

## TO MEDIA

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **LATROBE AREA HOSPITAL AID SOCIETY: SHOE US THE LOVE**

**LATROBE, PA, June 13, 2023 ...** On the heels of a successful shoe drive in 2021, Latrobe Area Hospital Aid Society (LAHAS) is once again asking the community to exhibit some sole by donating new and gently worn shoes of all sizes and type. As before, the collection will be held under the auspices of Funds2orgs to support micro-enterprise vendors around the globe while returning a portion of the funds raised to LAHAS.

Collection boxes are available through August 1 in the main lobbies of Latrobe Hospital and Excelsa Square at Latrobe, both part of Independence Health System. Donations may include footwear for men, women and children such as boots, sandals, sneakers, slippers and dress shoes. Each pair should be removed from its packaging, and either tied together with the laces or banded together.

Funds2Orgs may ship the shoes collected to 26 developing countries around the world. In 2021, LAHAS collected 6,728 pairs of shoes that were destined for Haiti. For their efforts, LAHAS made a profit of \$2,681.20 which was distributed back to the health system and the community.

In the receiving country, the donated footwear is sold to micro-entrepreneurs (small

business owners, mostly women) who buy the shoes at a fraction of the cost. This helps to ensure commerce and not destroy the commercial economy by dumping “free” items. Many countries and local governments have laws and regulations against “free” merchandise and donations in order to protect economies. The micro-enterprise partners of Funds2Orgs worldwide then take the shoes and sell them in their communities.

More than 4,000 micro-entrepreneurs and their families partner with Funds2Orgs and have created thriving businesses selling shoes. In turn, they have helped themselves out of poverty with their hand-up through our shoe drive fundraiser. Shoes are resold at a very low price or repurposed in these countries, not only providing needed footwear but insulation for homes, and stuffing for car seats or furniture. In the United States, 85% of consumer textiles end up in landfills which is extremely harmful to the environment, while 70% of the global population uses repurposed shoes and clothing.

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Independence Health System offers patients nationally recognized quality care in cardiology, orthopedics, palliative care, and maternity as well as a broad range of surgical, medical, emergency, and behavioral health services, and an extensive network of primary care physicians. With five hospitals, nearly 1,000 healthcare providers and more than 7,000 employees, Independence Health System serves a 10-county region and is the largest employer in Butler and Westmoreland counties.