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**Nonprofit & Business Partners Council**

Letter from the Council

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**Collective Impact**

I recently had the privilege of being the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley's guest at a national conference on Collective Impact. People from all over the world gathered in Washington DC to learn about new efforts that are springing up everywhere around the concept of working together to create positive outcomes. The conference was put on by the Collective Impact Forum.

In essence, collective impact efforts provide the structure by which people can come together to achieve real social change. It is more than just collaboration. It is collaboration that includes a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, and continuous communication. All this is made possible via a "backbone" organization that facilitates the process, and juggles the myriad responsibilities that go along with the community coalition and collaboration efforts. An important underlying value in all aspects of collective impact is the importance of stakeholder participation and leadership.

Collective impact can be applied across entire countries to impact huge social problems. The Tamrack Institute for Social Change, for example, is a leader in using these principals to combat poverty across Canada. It also works in smaller, more focused endeavors from individual neighborhoods to cities. I recommend the website [www.collectiveimpactforum.org](http://www.collectiveimpactforum.org) as a place to get started learning more about this movement. I am also proud to say that several leaders right here in our community have become well versed in these principals, including our own United Way. It is fair to say that we will likely hear even more about this in the years and months to come. Its just another example of how we in the Lehigh Valley are once again on the cutting edge of caring for each other and working hard to become a better place.