



Central Susquehanna
Intermediate Unit

2025

Year in Review



For an immersive, interactive experience viewing
the 2025 Year in Review, visit www.csiu.org/2025YIR

NEST CLINIC

Nurturing Environments for Support and Treatment

The NEST Clinic

The Nurturing Environments for Support and Treatment (NEST) Clinic opened Sept. 15, 2025. The school-integrated outpatient mental health clinic provides services to children, teens, and families, especially those who've fallen through the cracks. Its goal is simple: bring high-quality, compassionate mental health care directly into the lives and communities of those who need it most.

Care at the NEST Clinic is trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and built on trust. Staff members focus on building relationships, providing evidence-based care, honoring individual experiences, and helping patients develop skills to support healing and growth.

A supportive culture

Every person who enters its doors, including patients, families, and staff, is treated with dignity and care. At The NEST Clinic, staff strive to foster an environment where people feel valued, safe to speak up, heard, part of a team, and grounded in purpose. Teamwork, humor,

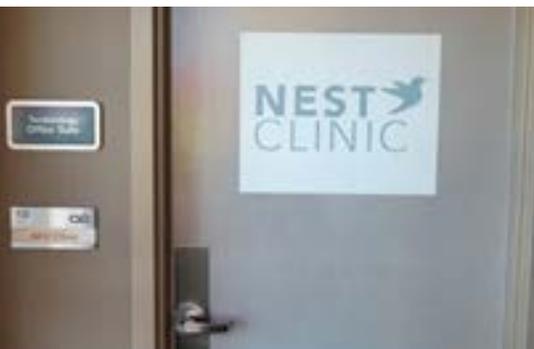
and grace matter here.

Who the clinic serves

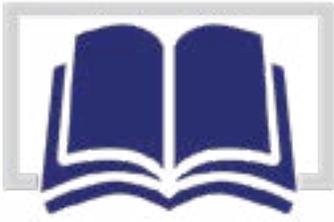
- Children and adolescents, primarily school-aged
- Parents and caregivers involved in treatment
- Adults who may benefit from outpatient behavioral health care
- Families experiencing emotional, behavioral or trauma-related challenges
- Individuals referred by schools, pediatricians or community providers

Many patients face complex challenges and often overwhelming life stressors, including persistent anxiety, bullying, social isolation, sudden family disruptions such as divorce or relocation, involvement with child welfare systems, grief, or past trauma. These experiences can affect emotional well-being, behavior, and the ability to function at school, at home or in relationships.

To learn more about the NEST Clinic, visit www.csiu.org/NESTClinic.



The Susquehanna Education Foundation: Changing Lives Through Opportunity



Susquehanna
Education
Foundation

The Susquehanna Education Foundation (SEF) exists for one purpose: to improve lives by expanding educational opportunity and supporting individuals facing barriers to success. Its mission is to support charitable and educational causes that improve the quality of life for CSIU clients and residents of the Central Susquehanna Valley and beyond, with a particular focus on at-risk populations and post-secondary pathways.

SEF's work comes to life in powerful, personal ways.

A Teen Father's Second Chance

A teenage father in the CSIU region faced an uphill battle. He wanted to work, provide for his child, and build stability, but without a driver's license, job options were limited. Through SEF and participation in the ELECT program, he received financial assistance to enroll in driver's education classes, obtained his driver's license, and secured reliable employment.

That single investment unlocked independence, income, and dignity, allowing him to support his family and begin building a stronger future. SEF strives to create impacts like this for teen parents and other at-risk populations.

Opening Doors for Students with Disabilities

Through the Andrew M. Hergan Transition Education Award, SEF honors students in special education who demonstrate compassion, perseverance, and a commitment to life beyond high school. The award commemorates Andy Hergan, a CSIU educator who devoted his career to helping students with disabilities transition into adulthood and meaningful work or education. In 2025, two recent recipients each received \$1,000 scholarships to pursue post-secondary education and workforce training that support life's next chapter. These funds reduce financial barriers and reinforce a critical message: their goals matter, and

their futures are worth investing in.

A Foundation That Supports Many Paths

SEF manages and supports a broad range of funds focused on student opportunity, family stability, safety, workforce training, and youth development, including:

- Scholarships and transition awards
- Support for families and students in hardship
- Career and technical education pathways
- Afterschool and youth development
- Safe schools and mental health initiatives

Giving That Matters, All Year Long

SEF relies on donors who believe in lifting others through education, opportunity, and compassion. Donations are accepted year-round, and every contribution helps strengthen programs that improve lives across the CSIU region.

To learn more about SEF's funds, impact, and giving opportunities, visit: www.susquehannaef.org



*Sam Persing, Destiny Rubio
and baby boy Greyson*

SERVICE TO OTHERS

A Year of Service, Connection, and Growth

Throughout the past year, Early Childhood programs at the Watson Children's Center remained committed to strengthening the community through service, partnership, and family-centered engagement.

Staff, children, and families supported local organizations, including the Ronald McDonald House, Toys for Tots, and Books for Babes, modeling compassion and community responsibility for young learners.



Opportunities for connection and celebration, such as family events like Trunk or Treat that fostered relationships and a strong sense of belonging, were also included. In addition, progress continued on building renovations, reinforcing the center's commitment to providing safe, welcoming, and enriching spaces for children and families.

As the year concluded, the Early Childhood programs reflected with gratitude on the partnerships formed and looked ahead to continuing this important work, strengthening bonds with the families and community they serve.



Mental Health Day at The Well

In late October, the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit hosted its Youth Mental Health Fall Event at The Well in Milton, bringing together more than 100 high school students from nine school districts for a regional day focused on empathy, connection, and peer leadership. The event emphasized how students can strengthen mental health supports in their schools through understanding, communication, and collaboration.

Students participated in story circles and guided discussions that fostered deep listening, trust, and belonging, facilitated by Susan Jordan, executive director of Susquehanna Valley Mediation. Partner organizations, including UPMC's Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Grant to Advance Care in the Elderly (GRACE) Project, supported the event by providing Beyond the Hype materials to raise awareness and promote healthy decision-making about vaping and mental wellness.

Funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education (AWARE) and HRSA GRACE grants, the initiative has grown from local Avidum-style clubs into a regional network of peer-led mental health support. Students left prepared to bring practical tools back to their districts to foster compassion and connection. CSIU's behavioral health team, led by Jistine Myers, CSIU educational consultant, coordinated the event.

To read additional press coverage of the event, visit the links below:
The Milton Standard-Journal: Uniting to strengthen school mental health support (<http://bit.ly/3ZfJboV>)

WNEP 16: Students in Northumberland lead the way in breaking mental health stigma (<https://bit.ly/wnep-mental-health>)



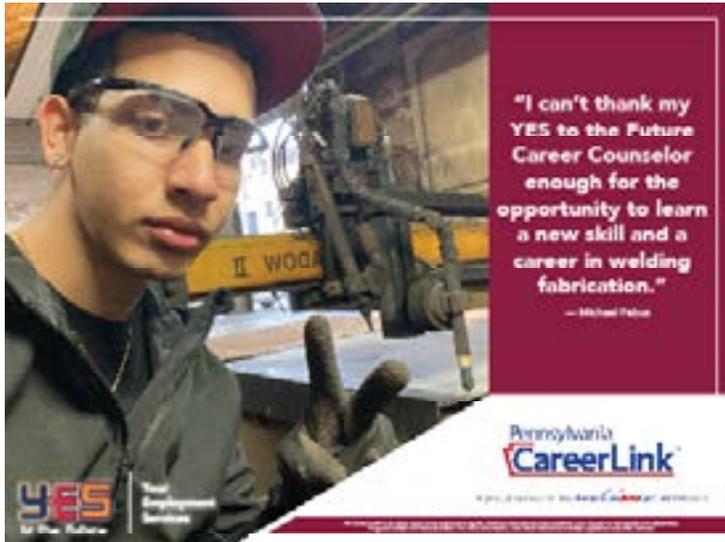
YES

to the Future

YES to the Future: Michael's Story

Michael faced significant financial hardship and limited opportunity when he learned about PA CareerLink®'s out-of-school youth program, YES to the Future. Raised in Puerto Rico by a single mother who worked multiple jobs to support her family, Michael grew up with scarce resources but strong determination. At age 21, with his mother's encouragement, he moved to Pennsylvania to live with his aunt in hopes of building a better future.

Although a high school graduate, Michael's limited English proficiency created barriers to employment, leading to repeated job rejections and instability. His path changed after visiting PA CareerLink® and being referred to YES to the Future, where he connected with a career counselor who helped him identify his interests, build a resume, obtain clearances, and take meaningful steps forward.



Through the program, Michael secured a paid welding fabrication internship at Lewistown Manufacturing, where his strong work ethic quickly earned the respect of supervisors. After completing the internship, he was hired in an on-the-job training position through a partnership between YES to the Future and PA CareerLink® Business Solutions. Michael now operates cutting machinery, continues developing new skills, and has opportunities for wage growth.

Today, Michael is confident in his abilities and proud of his career path, crediting YES to the Future with providing the support and opportunity that helped him build stability and a promising future.

YES to the Future: Angie's Story

Angie faced significant educational challenges after her learning was disrupted during the pandemic, particularly as an English language learner. Feeling discouraged and disconnected, she left high school at the end of her junior year, uncertain about her future. Despite setbacks, Angie remained determined to complete her education and achieve stability.

After enrolling in CSIU's adult education program, Angie learned about and entered PA CareerLink®'s out-of-school youth program, YES to the Future. With support from CSIU adult education staff and her YES career counselor, she regained confidence and re-engaged in learning. Between November and June, Angie attended classes consistently and successfully passed all five HiSET High School Equivalency exams, earning her Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma.

Through YES to the Future, Angie received support with testing fees, career exploration, and a YES-sponsored paid internship as a classroom aide in CSIU's adult education program. In this role, she supported English as a Second Language and citizenship students, offering encouragement grounded in her own experience. With continued guidance, Angie explored social work as a career path, toured Luzerne County Community College, and was accepted into the social work program beginning in the summer of 2026. Today, Angie moves forward with confidence, prepared to pursue a future once considered out of reach.



INNOVATION FOR GROWTH

A Summer of Discovery, Creativity, and Growth

During June and July, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers' STEAMS and Pathfinders programs provided four weeks of summer learning at 10 sites across the CSIU region. The programs combined academic enrichment with hands-on STEM activities, creativity, physical activity, and social development.

STEAMS students engaged in coding and robotics to build problem-solving and teamwork skills, while Pathfinders students explored science, engineering, and art through interactive projects, experiments, and field trips. Together, the programs offered students an engaging summer experience that supported learning, confidence, and continued success.



Sometimes Innovation looks like a... bunny?

North Central Secure Treatment Unit (NCSTU) expanded its Animals in the Classroom initiative by adding carefully designed animal habitats to English, science, math, social studies, and special education classrooms to support student learning, well-being, and positive behavior. The program promotes responsibility, emotional regulation, literacy, and real-world skills through hands-on care and interaction.

NCSTU's animals and habitats include fish aquariums, American eels, a turtle, a bearded dragon, and, most recently, Midnight, a free-roaming rabbit introduced in early 2025. Midnight provides comfort and emotional support to students and staff and has inspired plans to expand the program, reflecting NCSTU's commitment to creative, student-centered learning.





CSIU Launches New Website

The newly redesigned CSIU website was launched on Feb. 10, 2025, with a fresh, modern look, marking an important step forward in how CSIU connects with staff, partners, and the communities it serves.

The updated site features a sleek, responsive, and easy-to-navigate design that makes finding information faster and more intuitive. Whether users are seeking program details for students, families, adults, educators, schools, or CSIU staff, key resources are now easier to locate and access.

Key highlights include:

- Quick access to the following webpages: Center for Schools and Communities, Central Susquehanna LPN Career Center, Events & Registration, Staff Directory, and Employment Opportunities
- An updated Intranet that is easier for staff to access and navigate
- A streamlined top navigation bar that brings all major tools and resources together in one place

Designed with usability, accessibility, and efficiency in mind, the new CSIU website strengthens communication, improves user experience, and supports CSIU's ongoing commitment to innovation and service. The result is a more user-friendly digital experience that better meets the needs of those who rely on CSIU's online resources.



INNOVATION FOR GROWTH

Student Innovation at Competitions and Camps



GamingEDU: ESports Conference



GamingEDU: ESports Conference



GamingEDU: ESports Conference



K'NEX Design Challenge



K'NEX Design Challenge



K'NEX Design Challenge



Pennsylvania Scholastic Esports



Pennsylvania Scholastic Esports



CanSat Satellite Design Camp



Keystone Hack-a-thon



Keystone Hack-a-thon



K'NEX Design Challenge



CanSat Satellite Design Camp



PA Media & Design Competition



PA Media & Design Competition



Student Artist Reception

2025 Regional In-Service Day

CSIU hosted the 2025 Regional In-Service Day in October at Susquehanna University, bringing together more than 1,300 educators for a day of collaboration and professional learning. The event featured keynote speaker Gerry Brooks, autism advocate Ben Hartranft, and AI readiness, educational innovation and professional learning expert Matt Mervis. Breakout

sessions focused on AI, special education, assessment, literacy, wellness, and more.

Additionally, over 75 music educators participated in the District 8 PMEA Professional Development Day at the CSIU central office, reinforcing CSIU's commitment to innovation and excellence across the region.

2025 Regional In-Service Day

October 13, 2025



Dragonfly Mural

The dragonfly symbolizes transformation, adaptability, and growth. CSIU's dragonfly glass mosaic mural was created during a residency with Pennsylvania glass artisan Linda Billet, a self-taught artist specializing in kiln-formed glass and mosaic techniques.

The mural features fused glass pieces created by CSIU staff and students from Beyond Boundaries, Five Star Sunbury, Five Star Watertown, and the Work Foundations+ programs. Through collaboration, individual contributions come together to reflect CSIU's commitment to service, excellence, equity, and innovation.



ELECT 35th Anniversary

The 35th anniversary of Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT) was celebrated during the program’s fall 2025 conference, held Nov. 3-5 at the Eden Resort in Lancaster. The anniversary luncheon brought together educators, staff and partners from across Pennsylvania to honor the program’s legacy of supporting expectant and parenting students through academic achievement and graduation.

The event featured remarks from Lisa Lockwood, ELECT program officer at the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE); Nicole Tile, program supervisor at the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services; and Nichole Hartman, former ELECT technical assistance coordinator at the Center for Schools and Communities. Multimedia presentations highlighted student stories, program milestones, and recorded messages from Sabrina Lindsay, bureau director of student services at PDE; Dr. Mary Jo Podgurski, a longtime ELECT coordinator from Washington County; and Dr. Shileste Overton-Morris, the CSIU chief programs officer.



Three ELECT graduates also shared their experiences. Divine Justice, now working for a youth-serving organization in Washington, D.C., provided a recorded message. Two students from Lancaster County attended the celebration in person and offered reflections and appreciation for the program.



[Watch](#) the newly produced ELECT outreach video.





Our VISION

OUR PURPOSE

Enriching Learning. Enriching Lives.

OUR CORE VALUES

The CSIU is committed to:

SERVICE TO OTHERS

We value...

- collaborating with schools and the community to enrich lives and maximize potential
- serving schools and communities with integrity, compassion and authenticity to meet individual and collective needs

PASSION FOR EXCELLENCE

We value...

- making a positive difference and striving to achieve excellence
- pursuing bold ideas with heart and purpose

EQUITY IN ACTION

We value...

- fostering and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion that honors the differences and perspectives of all those we serve
- ensuring every person has the opportunity to reach their fullest potential regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, ability, sexual orientation, or other characteristics that make each individual unique

INNOVATION FOR GROWTH

We value...

- thinking creatively and collaboratively to promote innovation and entrepreneurship
- leading courageously and developing solutions for current and future challenges

CSIU Senior Leadership



Dr. John Kurelja
Executive Director
(570) 523-1155 x2301
jkurelja@csiu.org



Dr. Alan Hack
Assistant Executive Director
and Chief Academic Officer
(570) 523-1155 x2300
ahack@csiu.org



Dr. Bernadette Boerckel
Chief Outreach Officer
(570) 523-1155 x2352
bboerckel@csiu.org



Rae Ann Crispell
Chief Administrative Officer
(570) 523-1155 ext. 2314
rcrispell@csiu.org



Jared Lehman
Chief Innovation Officer
(570) 246-5963
jlehman@csiu.org



Dr. Shileste Overton-Morris
Chief Programs Officer
(717) 579-3649
smorris@csc.csiu.org



Brian Snyder
Chief Financial and
Operations Officer
(570) 523-1155 x2311
bsnyder@csiu.org

Prepared by the CSIU Public Relations Department

Follow
CSIU on:

