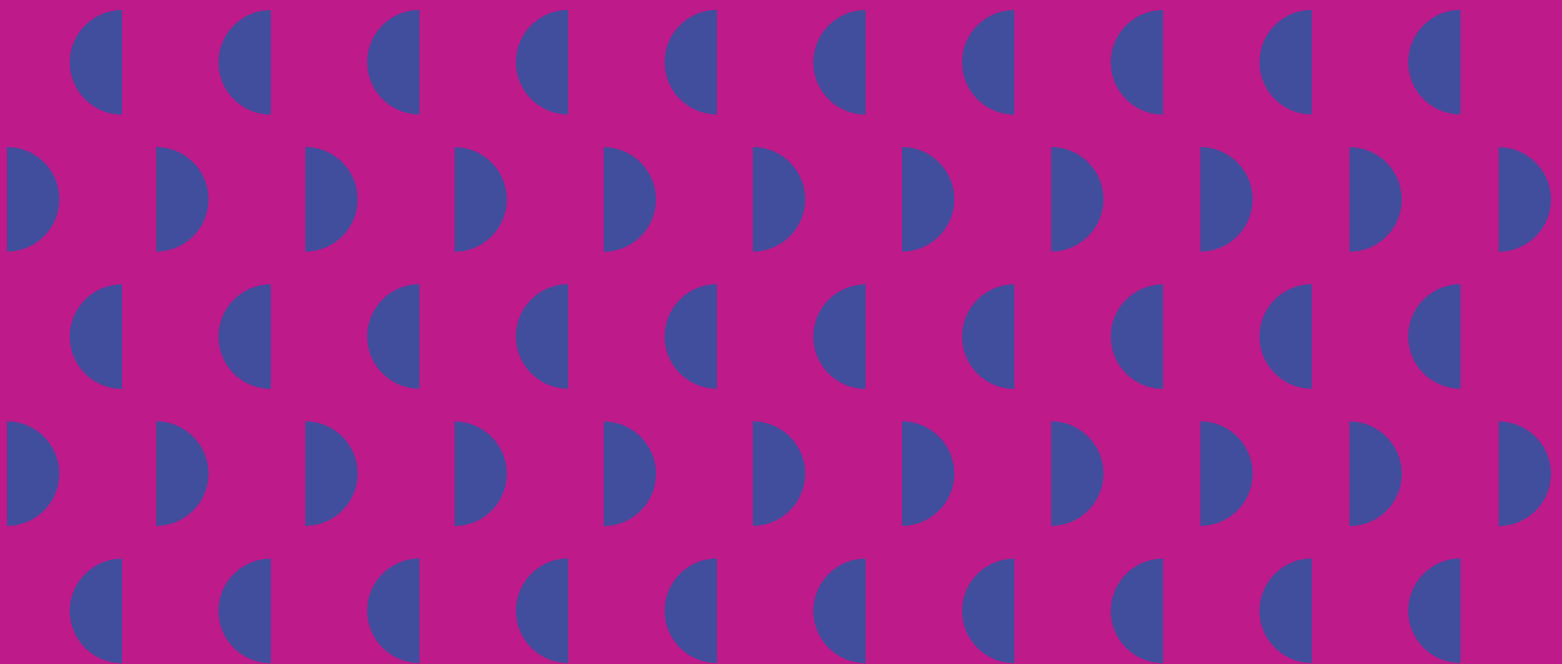


# Communities on the Rise: Building Prosperity Together in Bluefield & Johnstown

SAVERLIFE | OCTOBER 2020







Intuit Prosperity Hubs arrived in Johnstown, Pennsylvania and Bluefield, West Virginia with an ambitious goal:

**To build economic prosperity in communities in economic transition with high-quality jobs, vocational training, and resources to help small businesses thrive.**

Recognizing the importance of saving to change the trajectory of families' financial futures, SaverLife partnered with Intuit to increase savings rates in these communities. During a nine-month pilot, SaverLife blended our flagship digital experience with a robust grassroots outreach campaign to build a culture of savings in Johnstown and Bluefield.



“SaverLife is there to help encourage people to be able to save money  for when life’s issues pop up, and emergency  funds are needed to pay  for things. It’s something that could be beneficial to the City of Johnstown, that has such a high poverty rate.”  – John Dubnansky, Community & Economic Development Director for Johnstown, PA

# Regions on the Rise

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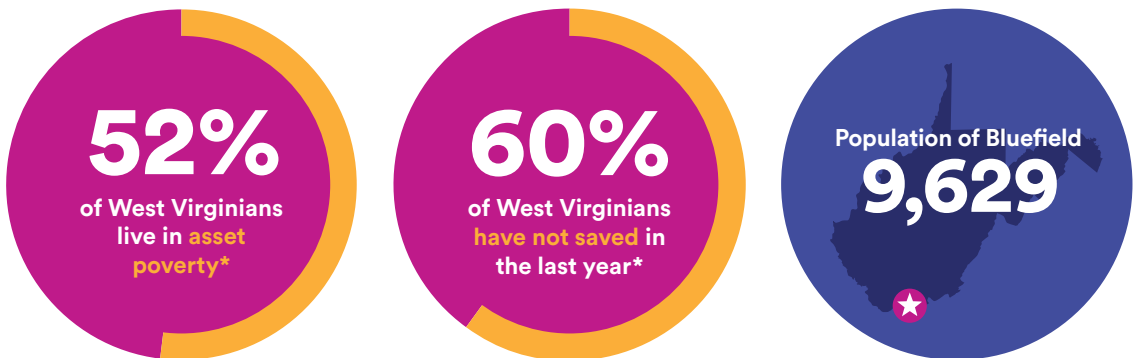
## Johnstown, Pennsylvania



In Johnstown, PA, 65% of residents earn less than \$35,000 a year, and 37% live below the poverty line.\*

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## Bluefield, West Virginia



In Bluefield, WV, 25% of residents live below the poverty line, and 78% have less than a bachelor's degree.\*

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\*Prosperity Now Scorecard

# Getting to Know the Communities

To understand the communities and their core challenges to financial health, SaverLife interviewed banks and community leaders, attended local community events, and surveyed residents. SaverLife needed to address **three key challenges** in Bluefield and Johnstown for our digital model to work effectively:



**Fewer people use online banking than our typical client populations.**



**Familiarity with financial technology products is lower, especially those that require linking an online bank account.**



**Information is disseminated in a variety of ways, including online, local media, community events, and word of mouth.**

The most critical element to success is building trust. While the arrival of Intuit and the subsequent boost to the local economies created a halo effect, SaverLife recognized the need to become ubiquitous in the community to be seen as a trusted resource.

SaverLife launched efforts in the regions with **three key strategies**: establishing employer partners as anchor institutions, creating community savings challenges to encourage engagement and drive savings, and combining digital and grassroots outreach efforts.

“I LOVE SAVERLIFE!  I have been telling everyone and anyone to sign up for it. I never could save  money before I started using it.”  – Jessica, CONCENTRIX EMPLOYEE

# Three Key Strategies

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## Employer Partners as Anchor Institutions

Intuit business partners Alorica and Concentrix quickly became **two of the largest employers in the regions**, employing more than 70 residents in Bluefield and 265 in Johnstown at newly opened customer success centers. Adapting our SaverLife Solutions white-label technology to increase the financial stability of the call center employees was a logical starting place.

Employers provide a trusted communication channel, usually resulting in higher participation rates. In addition, call center employees are likely to be comfortable with technology and more likely to engage with digital tools like SaverLife than the community as a whole.

### Employer-driven Program Design

Employees at both sites were offered SaverLife as an employee benefit to boost their financial wellness. Each employee received a \$1:\$1 match of up to \$40/month plus a \$20 bonus to support a goal of building \$500 in emergency savings.

SaverLife visited the Alorica and Concentrix offices to host sign-up events and created digital and print marketing materials to build on the employer-employee relationship. SaverLife also worked with on-site leadership to provide referrals to local banks and credit unions that could assist employees in setting up a savings account and signing up for SaverLife.

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**66% said...**  
**receiving the product as an employee benefit makes them more likely to stay with their employer**

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**75% said...**  
**learning about SaverLife as an employee benefit made them more likely to sign-up**

Results from the pilot were strong. Employees signed up at double (Concentrix) and quadruple (Alorica) rates of similar SaverLife employer programs. SaverLife hypothesizes that the higher sign-up rates at Alorica are due to strong engagement from site directors — employees received regular communication about SaverLife. As well, Alorica’s customer success center in Bluefield opened more recently, and SaverLife was offered as an onboarding benefit.



**Percent of on-site employees who signed up for SaverLife\***



\*compared to 10% enrollment at similar SaverLife employers

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## A Community-First Approach to Savings

SaverLife’s top priority was to **increase financial health** throughout the regions. We designed a community-first approach based on motivational savings challenges. This included:

**\$5 sign-up bonus for joining**

**The Race to \$500, a challenge to save \$500 over the course of two months**

**\$20,000 prize pool for each community**

**Scratch & Save, a product that gamifies the savings experience**

### PROGRAM RESULTS



**Average Net Increase in Savings**  
Bluefield **\$442**  
Johnstown **\$211**



**Area Residents who Joined SaverLife**  
Bluefield **1,078** POP. 9,629  
Johnstown **3,142** POP. 19,195

To further engage the community, SaverLife launched a story contest, which was advertised on local tv, radio, and in newspapers. Residents who submitted an entry to the prompt “what does savings mean to you?” were eligible to win a \$5,000 grand prize and two \$2,500 runner-up prizes.

The Bluefield and Johnstown communities have a strong culture of giving back. To highlight the savings success of the community, SaverLife awarded two community organizations \$15,000 Savings Challenge grants to match the savings success of residents. SaverLife contributed \$15,000 to the Li'l Tony Five for Five Scholarship Fund in Bluefield, and \$15,000 to the Cambria County Library Children's Section in Johnstown.



“Our well-loved  and well-worn areas of the children’s department are going to be getting a facelift with new  and better equipment. We don’t always get sort of an unexpected windfall like this. It’s giving us the opportunity  to do a project that’s been on the back burner, so we are thrilled.”  – Ashley Flynn, Director of the Cambria County Library System

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## Combining Digital and Grassroots Outreach to Increase Engagement

SaverLife adapted digital strategies for the Bluefield and Johnstown markets and created three successful marketing strategies.

### Adapting Digital Advertising for Local Markets

Advertising on Facebook and YouTube gained nearly two million impressions in the regions, yet digital strategies were initially less effective in driving signups than in larger markets. Realizing that our digital ads performed better when the content was localized, we adapted our strategy to engage local residents. We engaged Johnstown Tomahawks Coach Mike Letizia and local Bluefield radio host Micah Frisbee to create regional ads. The local ads featuring radio host Micah and the Tomahawks head coach performed significantly better than the standard SaverLife ads, lowering the cost per click by 68% and 34%.

### Strong Focus on Regional Media



SaverLife effectively used regional media to gain trust and build awareness of SaverLife. Billboards increased name recognition and encouraged residents to join SaverLife. Local radio and television shows promoted SaverLife and the community challenges over the nine-month pilot. The radio ads ran twice a day for 14 weeks. SaverLife saw significant increases in sign-up rates after local media coverage.



## A Complementary Grassroots Strategy

SaverLife found that local sporting event sponsorship is a reliable and cost-effective way to build brand recognition in smaller communities. As Bluefield Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spencer put it, “Football is king and basketball is queen.”

SaverLife sponsored the Mitchell Stadium in Bluefield, home of the Bluefield College Rams and Bluefield High School and Graham High School football teams. SaverLife attended the Bluefield vs. Graham football and basketball games, giving away more than 2,500 SaverLife t-shirts and promotional swag. SaverLife also tabled at local festivals and events, sharing information on SaverLife and giving away prizes, like gift certificates to local restaurants.

SaverLife sponsored the Johnstown Tomahawks arena events and ice hockey season with scoreboard and arena advertising, gaining more than 300,000 impressions. The Tomahawks team members gave away more than 500 pieces of SaverLife swag to game attendees and a \$5 sign-up bonus.



Bluefield cheerleaders with SaverLife freebies at the Bluefield vs. Graham varsity basketball game.



SaverLife team member Crystal Sand tabling at the Bluefield Lemonade Festival.







SaverLife sponsored the 2019 season of the Johnstown Tomahawks.

Once prosperous regions, the Bluefield and Johnstown communities have faced increasing economic struggles. With the support of Intuit, SaverLife took an innovative approach to successfully pilot a technology-based savings solution in two close-knit communities. SaverLife built a culture of savings in the Bluefield and Johnstown communities, helping more than 3,300 households begin their savings journey.



SaverLife (formerly EARN) is a nonprofit on a mission — to inspire, inform, and reward the millions of Americans who need help saving money. Through engaging technologies and strategic partnerships, we give working people the methods and motivation to take control of their financial future.

For more from SaverLife, please visit [solutions.saverlife.org/](https://solutions.saverlife.org/)

Before SaverLife, I could never save. The minute I got it it was gone — I never valued it. I always worked,  I just didn't save it. When the human resources department at Alorica sent me information, I signed up and it was so fun.  I got lots of tips on how to save!  SaverLife has made us self-sufficient. That means more than anything. I have high hopes for my daughters — our life hasn't been easy, so I save for them.”  — Jessica, BLUEFIELD