**SHINE Of Luzerne County Announces Opening Of New Centers**

**In West Pittston and Wilkes-Barre in Fall 2019**

SHINE of Luzerne County at Wilkes University has announced that it will open two new centers for its after-school program in September 2019. The after-school centers will be at Kistler Elementary School in the Wilkes-Barre Area School District and the Pittston Intermediate Center in the Pittston Area School District. The addition of the two new centers brings the total number of SHINE after-school centers to nine. The expansion of the program is made possible by a $2 million grant SHINE received from the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant program for 2019-2024.

The SHINE Center at Kistler will serve children in first through fifth grades. It also will include a home visitor program for students in kindergarten and pre-kindergarten. The home visitor program’s goal is to ensure that students enter school ready to learn. The SHINE Center at the Pittston Intermediate Center will serve elementary school students in first through fourth grades and also have a home visiting program. Students in the Pittston Area School District in grades five through eight attend SHINE at the Wilkes-Barre Career and Technical Center. In the Wilkes-Barre Area School District, students in grades six through eight attend the Career and Technical Center.

The after-school centers operate four days a week. Students are recommended for the program by teachers or guidance counselors in their school. Parents interested in having their child attend the program should contact their child’s school. Students at both of the new after-school centers will benefit from SHINE’s project-based STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) curriculum to kindle excitement about learning.

Carol Nicholas, director of SHINE, says the program is hiring new teachers in preparation for the opening. “We are excited to expand the reach of the SHINE program and are looking for teachers and teachers assistants who will be available to work in our afterschool program between 6-12 hours. The SHINE program will expose them to exciting opportunities to learn about state-of-the-art STEAM-based curriculums and technology.” Individuals interested in applying should contact the SHINE office at (570) 408-4368 or visit jobs@Wilkes online.

Rochelle Koury, director of administrative and student services in the Wilkes-Barre Area School District, said the expansion of the program to Kistler is a welcome addition.

“We are extremely excited and grateful for the expansion of the SHINE program in the Wilkes-Barre Area School District. The program was first launched at Heights Elementary School where we were at full capacity right from the beginning. The reason for this is the unique opportunity the students have to work hands on with various STEM activities based on their interests,” Koury said. “They can work outside the box and explore without worrying whether or not they are going to get a passing grade or

judged in any manner. The students are provided with the necessary resources as well as experienced instructors to help lead them to take chances, explore, question, solve, and succeed.”

Koury added, “Some of the other benefits we have seen from students who attend the SHINE program are an increase in attendance, a decrease in discipline issues, and a boost in self-esteem and confidence.  We hope that one day, we will be able to offer this program to all of our students throughout the Wilkes-Barre Area School District.”

Anthony Grieco, executive director of Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18, said that the expansion of SHINE is a benefit to the school districts it serves.

“It is very exciting that the Luzerne County SHINE program is expanding to two new locations for the upcoming school year.  These are incredible opportunities for Luzerne County students that are fortunate enough to be able to participate in high quality after-school programming that has a successful track record of increasing student achievement, increasing student engagement and helping students focus on career preparation, especially in the areas of STEM,” Grieco said.

SHINE of Luzerne County at Wilkes University serves students in the Hanover Area, Hazleton Area, Greater Nanticoke Area, Pittston Area, Wilkes-Barre Area and Wyoming Valley West school districts. SHINE, which stands for Schools and Homes In Education, was founded in fall 2015 in Luzerne County. State Sen. John Yudichak and former U.S. Rep. Lou Barletta teamed to bring the program to the community. Wilkes University is SHINE’s higher education partner and serves as home for the program.

**About Wilkes University**:

Wilkes University is a private, independent, non-sectarian institution of higher education dedicated to academic and intellectual excellence through mentoring in the liberal arts, sciences and professional programs. Founded in 1933, the university is on a mission to create one of the nation’s finest small universities, offering all of the programs, activities and opportunities of a large university in the intimate, caring and mentoring environment of a small college, open to all who show promise. *The Economist* named Wilkes 25th in the nation for the value of its education for graduates. In addition to 47 majors, Wilkes offers 25 master’s degree programs and five doctoral/terminal degree programs, including the doctor of philosophy in nursing, doctor of nursing practice, doctor of education, doctor of pharmacy, and master of fine arts in creative writing. Learn more at [www.wilkes.edu](http://www.wilkes.edu).

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