

# PPL Foundation honors the people who brighten our world

## Bright Lights grant program illuminates work of unsung community heroes

The PPL Foundation has announced the winners of its Bright Lights grants, which honor the people who are working to transform lives in their communities. They are the **bright lights** powering progress and making a difference.

The PPL Foundation awarded a total of \$100,000 in grants to help illuminate the outstanding contributions of individuals working in the nonprofit sector. Ten Bright Lights grants of \$10,000 were awarded in recognition of the honorees to the nonprofit agencies they support.

“This year, PPL is marking a century of people powering life, and we wanted to celebrate by honoring the unsung heroes who are working every day to improve lives in their communities,” said Ryan Hill, president of the PPL Foundation. “Their inspiring stories take on a new meaning given everything that we have all experienced in the past year. Whether they are promoting racial justice, inspiring a new generation of artists, providing healthy meals for children in need or creating opportunities for new entrepreneurs, they all share one thing in common – a desire to help others.”

The recipients of these special, one-time awards are:

- **Melisa Baez** leads the work of **ASSETS Lancaster**, a nonprofit focused on transforming the community through ethical and inclusive business practices. She has helped countless entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses in Lancaster County and South Central, Pa.
- **Kristen Boyle** is an inspiration to everyone who meets her. Legally blind, she has become an integral part of the design and creation of many programs for **Northeast Sight Services** in Exeter, Pa. She is committed to the development and improvement of programs that help other members of the community who suffer from vision loss.
- **Dave Brumbaugh**, founder and executive director of the **Uptown Music Collective** in Williamsport, Pa., has spent the last 20 years pursuing one goal – to educate and create well-rounded musicians, ages 10-18, so that they can connect their community with music. “He is not just molding great musicians; he is making great humans,” says one student’s mom.
- **Sarah “Sally” Casey** has led the struggle against domestic violence in Schuylkill County, Pa., since the grassroots efforts began in 1983. Her dedication and vision ever since to **Schuylkill Women in Crisis** has developed into a collaborative community response that has helped thousands of victims and their families find safety and healing.
- **Darian Colbert** has invested in the Allentown community by engaging in the leadership development of thousands of students, adult leaders and volunteers through the nonprofit agency, **Cohesion Network**. Its mission is to collaborate with residents, organizations and local government to empower people socially, educationally and economically, and create lasting change.
- **Melissa Fillman** founded **Kindness is Magic**, a Lehigh Valley organization that improves the education outcomes of public-school students by advocating for all students to be provided a nutritious lunch regardless of their economic status.
- **Christopher Kaag**, founder and executive director of the **IM ABLE Foundation** in Berks County, Pa., works to promote active lifestyles for everybody, including people with disabilities and veterans.
- **Tim Lee** is the driving force behind **The Mountain Center**, a facility that offers a multitude of services to Monroe County residents. Four years ago, Lee turned an abandoned school building into a community resource center that has assisted thousands of Monroe County residents in 2019.
- **Teresa Peters** is making a huge impact in her hometown of Berwick, Pa., and beyond, by operating **For**

**the Cause**, the area's first free, public and youth-led teen center. The nonprofit provides unique programming aimed at developing and supporting teens in grades 7-12. In addition, it offers basic needs such as nutritious food, shelter and clothing.

- **Yamelisa Taveras** is the founder of **Unidos**, an organization in the Lehigh Valley that works to improve the quality of life for underprivileged and marginalized residents by empowering unity and self-investment. The group recently raised funds to provide free laptops to Allentown School District students transitioning to remote learning due to COVID-19.

"Congratulations to all the recipients of the PPL Foundation Bright Lights grants," said Hill. "We are in awe of their service and commitment to moving our communities forward."

For further information: Lissette Santana, 610-774-5997

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