caregivers have access to information is paramount.

Through our community partners, the Foundation supports educational programming and outreach that raises awareness of available resources and equips families with knowledge to help their loved ones navigate a complex healthcare system.



Founded in 1984, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Buffalo & Erie County supports, educates, and advocates for families and caregivers of individuals affected by mental illness. Many of NAMI's programs and support groups are led by certified volunteer leaders who know firsthand the challenges individuals living with mental illness encounter.

To further its mission, NAMI developed the *Mind Matters Guide to Resources for People Living with Mental Illness*. Available in both print and digital formats, this resource provides critical information on:

- Navigating the mental health system
- How to handle a crisis
- Working with health insurance companies
- Finding support services
- Managing family relationships

In addition to educational content, the *Mind Matters Guide* includes contact information for mental health services across the Erie-Niagara region of New York State, helping families connect with the support they need.





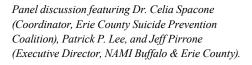
The Mind Matters Guide is a critical tool for mental health practitioners, as well as individuals and families navigating the complex continuum of mental health care in our region. We are truly grateful to the Patrick P. Lee Foundation for making it possible to produce a new edition of Mind Matters that will be accessible in both print and digital formats. We look forward to sharing it with the Western New York community soon!

Jeff Pirrone, CEO of NAMI Buffalo & Erie County



Jane Mogavero and Julianna Hill (Youth Peer Advocate, Mental Health Advocates of WNY) participate in panel discussion.







My Brother Lost in Time Documentary

Over the years, our grantmaking has shown that small investments can have a significant impact. This was certainly the case with *My Brother Lost in Time: A Bipolar Life*, a 15-minute documentary that sheds light on the realities of bipolar disorder.

The film tells the story of Paul Lukasik, a brilliant 58-year-old Buffalo resident who lived with bipolar disorder for decades before passing away in 2023. Narrated by his older brother, Dan Lukasik—a successful attorney and nationally recognized mental health advocate who lives with major depression—the documentary intertwines Paul's personal journey with critical information on bipolar disorder, its causes, and how families can provide support.

In partnership with Crisis Services and the Suicide Prevention Coalition of Erie County, the Foundation funded two screenings, providing hundreds of community members an opportunity to experience the film. The screenings were accompanied by panel discussions with NAMI Buffalo & Erie County and the Mental Health Advocates of WNY. The film aired on Buffalo Toronto Public Media on October 31, 2024.

By helping to reduce stigma and increase awareness, this project aims to encourage more individuals to seek treatment. Our Chairman, Patrick Lee, also recognized the film's importance in highlighting the essential role of caregivers in supporting loved ones with mental illness.



Watch the film with opening remarks from Patrick P. Lee

Think Bigger Do Good: Turning Research into Action

Advocacy is at the core of the Lee Foundation's work in mental health. Since 2019, we have supported Think Bigger Do Good (TBDG), a nonpartisan initiative that advances mental health and substance use policy reform at the local, state, and federal levels. Through its papers and webinars, TBDG translates hundreds of millions of research dollars into actionable solutions.

TBDG's success is fueled by a consortium of strategic and tactical partners committed to educating the public and decision-makers on pressing mental health and substance use issues. This group plays a critical role in identifying key topics, selecting subject matter experts, and leading dissemination efforts to ensure research reaches policymakers, practitioners, and communities in need.

As one of five private foundations supporting this national initiative, we take pride in our role in advancing meaningful mental health policy reform. We extend our gratitude to our partners for their shared commitment to improving mental health care nationwide:

- Peg's Foundation AKRON, OH
- Scattergood Foundation PHILADELPHIA, PA
- Sozosei Foundation PRINCETON, NJ
- Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation BUFFALO, NY







TBDG'S IMPACT

32 published papers 330 citations in national and international medical journals hrough its partnership with Psychiatric Services, a peer-reviewed medical journal published by the American Psychiatric Association

Build Promise: A Holistic Approach to Care

Build Promise is a 94-bed men's shelter and community access center that will provide comprehensive services for underserved residents on Buffalo's East Side. Scheduled to open in the summer of 2025, the facility is designed to remove barriers to essential care and offer a pathway toward stability.

Accessing high-quality treatments and support services is a significant challenge for many individuals experiencing poverty and homelessness. Through collaboration with 12 partner agencies, Build Promise will bring together various services under one roof, including mental health, medical, dental, legal, and workforce training programs. This integrated and holistic approach to care ensures the community's diverse needs are met.

Roughly two-thirds of homeless New Yorkers experience some level of mental health needs.

Addressing Mental Health Needs

The intersection of homelessness and mental health is significant. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, up to 20% of people experiencing homelessness live with schizophrenia, compared to less than 1% of the general U.S. population.

To help meet this critical need, Build Promise is partnering with BestSelf Behavioral Health and the Mental Health Advocates of WNY to provide both clinical services and nonclinical support.

 $Schematic\ of\ the\ Build\ Promise\ facility.$





By partnering with BestSelf, Build Promise will have **critical mental health services on-site**. This will be a game changer for people living with mental illness in our community. We are grateful to the Patrick P. Lee Foundation for their generous support of this endeavor. Stuart Harper, CEO, Build Promise

Finding His Career Path in Mental Health: Ben Boyd

After struggling in high school, Ben Boyd wasn't sure if college was the right path—or how he would afford it. Encouraged by his grandmother, he took a chance and applied to SUNY Canton, where he pursued studies in human services. During his time in college, he discovered a passion for research, seeing it as an opportunity to "drastically shift someone's life for the better."

With his bachelor's degree in hand, Ben decided to further his education, enrolling in Niagara University's Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. Throughout Ben's life, people have told him he is a "good listener," and entering the mental health field aligns with his desire to support and advocate for others. However, the financial burden of graduate school seemed overwhelming.

Ben vividly remembers the moment he was notified about his selection as a Lee Scholar. "I was working as a teaching assistant at SUNY Canton in the educational opportunity program when I received the email. The scholarship gave me an immediate sense of relief and reassurance that I was on the right path."

Beyond financial support, Ben recognizes the other benefits of being a Lee Scholar, including the opportunity to be part of an "incredible network of scholars."

This summer, Ben will intern at Spectrum Health and Human Services while continuing his research in metabolic psychiatry. Following graduation, he plans to work in clinical practice, specializing in patients with suicidality and borderline personality disorder.

From "good listener" to passionate mental health advocate in our community.



The staff is made up of incredible people who are authentically friendly, helpful and caring.

I felt heard and got the help I needed.

66 Thank you so much.
I believe in this treatment. 99

PATIENTS,
ECMC INTENSIVE
OUTPATIENT PROGRAM

Thank you, thank you, thank you I am so appreciative.



The Foundation is continually refining our approach and actively identifying opportunities to increase impact in our focus areas of education and mental health.

In 2024, we expanded our advisory committees, inviting experts from New York State and across the country to provide guidance on key initiatives related to the Foundation's mission and goals.

STEM Advisory Committee

Representing both academia and industry, STEM Advisory Committee Members include:



Rob LetesteBusiness Intelligence
and Workforce Manager,
Invest Buffalo Niagara



Adam Pratt
President, Sherex
Fastening Solutions



Jessica Rozycki (Lee Scholar '11), MEng Midwest Aero Test Operations Senior Leader at Boeing in St. Louis, MO



Michele Sabick, PhD
Dean, University of
Denver Ritchie School
of Engineering and
Computer Science in CO

Mental Health Advisory Committee

With extensive experiences in treatment and advocacy, members of the Mental Health Advisory Committee include:



Michael Flanagan, Esq Partner, Hodgson Russ



Howard Hitzel, PsyD, MPA former CEO, BestSelf Behavioral Health



Takesha Leonard, EdD, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC



Glenn LiebmanCEO of the Mental
Health Association
of New York State



Thomas Rosenthal, MD past Chairman of Family Medicine in the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University at Buffalo

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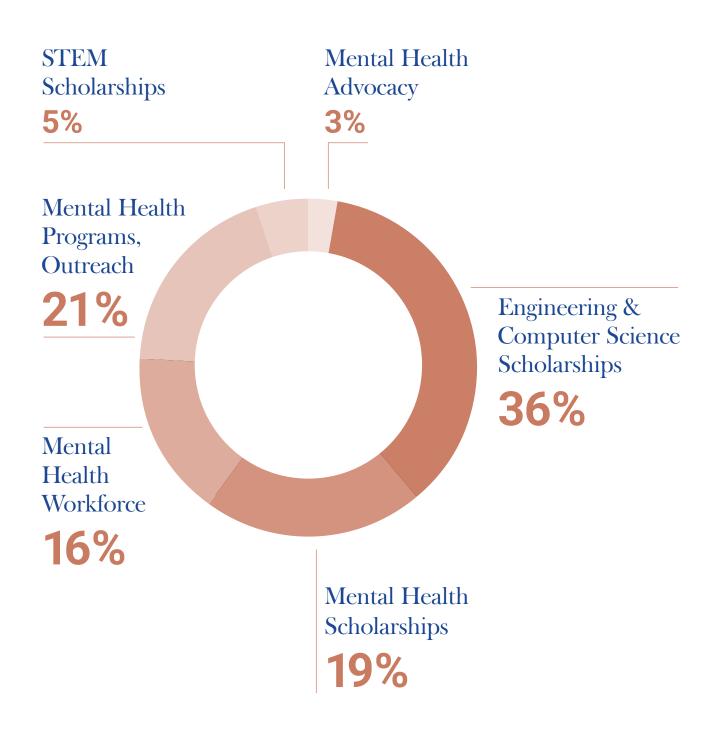
Foundation Team

Christopher Allaire Judy Arcara-Baxter Jane Mogavero, Esq George Schnell, CPA Renata Quimby

2024 Scholarships and Grants



Saint Louis University Lee Scholars.



\$3,329,891

Education Focus Area \$1,083,400

Engineering and Computer Science Scholarships

\$951,376

82 SCHOLARS

Boston University

Clarkson University

Northeastern University

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Rochester Institute of Technology

Saint Louis University

Syracuse University

University of Rochester

Wentworth Institute of Technology

\$132,024

39 SCHOLARS

Alfred State College Canisius University

Monroe Community College

Onondaga Community College

SUNY Erie

SUNY Niagara



Mental Health Focus Area \$1,594,491

Mental Health Advocacy \$84,347

Programs, Community Outreach, and Family Supports \$570,244

Build Promise: Community Access Center

Crisis Services: *My Brother* Lost in Time Documentary

ECMC Foundation: Creating Innovative Outpatient Behavioral Health Programs to Fill Gaps in Care

NAMI Buffalo & Erie County: The Mind Matters Guide

Spectrum Human Services: 1280 Main Street Capital Campaign

\$503,400

37 SCHOLARS

Canisius University: Clinical Mental Health Counselor Program

Daemen University: Masters of Social Work Program

Niagara University: Clinical Mental Health Counselor Program

University at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences: WNY Medical School Scholarship Program – Psychiatry

University Psychiatric Practice: Psychology Doctoral Internship Program

University of Rochester School of Nursing: Family Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Program

Workforce Recruitment, Training, and Retention \$436,500

Catholic Charities of Buffalo: Strengthening the Mental Health Workforce to Reduce Barriers to Accessing Services

Christian Counseling Ministries of WNY: Strategic Training and Retention Initiative for Clinicians

Compeer Buffalo: Creating a Pipeline for the Mental Health Workforce

Envision Wellness WNY: Recruit, Train, Retain Counselors for Patients with Serious and Persistent Mental Illness Family and Children's Service of Ithaca: CARES — Clinician Advancement and Retention through Enhanced Supports

Jericho Road Community Health Center: Behavioral Health Internship Pilot Program

Our Lady of Victory Charities: Outpatient Mental Health Clinic Investment Program





The Patrick P. Lee Foundation is a private foundation committed to achieving immediate and measurable impact in the areas of education and adult mental health.

We envision a community where individuals achieve economic self-sufficiency without experiencing undue financial burden.

Our vision for people living with mental illnesses is that they are engaged and supported by members of the community.



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