

For Immediate Release

Returning to Our Roots | Access Services Opens a New Community Home with a Unique Difference in Lehigh Valley

Bethlehem, PA | July 16, 2026

In July of 2026, Access Services is opening a brand-new home to support community members with intellectual disabilities and autism in the Lehigh Valley. The individuals who will call this house their home will begin moving in shortly. The need is great and this new home will allow individuals waiting for support to finally have a solution. According to Medicaid.gov, nearly one million households in the United States include adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) living with and supported by an aging caregiver and that number is growing (2022). This new home has a unique difference; individuals will utilize Enabling Technologies. Enabling technology refers to smart devices, software, and remote support systems that empower individuals with disabilities to live safely and independently.

Access Services' first [community homes](#), also known as group homes or CLAs, welcomed the first residents in 1978. Established in 1976 in response to the growing needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health challenges as Pennhurst was shutting down, Access Services stepped in to provide a person-centered, community-based service to those displaced. Many community members in Montgomery County at the time had little to no exposure to individuals like those living at Pennhurst. For many years, the recommended option was to institutionalize disabled family members who needed support. When Access Services moved those they served into the community, the reactions initially were mixed with many expressing fear and concern at township meetings. Over time, neighbors began to get to know and accept these individuals as valued members of their community.

Fifty years later, Access Services has grown into a large non-profit organization serving eleven counties across northeastern Pennsylvania in a variety of community support for adults, children, families, individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism, behavioral health, and housing. This growth has always been tied to responding to the needs of individuals in our community who were slipping through the cracks. With the celebration of the [50th anniversary](#) this year comes a return to the roots of Access Services: community homes, but with a new focus on utilizing Enabling Technology to provide the right level of support for each person. With full waiting lists, the need is just as great as it was fifty years ago and the commitment to providing care that is centered on empowering individuals to build a meaningful life is just as strong. This new home will provide a space for three or more individuals to live in the community with the full integrated support they need physical, emotional, spiritual, medical and social.

About Access Services

Access Services is a non-profit organization committed to building stronger communities by empowering individuals to achieve wholeness and belonging. Serving eastern Pennsylvania since

1976, Access Services provides community-based support for adults, children, and families, including services for individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism, behavioral health needs, and housing support.

Access Services believes in providing person-centered services that meet each individual's unique needs. Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, the organization asks, "How can we serve this person better?" This mindset has supported growth from a small group of social workers to more than 600 dedicated staff members across 11 counties, all working to strengthen communities.

Access Services remains adaptable and responsive to evolving community needs. When the organization cannot provide a direct solution, it connects individuals with trusted community partners and resources. Through these strong partnerships, Access Services helps build vibrant communities and lasting support for those in need.

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Works Cited

Supporting Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Their Aging Caregivers | Medicaid. (2022). Medicaid.Gov. <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/home-community-based-services/home-community-based-services-guidance-additional-resources/supporting-adults-intellectual-and-developmental-disabilities-and-their-aging-caregivers>