VonLehman CPA & Advisory Firm is proud to partner with LEAD Cincinnati on this special supplement recognizing 50 top nonprofit organizations throughout Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky. After reviewing the list of organizations, it struck me how each in its own unique way is a pillar in our community. These organizations are examples of how the strength of our region comes directly from individuals working together to drive their mission forward. These individuals work consistently to bring ideas to life, to make plans materialize and, most importantly, to make a difference in people’s lives.

As with our great community, VonLehman is an evolving and responsive entity. Like nonprofits, we are built on the strength of dedicated people passionate about making a difference in the lives of our clients, neighbors and families.

Founded in 1946, VonLehman takes great pride in giving back to the community. A substantial number of our associates serve on boards or committees across Greater Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky and Indianapolis. We want to bring awareness to those organizations that help meet the needs our community faces, and do our part in helping those organizations thrive.

At VonLehman, we strive to make a lasting impact on the communities that have supported us over the last 70 years. Based on an employee suggestion, the “VL Cares” committee was created several years ago. This group gathers projects and ideas and then disseminates the information to our associates to garner participation. The committee most recently created the VL Cares Make a Difference Day in which nearly 130 VonLehman professionals spent the day supporting six nonprofit organizations with both manual and intellectual labor.

Beyond giving back, we’re also proud to perform services for more than 300 nonprofit and governmental organizations. We have more than 30 people dedicated to working in our Nonprofit Group providing audit, accounting, tax and consulting service expertise to clients. Our nonprofit team provides a breadth of service capabilities to our clients, based on the needs of each unique organization and mission. In recent years, we’ve proactively identified, assessed and implemented programs in areas such as IT analysis, internal controls assessments, mergers and acquisitions, policy and procedure assessments, QuickBooks, talent recruiting and many others.

My VonLehman associates and I are proud to be a part of recognizing these organizations for a job well done. As we take pride in working with nonprofits in pursuit of their mission, we also thank you for making a difference and making your mark on our community.

– Stephanie Allgeyer, Shareholder and Chair of VonLehman’s Nonprofit Group

VonLehman CPA & Advisory Firm
The Cincinnati Art Museum is one of the country’s oldest visual arts institutions and one of the true treasures of the Tri-State, says Cameron Kitchin, museum director. “Our museum collections reach back through 6,000 years of human history, and cover every corner of the globe and culture throughout recorded history,” he says. “The museum is a magnet of civic change. It’s a lens into the past, and a tool for connecting people from different places and backgrounds who hold views of the world that are beneficial to all of us.”

The museum, located in Eden Park, commands a diverse collection of more than 67,000 works, and hosts several national and international traveling exhibitions each year. “The Cincinnati Art Museum is raising the next generation of art lovers,” says Kitchin. This is where busloads of school kids embark upon their first art experience and have been introduced to a lifetime interest in the subject. It is through the arts, Kitchin says, that a community can openly discuss issues like economic immobility, race and gender equality – issues that are often expressed through artwork – in a safe place.

“We always strive to be bigger and reach further,” says Kitchin. “The challenge is continued community investment in the art museum. The community needs to see how the museum can grow and benefit everyone’s lives.”

The museum is supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses that give annually to ArtsWave. The Ohio Arts Council helped fund the museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The museum also gratefully receives operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as from museum members.

Kitchin says the Cincinnati Art Museum will remain steadfast in its mission: contributing to a more vibrant region by inspiring its people and connecting its communities through the power of art.

The Cincinnati Art Museum is located at 953 Eden Park Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45202. For more information, call 513.639.2995, email information@cincyart.org or visit www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org.
It might seem unlikely that a city the size of Cincinnati could successfully support one of the world’s greatest orchestras for more than 120 years. Nevertheless, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra – the sixth-oldest orchestra in the United States – continues to fulfill its mission of outstanding musical tradition: seeking and sharing inspiration.

How do they do it?

“The reason we can do that is because the CSO has continually expanded,” says Trey Devey, the outgoing CSO president. “We play as the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, the Cincinnati Pops...we are the official orchestra of the the May Festival, Cincinnati Ballet and Cincinnati Opera, and we play educational and park concerts. The level of accessibility that exists here allows everyone to experience the CSO. Because our fan base is growing and our quality is well known, we’ve been able to piece together and keep together what only a handful of 52-week-a-year orchestras have been able to.”

Operative word: “We’ve.”

“Sustaining the CSO is a team sport,” Devey continues. “We have a phenomenal board, a great staff, amazing audiences and supporters. We’ve brought all these stakeholders together in order for the orchestra to thrive. Few orchestras have both the sustainable financial outlook and the quality and reputation of the CSO.”

And that is something that must never be taken for granted, he notes. The CSO is one of Cincinnati’s jewels, and the steadfast collaborative spirit of the stand-up people who support it in a myriad of ways is the glue that keeps the orchestra alive and well. Devey, who has served as president for nine years, will leave in April to become president of the Interlochen Music Center located in his childhood stomping grounds of northwest Michigan.

“Cincinnati is truly blessed,” says Devey. “I walk out of every performance encouraged by the CSO experience. I will look forward to coming back as much as I can.”

The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra is located at 1241 Elm Street Cincinnati OH 45202. For more information, call 513.621.1919, email information@cincinnatisymphony.org, or visit www.cincinnatisymphony.org.
Kurt Reiber, president and CEO of the Freestore Foodbank, believes everyone deserves to eat nutritious meals seven days a week, 365 days a year. This is what fuels the organization’s exemplary mission to provide food year-round to the hungry in the Tri-State.

What many people might not realize, however, is that hunger is a reality for far too many people around us—one in six of our neighbors is at risk in the Tri-State region. The Freestore Foodbank’s outreach extends far beyond feeding people. That’s because hunger is a many-faceted issue, Reiber explains.

“At the Freestore Foodbank, we see food as a vehicle for a larger conversation,” he says. “It helps us collaborate with other agencies, connecting our neighbors to area programs and resources aimed at creating overall stability and self-reliance.”

In addition to feeding people, the Freestore tries to ‘shorten the line’ by focusing on workforce development issues. “We are in our 16th year of the Cincinnati COOKS! program, which is a free culinary job-training program that teaches basic skills required to hold a job in the culinary field,” Reiber explains.

While participants learn valuable job skills, Cincinnati COOKS! also makes a difference in the lives of hungry children.

“One in four children in our four-county area deals with hunger,” he adds. The nutritious snacks and meals prepared by Cincinnati COOKS! students are served at Kids Cafe, an important after-school feeding program.

“Sometimes I think the public considers ‘the hungry’ as nameless, faceless families or individuals somewhere ‘out there,’” says Reiber. “In reality, the face of hunger is the same as the faces at the school or church you attend. ‘The hungry’ are your neighbors in line with you at the grocery store.”

The Freestore Foodbank Customer Connection Center is located at 112 East Liberty Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202. For more information, call 513.242.1064 or visit www.freestorefoodbank.org.
Devoted Teachers, Customized Learning Help Students Maximize Potential

Why work math problems in a workbook when you can write them out on the top of your desk using a dry erase marker?

That’s just one of the ways teachers make customized learning fun at Linden Grove School in Deer Park. It allows teachers to select math problems for each student depending on how easily they are grasping particular concepts.

Providing customized learning for K-8 students with autism and associated learning needs is the heart of their progressive education program, says Kristin Tennyson, who has served as head of school at Linden Grove for 17 years. Specialized therapies, small class sizes and low teacher-student ratios help each child maximize their academic potential. Additionally, the devoted teachers and staff partner with families and community members to ensure each child feels safe, engaged, supported and challenged to promote life-long success.

“We use a variety of research-based programs because every student has different needs,” Tennyson says. “We’re a real school, we’re accredited, and we have after-school activities and field trips so that our students get that true school experience.”

LEGO education programs, robotics classes and other specialty courses inspire creativity and critical thinking. An applied skills program for grades 6 through 8 prepares students to lead independent, fulfilling lives through activities such as cooking, service learning projects and career exploration.

Parents praise Linden Grove School for providing students a caring, supportive and academically appropriate setting, more effectively opening the world of learning and social interaction.

“It’s fun to work here,” says Tennyson. “I can’t imagine working anywhere else. Parents are so thankful to us, but what they may not understand is that we learn as much from the kids as they learn from us. Linden Grove is a place of hope for everyone.”

Linden Grove School is located at 4122 Myrtle Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45236. For more information, call 513.984.2215 or visit www.lindengroveschool.org.
For 65 years, Neediest Kids of All (NKOA) has helped provide new hats, coats, shoes, eyeglasses and money for field trips and summer camps for thousands of Tri-State kids who live in poverty. Children at more than 700 schools and Head Start sites in 17 counties have benefited from the outpouring of generosity to NKOA, founded in 1952 by WKRC-TV and owned by Taft Broadcasting. Enquirer Media became involved in 1964, and iHeart Media Cincinnati joined in 1999.

“There haven’t been any changes in children’s needs since Neediest Kids of All was founded, there are just more children with needs,” says Executive Director J.J Wales, who has led the collaborative effort for the past 20 years. “We have been a grassroots, direct-service organization since the beginning, and we continue to be, with funds distributed to schools where teachers, principals, school secretaries and school nurses know the families in crisis. The efficiency of the program is mindboggling because of that.”

NKOA has had to tweak its mission a bit over the years. “It used to be that we could provide a new coat for a child, or a new pair of shoes, or a new pair of pants. Now we’re seeing children in dire need of entire outfits.”

Greater Cincinnati is an incredibly generous community, says Wales, but there is still much work to be done. “Neediest Kids of All is blessed to have so many people in our society so willing to help those less fortunate. It’s unbelievable the funds we raise, and the direct services we give. But to still have 44 percent of our children in our area living in poverty is a glaring issue we must continue to address. It’s a very complex problem.”

Neediest Kids of All is located at 312 Elm Street, 20th Floor, Cincinnati, OH 45202. For more information, call 513.768.8549, email NeediestKidsofAll@gmail.com or visit www.neediestkidsofall.com.

Imagine trying to learn, live a quality life and strive for your potential without having those necessary skills.

Springer School and Center in Cincinnati is solely devoted to the education of children with learning disabilities, ages 6-14. With a capacity for 200 students, the school has a staff to student ratio of 6:1. Through the center’s outreach programs, parents and professionals throughout the tri-state develop an understanding of learning disabilities and the most effective means to address them.

“A learning disability interferes with an individual’s ability to take in information, process what it means, store it away for future use, or retrieve it,” says Shelly Weisbacher, executive director. “Children with average or above average potential who have difficulty reading, understanding mathematics or completing written assignments could have a learning disability.”

If one is not attuned to a student’s learning disability or co-occurring issues such as ADHD, a student might be labeled lazy, difficult or not wanting to comply, and nothing could be further from the truth, according to Weisbacher.

At Springer, dedicated teachers understand students’ needs and students are provided the time and space to develop the skills and strategies necessary to find real success in school and throughout their adult lives.

Springer also makes sure that families have the information they need to move ahead, that educators in the community have the knowledge they need to recognize learning disabilities, and that students are in an environment where it all comes together to allow them to flourish.

“The best part of being at Springer for me is seeing children’s lives transformed – their smiles return, confidence grows and they come to believe that success can be theirs,” says Weisbacher.

*Springer School and Center is located at 2121 Madison Road, Cincinnati, OH 45208. For more information, call 513-6080 or visit springer-ld.org.*
Imagine a community where everyone has a stable home and the resources to maintain it.

That’s the vision that drives Strategies to End Homelessness to coordinate a comprehensive system of care to prevent and, eventually, eliminate homelessness in Greater Cincinnati. A centralized emergency shelter hotline, homelessness prevention, street outreach, emergency shelter and housing solutions are some of the safety nets sewn with Strategies’ collaborative thread of 30 area non-profit organizations.

“The biggest obstacle to ending homelessness is that most people don’t understand who is homeless,” says Kevin Finn, president and CEO. Most people perceive the average homeless person to be 50 to 60 years old, living on the street, clutching a bottle wrapped in a brown paper bag. That’s not the case. An increasing number of families and children are homeless (though usually bunking with friends or relatives, or living in a shelter, not on the street), with more than half of the homeless population under the age of 35.

“People are always looking for that silver bullet to end homelessness, but there isn’t one,” Finn says. “There are usually a couple of problems that lead to homelessness, so multiple problems have to be addressed. With limited prevention funding, our goal is to get people out of a bad situation as soon as possible.”

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently awarded Hamilton County $3.8 million to address youth homelessness. The grant, to be administered by Strategies to End Homelessness, will supplement the almost $17.5 million his organization received from HUD in December to tackle overall homelessness. Finn says that homelessness is a regional issue, so his organization is also getting involved in Northern Kentucky.

Strategies to End Homelessness is located at 2368 Victory Parkway, Suite 600, Cincinnati, OH 45206. For more information, call 513.263.2780, email info@end-homelessness.org or visit www.strategiestoendhomelessness.org.
What began more than half a century ago as an experiment to integrate ex-offenders back into the community has evolved into a valuable service organization, last year helping an estimated 36,000 children, adults and families get their lives back on track and making Cincinnati a safer place to live and work. An additional 34,000 people were helped through prevention and hotline services.

The Talbert House mission, says Neil Tilow, president and CEO, is to improve social behavior and enhance personal recovery and growth. This is done through prevention, assessment, treatment and re-integration services. The goal is to help those who are homeless, jobless, involved in the criminal justice system, and adults and youth with behavior/mental health needs, including addiction.

“People associate Talbert House with whatever their experience with us has been,” Tilow says. “If they know someone who was picked up for drunk driving, if they know someone in school who needed help, if they know someone with an addiction problem, or someone who called our hotline for help, that’s how they have come to think about Talbert House. Quite frankly, we’re happy about that. We like that Talbert House is thought of as a place to go for help. We don’t want to be thought of as a system. We want to be that doorway to help that people can get to.”

Talbert House, which was founded in 1965, remains an effective doorway to a better life and a safer community because, Tilow says, it has grown to meet the changing needs of society and the organization itself. Diverse services offered include Community Outreach, Prevention and Education, Employment and Workforce Development, the Fatherhood Project, Social Enterprises, Driver Intervention Program, Childreach and the Victim Service Center.

“We’ve done a lot of good things over the years,” says Tilow. “We have to keep at it. Going forward into 2017, workforce development, poverty and the heroin epidemic are the three big areas for us.”

The Talbert House executive office is located at 2600 Victory Parkway, Cincinnati, OH 45206. For more information, call 513.751.7747 or visit www.talberthouse.org.
For the homeless and hungry, just trying to put one foot in front of the other to survive another day can be frightening. Shelterhouse, formerly the Drop Inn Center, offers hope and help to those requiring immediate assistance and then provides a tailored approach to meeting their specific needs.

“We were founded more than 40 years ago to serve the most vulnerable homeless men with serious substance abuse problems,” says Arlene Nolan, Shelterhouse executive director. “Later we started serving homeless women as well. We serve people where they are in order to meet their basic survival needs. We’re known as a low-barrier shelter because we make accessing our services as easy as possible for those seeking assistance.”

Two years ago, the Drop Inn Center changed its name to Shelterhouse, now operating as the Esther Marie Hatton Center for Women with 60 beds, and the David and Rebecca Barron Center for Men with 150 beds. It’s the goal of the new state-of-the-art shelters to help the homeless become self-sufficient, stable and productive citizens.

Nolan says there has been an increase in the “newly homeless” – those with no previous record of homelessness, mostly a younger generation addicted to opioids and heroin. And Shelterhouse is also seeing more elderly in need.

“Our challenge, given our mission, is securing financial support to keep our organization going. We consistently operate at an over-capacity level serving 253 homeless individuals on any given day. When you’re serving adults with severe mental health or substance abuse issues, it can be a hard cause to sell. But the work we do here is important. If not for us, there would have been 379 individuals sleeping on the streets of Cincinnati last night. Our place in this community is absolutely vital.”

Shelterhouse’s collaborative partners include the Freestore Foodbank, Cincinnati Health Network, Cincinnati Works, Center for Chemical Abuse and Treatment, Talbert House and many others.

The David and Rebecca Barron Center for Men is located at 411 Gest Street, Cincinnati, OH 45203; 513.721.0643. The Esther Marie Hatton Center for Women is located at 2499 Reading Road, Cincinnati, OH 45202; 513.562.1980. For more information, visit www.shelterhousecincy.org.
Worry and fear consume families when a loved one is diagnosed with cancer. The Dragonfly Foundation, led by co-founders Christine Neitzke and Ria Davidson, helps young cancer patients and their families find strength, distractions and community, while providing families with opportunities to enjoy more of their time together.

“We fill a unique space in the landscape of pediatric cancer-related nonprofits,” says Davidson. “And the depth of need for the programs, services and events we provide can’t be overstated.”

The Dragonfly Foundation’s small staff of employees and larger group of volunteers work extremely hard to meet that need. Their work supports thousands who are affected by the emotional, physical and financial toll of cancer and bone marrow transplants, as well as the post-traumatic stress associated with diagnosis, treatment and long-term recovery.

Neitzke and Davidson know all too well the dark feelings inherent with the challenges of managing the care of a loved one with cancer. Neitzke’s youngest son, Matt, was diagnosed with Stage 3 Hodgkin’s lymphoma in February 2010, and he almost died twice from complications of chemotherapy treatment. Davidson, who cared for her late mother-in-law at home after she was diagnosed with lung and brain cancer, was one of the people who helped the Neitzke family through their heart-wrenching journey.

“We were fortunate,” says Neitzke. “We had people who dedicated themselves to making Matt and our family smile.”

She and Davidson realized, however, that so many other families aren’t that fortunate and decided to do something about it. While Matt was still in treatment, they created The Dragonfly Foundation. Primary services include providing gifts, technology, care bags, and other quality of life programs to Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center and Dayton Children’s Hospital, and two other partner hospitals in Chicago, IL. They also provide tickets to local social events and entertainment; emotional health, awareness and support programs; and valuable community connections.

“We are a light in the dark for patients ranging in age from birth to age 30 and their families,” says Davidson. “Simple pleasures, moments of joy, and knowing they are not alone helps them make it through another day, and another week. We want them to be able to enjoy as much time together as they can.”

The Dragonfly Foundation is located at 9275 Governors Way, Cincinnati, OH 45249. For more information, call 513.494.6474, email info@dragonfly.org or visit www.dragonfly.org.
Collectively touted as a thriving anchor district that includes the communities of Avondale, Clifton, Clifton Heights, University Heights, Fairview, Corryville and Mount Auburn, its momentum springs from thoughtful, smart, creative residents, businesses and groups. But it doesn’t stop there. Uptown’s immediate and long-term future is also in the hands of the Uptown Consortium Inc., a can-do-and-does organization founded in 2004, and supported by the University of Cincinnati, UC Health, Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center and TriHealth.

“We revitalize or work with partners to improve the neighborhoods in those areas,” says Beth Robinson, president and CEO of Uptown Consortium. “In the past eight years, we’ve been able to incentivize and encourage a number of key investments in the Uptown area. Simultaneously, many private developers and business leaders have been investing without incentives, due to the attractiveness of the Uptown footprint. Where once we had empty storefronts, dilapidated buildings and crime, all of us have been working to now have new businesses, new residents and new street life.”

In anticipation of the interchange opening at the intersection of Martin Luther King Drive and I-71, the Uptown Consortium is working on a mixed-use development supporting Uptown’s medical, research and innovation industries. As predicted, the transportation project is already having a transformational impact on the Uptown Innovation Corridor.

“Of our ambitious plans for the district’s transformation, some are already under construction,” Robinson says. “We are working now to attract a variety of mixed users – including bioscience companies that require close proximity to our hospitals, for example – as well as new housing. Our goal is to amplify the economic benefits realized by residents, businesses and institutions.”

Robinson recalls that she began her term as president and CEO during the challenging economic times of 2008 when financing was hard to come by and people were extremely cautious and not in the mood to make major investments.

“It was tough, but we got through it, investors were brave and believed in our shared vision, and today Uptown is booming. We’re just thrilled to be in this position.”

Uptown Consortium is located at 629 Oak Street Cincinnati, OH 45206. For more information, call 513.861.8726 or visit www.uptowncincinnati.com.
Helping to build healthy spirit, mind and body for all is the rallying cry of the YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association) of Greater Cincinnati and it is as relevant today as it was when the Y was founded locally 164-years-ago. Those values continue to be at the heart of the non-profit’s mission, operating 14 branches, an overnight camp and 80 childhood learning centers across Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

“I think of the YMCA as the original holistic health and wellness organization,” says Chief Operating Officer of the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati Myrita Craig. “Our footprint is much larger than people realize, especially in early learning and youth development. Our programs are touchpoints for families and kids. We’ve made an enormous investment in our region to help youth and families get the help and support they need.”

The Y focuses on three pillars to strengthen community: youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Recognizing that lasting personal and social change can only occur when we all work together, the Y is a committed and diverse community that inspires people of all ages, and families in all forms, to achieve their hopes, dreams, and goals. Regardless of age, income or background, at the Y, all have equal opportunity to learn, grow and thrive in a safe, caring and vibrant environment. “I am always inspired when I visit our branches” says Craig. “We welcome all ages, races and backgrounds. Health and wellness are truly the great societal equalizers.”

The recent $29 million renovation of the historic 100-year-old Central Park YMCA on Elm Street in downtown Cincinnati includes a complete state-of-the-art upgrade of the fitness facility on the lower floors and adding affordable housing for senior citizens on the upper floors.

“We are trying to connect in many different ways to help local companies, individuals and communities achieve their goals,” says Craig. “We try to be that location where everyone can come and be on a journey of good health. If we can partner with local businesses and help them thrive, that’s a sustainable partnership. We want the Greater Cincinnati area to be a healthier region, known as a good place for businesses and families to be located.”

The YMCA of Greater Cincinnati administrative offices are located at 1105 Elm Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202. For more information, call 513.362.9622 or visit MyY.org.
Leading Nonprofits in the Tri-State Area

Cincinnati Art Museum
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
Freestore-Foodbank, Inc.
Linden Grove School
Neediest Kids of All
Shelterhouse Volunteer Group
Springer School & Center
Strategies to End Homelessness
Talbert House
The Dragonfly Foundation
Uptown Consortium
YMCA of Greater Cincinnati
Bawac, Inc.
Be Concerned
Brighton Center
Butler Foundation
Center for Great Neighborhoods of Covington, Inc.
Child Focus
Children, Inc.
Children’s Home of Northern Kentucky
Cincinnati Museum Center
Cincinnati Nature Center
Cincinnati Opera Association
Cincinnati Waldorf School
Contemporary Arts Center
Corporation for Findlay
Market of Cincinnati

Council on Rural Service Programs
Diocesan Catholic Childrens Home
Girls on the Run
GLAD House, Inc.
Greater Cincinnati Health Council
Hearing Speech & Deaf Center for Greater Cincinnati
Horizon Science Academy - Cincinnati
Life Learning Center
Lifetime Resources, Inc.
Lighthouse Youth Services
Madcap Productions
Over the Rhine Community Housing
People Working Cooperatively, Inc.
Redwood Rehabilitation Center
Ronald McDonald House
Stepping Stones, Inc.
Taft Museum of Art
The Center for Independent Living Options, Inc.
The Cincinnati Ballet Company, Inc.
The Greater Cincinnati Foundation
Welcome House of Northern Kentucky, Inc.
Women’s Crisis Center
YWCA of Greater Cincinnati
Zoological Society of Cincinnati