



CAPITOL UPDATE

State Representative **MAUREEN MADDEN**

Representing the 115th Legislative District

Spring 2021

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THE 450 PROJECT

SEE INSIDE: Stories on Wesleyan Church Homeless Shelter, The 450 Project, Ceramics for a Cause, and the Shirley Futch Vaccination Event.

Shirley Futch Plaza Helps Residents to get Vaccinated

Shirley Futch Plaza, located in East Stroudsburg, is an apartment community for residents 62 or older, or those with a disability. Many residents do not have transportation and rely on public transportation. Because it is not an assisted living facility or a nursing home, Shirley Futch Plaza did not meet the requirements to have medical professionals visit the community and administer the COVID-19 vaccine.

Hearing the need for a coordinated response for the residents, Rep. Maureen Madden worked with East Stroudsburg Mayor Armand “Doc” Martinelli, St. Luke’s Health Network President Don Seiple and his amazing staff, Social Services Coordinator at Shirley Futch Plaza Lisa Flory, and Assistant Executive Director for Monroe County Transit Authority (MCTA) Rich Schlameuss. MCTA provided bus services for 60 residents of Shirley Futch Plaza to St. Luke’s Monroe Campus Hospital to receive COVID-19 vaccinations.

The residents received their first dose of the vaccine and

scheduled their second dose appointments. It was a true community effort.

Flory was pleased with the success of the day: “We would like to thank Representative Madden for all the time she spent contacting people and working on this for us, Mayor Martinelli for his help, MCTA for arranging transportation, and Colleen Pugliesi from Mr. Seiple’s office at St. Luke’s Hospital for working with us to get everyone scheduled. It’s so reassuring to have people who are willing to make sure that our seniors don’t fall through the cracks so they receive the vaccine that will be so beneficial to them.”

If you or a family member are having trouble scheduling a COVID-19 vaccination, the Monroe County Area Agency on Aging can assist you in registering for the vaccine by calling 570-420-3735. Monroe County seniors 65 or older who need transportation to their vaccination appointment can call MCTA at 570-839-6282 to schedule a ride.



Below, left to right – St. Luke’s Health Network President Don Seiple; East Stroudsburg Mayor Armand “Doc” Martinelli; Rep. Maureen Madden; Monroe County Transportation Authority driver Angel Madera-DeJesus; and Social Services Coordinator at Shirley Futch Plaza Lisa Flory.



Mass Vaccination Events at Pocono Raceway



What is usually the hub for exciting NASCAR races recently bolstered a different type of finish line: the first step back to normal.

Thousands of cars lined up to receive their first dose of the Moderna vaccine at the first mass vaccination event held by Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) and Pocono Raceway on March 20th. 3,000 patients were guided by the LVHN and Pocono Raceway staff to ensure an easy and seamless vaccination process. The second mass vaccination held on April 7th saw 2,000 patients receive their first dose. This event came just two days after the expansion of vaccine eligibility. Those who qualified under Phase 1A or 1B were able to schedule their appointments and receive their first dose with ease. All of PA outside Philadelphia County entered phase 1C on April 13th, so we can expect many more LVHN mass vaccination sites in the coming weeks.

Rep. Madden would like to thank LVHN and Pocono Raceway for their valiant efforts. She would also like to thank all Pennsylvanians for doing their part to end this pandemic and facilitate our return to normal.

To schedule an appointment for any LVHN COVID-19 vaccination event, including drive-through clinics, people can sign in to MyLVHN, the health network's patient portal. They also can schedule an appointment by calling the COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline at 833-584-6283 (833-LVHN-CVD). The COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline hours of operation are Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and Saturday-Sunday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. However, because of large demand and call volume, you may be on hold. MyLVHN will be your fastest and easiest way to schedule.

The 450 Project

From the time of her first cycle to menopause, the average American woman will have approximately 450 periods in her lifetime. Added up, this equates to around 10 years – or about 3,500 days – of the average woman's life that will be spent menstruating.

Recently, Rep. Maureen Madden's office partnered with local community leaders and Pocono Mountains United Way to support The 450 Project. The 450 Project is a vital, locally sustained program that helps adolescent girls and women throughout Monroe County who face privation with their ability to purchase feminine hygiene supplies, especially within the current COVID-19 pandemic emergency. These necessary health care items required by virtually all girls/women are very expensive and as a result, often out of reach of consistent accessibility.

The problem is particularly worse for women who live in underserved communities. For those experiencing poverty, \$7 a month spent on feminine products per female in the household is far too expensive, especially when they are trying to provide basic needs, such as food and shelter. One in 10 young women cannot afford pads or tampons. Period poverty, the term for inequities related to menstruation, affects students, low-income, and homeless women, and those currently imprisoned. For many, the price of a box of pads or tampons is exorbitant.

Rep. Madden has co-sponsored legislation that would address period poverty for girls and women in the commonwealth. One measure would require Pennsylvania's public schools to supply pads and tampons in bathrooms serving students in grades six through 12. Another would require state prisons to provide at least two varieties of sanitary pads and two varieties of tampons to all female inmates at no cost.

The ability to care for menstruation needs is critical to optimize physical health for all girls and women. Safe, accessible feminine hygiene products also have a considerable impact on women's social, educational, and occupational well-being. Lack of access and affordability of these basic products often results in missed work and school and can adversely affect physical and emotional health. Recent data finds that one in five girls miss all or part of the school day due to lack of resources.

Monroe County community participation and assistance in supplying our local food banks, junior high and high schools, and local outreach support programs with feminine hygiene supplies and products will be of tremendous benefit to many Monroe County girls and women. Please visit The 450 Project's Facebook page for more information.

<https://www.facebook.com/The450Project>

Rep. Madden's office will be conducting a feminine care drive for the month of May. May 28th is Menstrual Hygiene Day, an annual awareness day to highlight the importance of access to sanitary products. The 28th was chosen because the average duration of a menstrual cycle is 28 days and on average, women and girls menstruate for five days per month, hence 5-28. Rep. Madden's Stroudsburg and Tobyhanna District Offices will have drop boxes available to collect unscented pads, tampons, cleansing wipes, and liners for distribution.



Wesleyan Church Homeless Shelter Continues to Help the Community



Rep. Madden with Pastor Dana Antal and Pastor Linda Keefer



*Rev. Linda Keefer,
first female
pastor of
Stroudsburg
Wesleyan
Church.*

Faith, Love, Unity. That is what is written above the doors of the Stroudsburg Wesleyan Church (SWC). The SWC is one of the most dedicated community resources we have here in Monroe County. Their mission of helping residents knows no bounds. What was once the space that housed their pre-school, has been transformed into a men's and women's shelter. The 30-bed shelter includes a stocked kitchen, serving fresh, hot coffee, an area to wash and dry clothes, bathrooms with showers, and lockers for residents' belongings. Two men's bedrooms provide 21 beds, and a women's bedroom sleeps 9. There is also a meeting space with a television.

Representative Madden has worked for the last decade to address the growing problem of homelessness in Monroe County, beginning with helping to establish the first day center in the area, now known as Street2Feet. The lack of affordable housing is another crisis facing many individuals. The COVID-19 outbreak and stay-at-home orders have shined a light on the fundamental importance of housing. Many people simply do not have housing on a regular basis where they can be safe.

The shelter, which was formally located in the gymnasium, only recently moved to its newly renovated location. The project was partially funded by state and federal grants from the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, CARES and CARES State Set Aside (SSA) ESG-CV-CB (Emergency Solutions Grant Cares Code Blue) and from the Department of Community and Economic Development.

Thanks to the perseverance and hard work of the congregation and volunteers, spearheaded by Co-Lead pastors, the Rev. Dana Antal and the Rev. Lynda Keefer, the new facility provides a comfortable, home-like environment. Rev. Keefer is also the first woman pastor in the Stroudsburg Wesleyan Church's 105-year history and works tirelessly serving the community. Their outreach also includes children and youth ministries, nursing home ministries, The Creative Learning Center Preschool, Helping Hands Food Pantry, and numerous addiction

and gambling recovery groups.

The shelter is open from November 1st through March 31st. Call 570-872-0126 for more information. Anyone in need of shelter in Monroe County should call 2-1-1, Monroe County's social service hotline. They can assist with food, housing issues, and utilities.

Madden Elected Vice Chair of House Northeast Democratic Delegation

Rep. Maureen Madden is honored to be elected as the vice chairwoman of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives' Northeast Democratic Delegation alongside Chairman Rep. Marty Flynn, D-Lackawanna, for the 2021-22 legislative session.



"We must use our delegation as an agent of change that will ultimately benefit our region, which is a diverse cross section of rural and urban communities," Madden said.

Racism in Pa. High Schools and Colleges Creates Barriers to Opportunity

Reps. Maureen Madden and Malcom Kenyatta co-hosted a House Democratic Policy Committee hearing concerning racism in high schools and on college campuses. The highly comprehensive and enlightening event centered on personal narratives of students, strategy and practice from experts, insights from Pennsylvania university faculty, and experiences of community members from impacted areas.

The hearing successfully identified avenues in which the commonwealth can work to help mitigate the impacts of racism in our education system. Chad Dion Lassiter, a panelist and executive director of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, stressed the importance of inculcating anti-racism training that addresses anglo-conformity, Americanization, and acculturation. In addition, faculty concluded that expansion on diversity and race curriculum requirements is needed for the knowledge and awareness gained to be a continuous learning experience for students.

In addition, the experts added that colleges and universities must be committed to making sure they address and redress white supremacy. This may include utilizing third-party agencies to conduct anti-racism training for all leadership staff and students to promote conversation and learning that leads to a greater level of humanity. The hearing also explored increased funding for counseling centers, diversifying faculty and boards of trustees, the role of performance art in addressing and humanizing the consequences of racism, and creating explicit links between implicit bias training to faculty hiring, promotion, and retention policies.

Local Business Owners Giving Back



The worldwide pandemic created a difficult year for people throughout Monroe County, and Rep. Maureen Madden recognized that local businesses were struggling. Madden took action by voting for legislation that created a state grant program which could be used to help keep businesses open and pay workers. Some local business owners are doing what they can to help the community during an already difficult year for them.



Justine Riches, owner of The Blu Studio in Stroudsburg, had to close her doors last year during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown. What had been a busy vintage home décor and furniture store and a place where people gathered for weekly workshops, suddenly had to re-invent itself. Riches began doing Facebook Live sales, with 10% of all sales going to community programs and agencies. Since transforming her retail sales, she has raised money for AWSOM, Pocono Mountains United Way, Pocono Area Transitional Housing (PATH), and Stroud Township. In January, she raised \$3,000 for Stroudsburg Fire Department, which had been unable to fundraise due to COVID-19.

Her Facebook Live sales happen two to three times a week and have been so successful; the space that once housed her workshop is now her shipping area. She said business has never been better, thanks to her new way of operating her store, and the community is reaping the benefits.

“If it wasn’t for the customers purchasing the items, we wouldn’t be able to do this, so it’s amazing – it’s absolutely amazing,” Riches said. “I’m in awe of my customers.”

Katie Ace, co-owner of The Cure Café, and Lisa Diemer, owner of Kitchen Chemistry Bakery, both located in downtown Stroudsburg, are displaying the work of local artist Linda Schwartz. Schwartz, a sculptor and potter, has seen her own business struggle from COVID-19 due to cancellations of craft shows and limited gallery exhibits. Wanting to continue to create while also helping her community, she conceived “Ceramics for a Cause.” Her works are on display at local eateries and are available for purchase with 100% of the sale being donated to local food banks.

Colorful cake and cupcake stands, and whimsical bowl sales are providing needed meals to families in our community.



From left: Justine Riches donating a check to Stroudsburg Fire Department, Lisa Diemer and Katie Ace.

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Reminder

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program benefits people who are 65 or older, widows and widowers 50 or older, and disabled people 18 or older. Income requirements include homeowners with a household income of \$35,000 or less, and renters with a household income of \$15,000 or less. If you are eligible and would like assistance with these forms, please call one of Rep. Maureen Madden’s offices to schedule an appointment. The deadline is June 30.





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My office can help you with ...

- PennDOT issues – vehicle registrations, special tags, handicap placards, titles, and driver’s license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Obtaining and completing state forms
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation, disability, and workers’ compensation
- Birth and death certificates
- Problems with the Department of Human Services (food stamps, medical and income assistance)
- Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Requests for literature – bills, regulations, statutes, Pennsylvania maps, senior citizen information
- Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for outstanding accomplishments and family milestones
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate problems or questions
- PACE prescription-drug cards for senior citizens
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups



WHAT YOUR VOTE MEANS ON MAY 18

BALLOT QUESTION #1
The PA General Assembly would be able to unilaterally end or extend a disaster emergency declaration – endangering COVID-19 federal funding and necessary flexibility.

BALLOT QUESTION #2
A disaster emergency would automatically expire after 21 days, unless the General Assembly votes to extend it.

BALLOT QUESTION #3
The PA Constitution would be amended to prohibit denying or restricting equal rights based on race or ethnicity.
** Discrimination on these grounds is already banned by state and federal law – this change would open the state up to “reverse-discrimination” lawsuits.*

BALLOT QUESTION #4
Non-volunteer municipal fire departments, companies, and EMS companies would be eligible for the same state loans that volunteer departments apply for.

IF APPROVED (A MAJORITY OF PA VOTERS CHOOSE “YES”)
Read the questions as they will be asked on your ballot at dos.pa.gov or see a preview of your ballot at vote411.org/ballot.



Rep. Madden would like to thank her staff Marina Purcaro, Latisha Griffith, Danielle Cotumaccio, Erin Derosa, and Zara Safiullah for their collaboration on this newsletter.