

Gateway to Equity Award May 2025: La Comunidad Hispana Health and Community Services

Dr. Valentina Rutolo, LCH Primary Care physician, and Kate Wickersham, CRFE, LCH Director of Development, accepted the Gateway to Equity Award at the AAUW May Banquet for La Comunidad Hispana Health and Community Services at the May WCCC AAUW Banquet. They both spoke passionately about the mission of LCH, to improve the health and well-being of people and communities by providing high quality healthcare, resources, and social services, especially in the primarily Latino population in Kennett Square.

Dr. Rutolo told how as a woman as well as a physician she can relate to the population LCH serves, and how their needs expanded what she understood to do as a doctor. She came to understand how they have challenges with language, transportation, and need for help to pay for their care, as many are below the poverty level. She expressed how LCH works to meet all the needs of individuals who cannot go to specialists or other care resources, and so for example, has added chiropractic care and physical therapy for those suffering from hard physical labor but cannot take time off from work. She noted examples of how LCH found ways to expand services: starting a pharmacy, arranging for Fox Chase Cancer Center to drive a mammogram van to LCH, and adding two bilingual individuals to give dental care. In short, she told how she tries to treat the whole person, more than half of whom are women often taking care of other women and families—so the entire family benefits from her integrated behavioral health and primary care.



Dr. Valentina Rutolo



Kate Wickersham

Kate Wickersham spoke to the mission of LCH: “LCH will set the highest possible standard for community health and wellness by creating and sustaining the resources, conditions, and opportunities that enable all LCH patients and community members to experience their optimal health and wellness.”

LCH was established in 1973 by Kennett Square residents, clergy and supporters to serve the needs of a primarily Latino population drawn to the area by jobs in the mushroom industry. Vulnerable families were in need of a place to go for help, ask questions, and seek resources. Peggy Harris and Margarita Quiñones brought healthcare to the non-profit organization, and La Comunidad Hispana came to life laying a foundation of passion for serving the community. As the need in the community grew, so did the organization. In 2012 LCH became a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) associated with the Pennsylvania Association of Community Health Centers (PACHC). LCH offers primary care, social services, integrated and outpatient behavioral health, women’s health, dental services and pediatrics. In fall of 2023, LCH opened the Pia Center for Behavioral Health at LCH to provide outpatient and group therapy services to our community.

Both Dr. Rutolo and Kate Wickersham noted how by delivering state-of-the-art, accessible, integrated, and personalized healthcare for the individuals in the community, LCH strengthens the community—how making the individual healthier, that builds a stronger family, and the community is healthier.