

# PAY IT FORWARD FUND IN MEMORY OF RONN FLETCHER

## I. PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date: May 10, 2024

### Contact Information:

Organization Name: Lighthouse Youth Center  
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Phone: 610-467-6000  
Web Address: www.oxfordlighthouse.org  
FEIN: 23-2661775

Contact Name: Micah Lehman  
Contact Title: Executive Director  
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Year Incorporated: 1991

**Has your nonprofit previously applied to the Community Foundation:** Yes  No

### Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture and Humanities       Environment/Animal Welfare       Health  
 Human Services       Education       Religion

### Organizational Information:

**Geographic Area Served:** Oxford, PA / Southern Chester County

**Annual # of Clients & Description of Population Served:** In 2023, 325 unique individuals attended Lighthouse youth programs. The Lighthouse Youth Center serves youth aged 9-18 in the Oxford community.

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Lighthouse is to shine the light and love of Jesus to Oxford area youth through staff-directed, volunteer-supported programs and services.

**Organization Description:** For 36 years, The Lighthouse Youth Center has been a beacon of light and hope to youth and their families in the Oxford community. By providing free after school programs, snacks and meals, homework help, and postsecondary education support, the Lighthouse equips and empowers youth to realize and achieve their God-given potential in life.

Annual Budget \$ <u>476,653</u>	<u>4</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>66</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>10</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>23</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>72</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>11</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>4,000</u> # of Volunteer Hours (2023)
<u>100</u> % total	

### Top 3-5 funding sources:

Oxford Civic Association, Oxford Area Foundation, Lasko Foundation, Hostetter Grain, Lapp Family.

### Proposal Information:

Grant Amount Requested:

Year 1 \$ 15,000 + Year 2 \$ 15,000 = Total \$ 30,000 (Maximum \$50,000 Total)

**Summary Description of Paradigm-Shifting Grant Purpose:** The purpose of this grant is to support the work of the Lighthouse Youth Center to inspire positive change and transform the way that young people are engaged with their faith and community by fostering spiritual growth, resource development, and positive social impact.

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## II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

### 1. Organization's history, goals, key achievements, and distinctiveness

For 36 years, the Lighthouse Youth Center has faithfully carried out the mission of shining the light and love of Jesus Christ to Oxford area youth through staff-directed, volunteer-supported services and programs. What began in 1988 as the initiative of several concerned community members has now grown to become a trusted pillar in the Oxford community that has offered free, essential resources to thousands of children.

Open to all youth aged 9 to 18, Lighthouse programs provide free access to resources that are vital to the success of youth in the community. These resources include homework assistance, educational programming, college preparation, recreational activities, nutritious snacks and meals, and a safe environment with adult supervision. Beyond meeting basic needs, the Lighthouse seeks to empower and equip youth with the resources they need to realize their God-given dreams and potential in life.

By running daily afternoon programs year-round, our goal is that participating youth will learn important skills, values, and lessons needed to live a life of excellence and make a positive impact in the community. We also expect that the community will grow stronger because of the Lighthouse's mission to be a uniting force that overcomes barriers and brings people together. The Lighthouse provides a safe and uplifting environment where youth can participate in engaging activities, learn valuable skills, and receive individual support to help them overcome life's challenges. As the only local organization offering these services, the Lighthouse fills an essential role in the community and helps bridge the resource gap by connecting youth to needed support.

In 2023, 325 unduplicated youth participated in Lighthouse Youth Center programs. Of that number, 18% are African American, 24% are Caucasian, 41% are Hispanic, and 17% are Multiracial. A total of 7,112 free meals were served to youth as part of the Lighthouse food and nutrition program. The Lighthouse Scholarship Program supported five youth center students with a total of \$27,821 to help them achieve their dream of pursuing a college education. Additionally, the Lighthouse partners with many individuals, businesses, churches, and organizations in the community to better serve youth and their families. Last year, more than 70 individuals volunteered over 4,000 hours at youth center programs and events.

### 2. Paradigm Shifting Funding request:

#### A. Specific Chester County needs and issues to be addressed

There is a clear need in Oxford for positive extracurricular activities for youth, especially for those who face economic barriers. The Lighthouse seeks to fill this resource gap to address the need for a safe and encouraging environment that is freely available to all youth aged 9-18. The Oxford Area School District (OASD) serves 3,379 students (2021-2022) and has a per capita income of \$34,579 which is 38% lower than the average for Chester County (2021). Oxford's poverty percentage for children ages 5-17 is 11.5% which is 1.5 times the average for Chester County (nces.ed.gov) and the highest in Southern Chester County. 57.6% of OASD students qualify for free and reduced lunches (2022). The Lighthouse Youth Center's facility is located near the schools, the center of town, and the community's largest low-income apartment complex where many of the students who we serve reside, making programs easily accessible for youth to attend. This is the community that the Lighthouse serves.

## **B. Paradigm-shifting impact**

In a world where youth are constantly being bombarded with negative influences and confusing messages, The Lighthouse Youth Center stands as a safe haven and guiding light of truth for youth in Oxford. Ultimately, the Lighthouse exists to inspire positive change in young people and transform the way that they engage with their faith and community by fostering spiritual growth, resource development, and positive social impact.

## **C. Overall strategies to implement the initiative**

The Lighthouse aims to tackle current challenges within the Oxford community by developing resources in six key areas: Relational, Intellectual, Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Spiritual. Through our programs and services, we offer educational experiences for youth to explore and develop each of these resources. We believe that when young individuals attain a better understanding and balance in these areas of their life, they are significantly more likely to develop into self-sufficient, productive members of the community.

## **D. Why it is important to fund this now**

The services offered by the Lighthouse are essential to the Oxford community. The Lighthouse operates in a key area of service as no similar alternative exists for youth in Oxford. Many families who we serve are low income and often require assistance to provide their children with the necessary tools for their success. We actively help fill this gap to ensure that all youth in the Oxford area continue to have access to the tools and resources they need to succeed both in and out of the classroom.

## **3. Timetable, with anticipated outcomes and their relevance to the nonprofit's mission**

By offering weekday afternoon programs throughout the calendar year, we anticipate that the Lighthouse Youth Center will serve as a nurturing environment where young people can grow spiritually, emotionally, and socially. Our goal is to foster a strong sense of community, encourage personal development, and provide opportunities for service and leadership within the context of Christian values. Through our programs and activities, we aim to equip young individuals with the tools they need to navigate life's challenges with faith, integrity, and compassion, ultimately empowering them to positively impact their families, communities, and the world around them.

## **4. How impact and results will be demonstrated**

The Lighthouse Youth Center measures each program's impact by tracking student participation as an indicator of growth in our six areas of targeted resources. This data is evaluated monthly by youth center staff and the board of directors. This method of tracking informs how programs are designed and implemented to ensure they are effectively meeting the needs present in the community. Program evaluations have been used in the past to restructure programs, cancel ineffective programs, and create new programs to better serve the mission and vision of the organization. The Lighthouse Youth Center's current programs have been developed as a result of more than three decades of program evaluations and improvements with the goal of more accurately addressing the needs of the community.

Success is measured at Lighthouse Youth Center programs by looking for:

- Sustained and/or increased youth attendance
- Sustained and/or increased youth participation in programs
- Sustained and/or increased volunteer participation
- Youth and volunteer satisfaction
- Effectiveness of program (Is the program meeting the needs of the youth?)