

Expand

[https://lancasteronline.com/news/local/at-community-action-partnership-incoming-ceo-vanessa-philbert-aims-to/article\\_7441ed34-156d-11ea-b583-63e0a49b7da5.html](https://lancasteronline.com/news/local/at-community-action-partnership-incoming-ceo-vanessa-philbert-aims-to/article_7441ed34-156d-11ea-b583-63e0a49b7da5.html)

## At Community Action Partnership, incoming CEO Vanessa Philbert aims to pay it forward



TIM STUHLDTREHER | Staff Writer Dec 3, 2019



Vanessa Philbert will take over as CEO of Community Action Partnership of Lancaster County on Dec. 16, 2019.

[Buy Now](#)

TIM STUHLDTREHER | LNP Staff Writer

Vanessa Philbert knows firsthand the day-to-day struggles of the individuals and families she helps at Community Action Partnership of Lancaster County.

Shortly after 9/11, she and her husband had moved to New Holland from New York City, her hometown.

Their second child had just been born, and they were struggling to make ends meet. She didn't have a car, so transportation often meant a bus into downtown Lancaster with two small children in tow, then a transfer to another bus headed to her destination.

She remembers the stress of not knowing how they would get home one day, after an appointment in Ephrata ran long and they missed the bus back to Lancaster.

"It's so important," she said, "that I don't forget that urgency or that pressure that I felt in that moment and for many moments afterward. ... That's what helps me lead the work in a way that I believe will create the most impact for our families."

On Dec. 16, [Philbert will take the helm at CAP](#), the area's largest anti-poverty nonprofit.

### **Vanessa Philbert named first woman CEO of Community Action Partnership**

Philbert, 42, will be CAP's first female CEO, and hence the first Latina in the role. She succeeds Dan Jurman, who is becoming executive director of Pennsylvania's new Office for Advocacy and Reform.

CAP has 305 employees and a budget of about \$35 million. It serves 40,000 individuals yearly with programs in four categories: education and child development, health and nutrition, household stability, and safety and empowerment.

Women of color form a large majority of CAP's workforce and the clients it serves. Philbert said her promotion feels "surreal and wonderful." In an email to CAP's board, she used the word "orgullo," Spanish for "pride" — specifically, she said, pride stemming from unity and membership in a group or community.

Philbert previously worked at CAP from 2003 to 2007, leaving to take a job at United Way of Lancaster County. She was hired on the condition she continue her education, which she did, earning bachelor's and master's degrees while working full-time and raising her children.

Her husband, Ronnie, is a lead technician at Lancaster General Hospital. They have three daughters: Ashley, 23, who works at CAP; Andrea, 17; and Amaya, 13.

After stints at several other nonprofits, Philbert returned to CAP as an impact team leader in 2016, and became chief impact officer in 2018.

Jurman, a dedicated innovator, made numerous changes during his time at CAP. Philbert said her team's first task will be taking stock: What's working well and what needs additional tinkering? As it happens, the timing coincides with CAP's three-year cycle for reviewing and updating its strategic plan.

CAP will continue partnering with other nonprofits and **advancing the goals of One Good Job**, the plan to cut Lancaster city poverty in half by 2032. One Good Job is "exactly aligned" with CAP's mission, Philbert said.



LOCAL NEWS

**Report suggests Lancaster's poverty coalition is indeed making a difference**



TIM STUHLREHER | Staff Writer

She said she's received a lot of approbation as she transitions to CEO, but she recognizes being the first woman comes with a lot of pressure, too.

She said it makes her reflect on her grandmother, who died at age 96. She never received an education and was illiterate, but she stayed current by listening to the news on the radio, and she made sure her children and grandchildren understood the importance of education and civic engagement, Philbert said.

"Now I get to teach that to my girls," she said. "That's one of the reasons I came back to CAP, this idea that this work needs a legacy. I want to be able to point my girls to that."

## More Headlines

- [Toast the holidays with these made-in Lancaster County beers](#)
- [Naked Eye Ensemble will use toy instruments and even cell phones at its CD release show](#)
- [From Nigeria, to Linden Hall to Division I basketball scholarships: Adaramoye, Mbeledeogu excelling in Lancaster County](#)
- [8 people killed, 247 injured in Pennsylvania during Thanksgiving driving: state police](#)
- [10,000 Stoltzfuses and the house where they all began \[The Scribbler\]](#)
- [Manheim Central's Will Betancourt sets his sights on top of the state podium](#)
- [Penn State Notebook: Parsons honored, Gross-Matos turning pro, Lions remain No. 10](#)
- [21-year-old caused Terre Hill man's death while stealing truck, set blaze at New Holland business: prosecutors](#)
- [Here are the 13 juvenile killers from Lancaster County; 3 out of prison, 1 granted parole](#)
- [Tabitha Buck, who helped kill Laurie Show in 1991, could be out of prison by Christmas](#)

- [Previewing L-L League Section 1 girls basketball for 2019-20 season](#)