

Well-Informed

Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation | Community Benefit Report | Spring 2015



Let's Get Growing!

When you watch or read the news, you most likely see stories about how people are getting back-to-basics and planting vegetable and herb gardens. You hear about free neighborhood gardens, rooftop gardens, organic gardens, urban gardens, children's gardens, and more.

But what are the physical and mental benefits of gardening?

Benefits range from saving on grocery bills, avoiding pesticides, eating healthy, having fresh herbs at your fingertips, or serving your family fresher produce that hasn't travelled across the country and become nutritionally depleted from the journey—not to mention the benefits of getting back to the great outdoors.

Studies have found that when we exchange our sterile, indoor environs for our natural surroundings, we benefit. For instance, being in natural places can improve our outlook, help us cope with stress, restore our concentration and improve our productivity.

In addition, gardens can be areas for recreation and exercise. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests that all adults should set a goal of at least 30 minutes of [moderate-intensity physical](#)

[activity](#) each day of the week. Doing so can reduce the risk of obesity, high blood pressure, type-2 diabetes, osteoporosis, heart disease and stroke.

Gardens can also increase your property value and save money when grocery shopping. With so many benefits, only one question remains: **How do you get started?**

Gretchen Lea, area interior designer and Penn State Master Gardener, offers the following steps:

- Choose a spot that gets sun, whether that is in-ground, container or raised beds.
- Check soil conditions to make sure it's not too soggy. Too much water or even overwatering later is one of the biggest mistakes made and can quickly lead to an unsuccessful gardening experience.
- Use compost to balance your soil. A good resource, says Lea, is [ESPOMA natural gardening products](#).

- Start growing, whether from seeds, plants or both.

A great resource for beginners and experts is the Penn State Extension, an educational network that gives all of Pennsylvania's counties access to the University's resources and expertise. For instance:

- [Reference detailed guides](#) meant to make your gardening experience successful
- [Find everything](#) from tips on beekeeping to deterring rabbits from making your garden their tasty snack
- Do you have a desire to become a Master Gardener? [Learn more](#) about what goes into basic training

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a message from our president



Welcome spring! The last reminders of a particularly cold winter have at last melted away in favor of longer days, warmer temperatures and a desire to get back outdoors. To that end, we hope you embrace all of what the Pottstown area has to offer.

The area's calendar of events will keep you busy in the next couple months. Just a few of the upcoming activities include:

- [May 17: 5K Challenge Run starting at Riverfront Park in Pottstown](#)
- [June 6-12: The 17th Annual Schuylkill River Sojourn](#)
- [June 25-28: The 24th Annual Pottstown Volleyball Rumble](#)
- [July 11: Sly Fox Track Club Half Marathon](#)

If running a 5K or half marathon isn't for you, consider participating in the [Mercury Mile](#), a weekly walk hosted by an area organization or business that promotes walking as a free fitness option.

Of course, that's in addition to Pottstown celebrating its bicentennial. There are big things happening in our community! We hope you find active and healthy ways to enjoy them.

David W. Kraybill, President

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Another resource, which is right in our own backyard, comes from the [MOSAIC Community Land Trust](#). Currently, the group runs two community gardens in downtown Pottstown, located at 423 and 615 Chestnut Streets. Laura Washington, community gardens manager for MOSAIC Community Land Trust, said, "It's a great way for families who live in town to garden. It's a place where people can connect, and it offers an outlet where they can be expressive."

MOSAIC supplies water, tools, seeds, seedlings and resources to those who sign up for one of the organization's 50+ plots. There is a small annual fee of between \$30 and \$55 (dependent on salary) per plot for individuals or \$110 per plot for businesses.

In addition, MOSAIC hosts a garden contest open to all residents of the Pottstown borough. The contest has just launched and offers cash prizes across four garden categories. Interested? Check out the [full-page flyer](#) and register today!

Tip from the experts! What's an easy way to start gardening with kids? Try a pizza garden! Tomatoes, peppers and lots of herbs.



Let's get growing!
Show off your beautiful gardens, Pottstown!

Enter the 2015 Home Garden Contest and you could win big cash!
Sponsored by Mosaic Community Land Trust

Grow a garden that looks and/or tastes good, smells good and feels good, too!
Add color, charm and natural beauty to your home and neighborhood with a garden that overflows with vegetables, vibrant flowers and plants. And now, you could win a prize for your passion and efforts, too!

Prizes:
Over \$2,000 in cash prizes and gift certificates. Gift certificates for usable entries will also be awarded. Every gardener who enters has a chance to win!

A warm thank you to our sponsors, including Dick and Sally Heylman of Heylman's Pipe Hill Tree Farm, Cobble Gardens and the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation for their support!

Categories:

<p>1. Junior Gardener: including container or in-ground gardens; entrants must be 18 or younger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grand Prize: \$100 • Second Prize: \$75 • Third Prize: \$50 	<p>2. Residential Front or Side Yard Gardens: including container or in-ground gardens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grand Prize: \$250 • Second Prize: \$150 • Third Prize: \$100 	<p>3. Residential Back Yard Gardens: including container or in-ground gardens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grand Prize: \$200 • Second Prize: \$150 • Third Prize: \$100 	<p>4. Neighborhood Gardens: members of their neighbor's street or block working together on their amounts divided equally amongst entrants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grand Prize: \$800 • Second Prize: \$450 • Third Prize: \$300
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Judging criteria:
Gardens entered in the contest will be judged on the following components: Effective use of color in flowers and plants; pleasing balance in the use of the plants; the condition of the plants; garden accessories (if used in the garden); enhancement to property; and neighborhood. Bonus points will be awarded for incorporating vegetables into gardens. Judging will be done by Pottstown Area Garden Club members and Mosaic staff and volunteers, including at least one Penn State Master Gardener. Judging will take place in early July 2015. The Judges' decisions are final.

Who's eligible to enter:
Anyone with space to plant! Specifically, all Borough of Pottstown homeowners and residents of rental properties.

How to enter:
Fill out the official entry form and mail to Mosaic Community Land Trust, 10 S. Hanover Street, Pottstown, PA 19464. Or, email entry form to glew316@comcast.net.

Deadline:
Entries must be received by **Monday, June 18, 2015 at 5:00 p.m.**

For more information:
Need help getting started? Contact Mosaic Community Land Trust for resources, including coupons from Colonial Gardens. Contact Gretchen Lea at (610) 367-6773 or glew316@comcast.net.

Download the registration form
<http://bit.ly/MosaicGarden>



Gardening at Home... And in Your Neighborhood

It's no secret that gardening is among the top hobbies enjoyed by many in the region and around the country. Nothing compares to the taste of homegrown food or the beauty of your very own flower garden! It's with that in mind that the Foundation launches its latest series of webisodes.

Each 10-minute webisode introduces viewers to an informative and educational discussion covering a variety of gardening topics:

[Community Gardens & 2015 Garden Contest](#) features a conversation with Laura Washington, community gardens manager for Mosaic Community Land Trust, along with area resident and past winner of Mosaic's garden contest, Robin Pineda. They discuss the benefits of community gardens—as well as entering the garden contest!

[Why Plant a Garden](#) features Gretchen Lea, interior designer and Penn State Master Gardener. Not only does she express the physical and mental benefits of gardening, she also explains how beginners can easily get started.

[Why Plant Organic](#) continues with Lea, who explains what beginner or expert gardens should keep in mind when it comes to organic gardening.

[How to Manage Your Garden](#) continues with Washington, who talks about the area's community gardens, how to sign up and how to manage your garden (whether it is part of the community garden or part of your backyard).

An upcoming webisode that will be filmed live during Mosaic's May planting days. Look for this video coming soon.



Foundation Success Stories

When was the last time you enjoyed fresh vegetables, having only moments before pulled them from the earth with your own hands? Today, it's a pleasure that's become more and more rare. But it's one that the [Mosaic Community Garden](#) hopes to rectify. David Jackson, president of the organization's board of trustees, shared his own personal account with a young boy enjoying his first taste of a radish. "We warned him that radishes are a little hot, so he took a small bite," said Jackson. "When I asked him if he liked it, he took a bigger bite and said, 'Yes!'"

Interested in reading more? Check out the complete article [here](#).

On Your Park, Get Set, Go!™

Summer is just around the corner—and with it will come the second annual **On Your Park, Get Set, Go!**™ contest. This program gives municipalities the opportunity not only to showcase area parks, but also to improve them. The contest will run throughout July. At the end of the month, the park with the most votes will receive a \$10,000 grant from the Foundation, second place will receive \$7,500, third place will receive \$5,000, and all remaining parks will be entered into a lottery with one lucky park receiving \$2,500.

With so many amazing parks available throughout the surrounding area, we hope to highlight the many assets that are often just a walk or short drive away.

Our next Community Benefit Report will feature the parks in the contest, as well as how you can vote for your favorite this summer.

Stay tuned!

www.pottstownfoundation.org



Paving the Way for Early Education in Pottstown

All children should have an equal opportunity to thrive. That's the mission of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, an organization that works with communities to help vulnerable children realize their full potential in school, work and life.

It's a mission that tracks closely with a well-respected group in Pottstown known as PEAK, or Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness. PEAK's overarching goal is to ensure that all children in Pottstown enter kindergarten ready to learn.

In part, the fact that their missions are so closely aligned is why earlier this year, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation awarded Pottstown Schools with a \$1,250,000 grant, to be spread over three years. The grant will fund the efforts of the district and partners to improve educational opportunities for children from pre-K to the third grade.

An area that will continue to receive the organization's focus is "trauma-informed practices" in schools, especially to combat adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). ACEs are traumatic experiences that occur before the age of 18 and that people remember into adulthood. They can include:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Mental illness of a household member
- Substance abuse by a household member
- Divorce or separation of parents
- Domestic violence toward a parent
- Incarceration of a household member

A National Trend: From Awareness to Action

According to a report by the Massachusetts Advocates for Children and Harvard Law School, more and more educators are recognizing that addressing trauma's impact on learning creates enormous opportunity to help students learn and be successful. Their challenge is in moving from the awareness stage to action. Changing the culture of a school requires commitment across the entire staff.

For Pottstown schools, however, an advocate is already in place with the work that PEAK has done and will continue to do in the future.

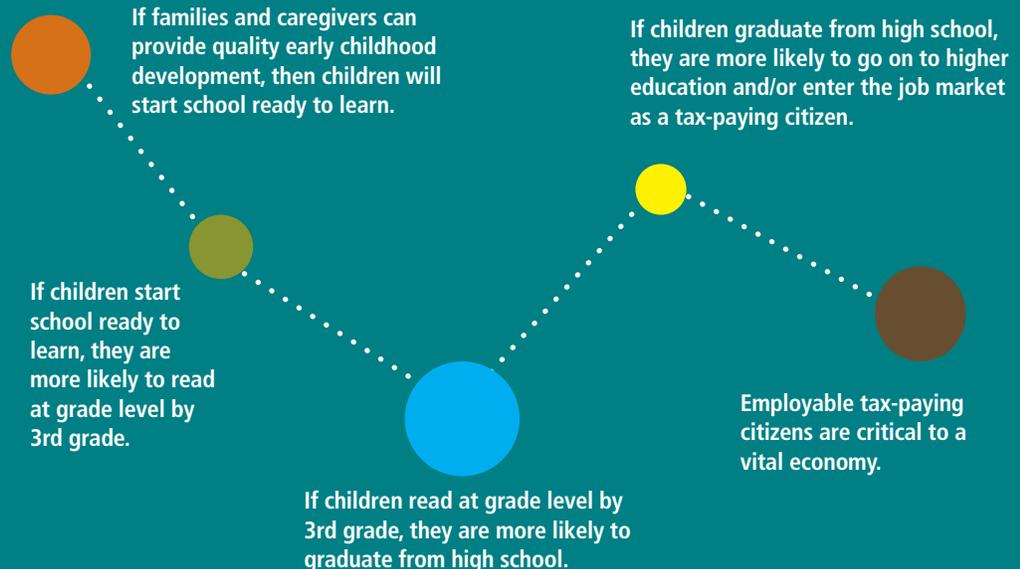
Success Stories



There are many community outreach programs in the greater Pottstown area that achieve success by touching the lives of others. But, it is rare you find a program that touches so many lives at a very early age where successful outcomes can last a lifetime. That program is the Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness, or PEAK.

Interested in reading more? Check out the complete article [here](#).

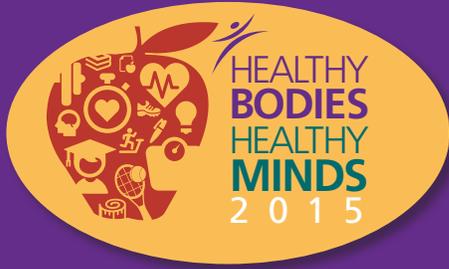
Why does early learning matter?



Courtesy of PEAK.
Download their [brochure](#).

www.pottstownfoundation.org





Save the Date

- What:** [Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds Institute](#)
- When:** August 4 & 5, 2015
- Time:** Registration opens at 7:30 a.m. Welcome and opening Plenary start at 8:15 a.m.
- Where:** The Hill School in Pottstown, PA

In just a few short months, school administrators and office staff, as well as teachers, nurses and related professionals, will converge on the campus of The Hill School to attend the 2015 Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds Institute, sponsored by the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation. Leading neuroscientists, educators and psychologists will present research and practical knowledge for participants to creatively incorporate movement into their teaching practices. Many of the sessions require active participation.

In other words, this is not your typical conference! If you are an educator and are interested in attending, [review our registration guide](#) and register today!

Or, questions may be directed to Laura DeFlavia at ldeflavia@pottstownfoundation.org or 610-323-2006, x24.



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www.missionhealthyliving.org



“Foundations of Life” Blog with Dr. Laurie Betts

Find inspiration and advice by following Dr. Betts as she discusses family life, exercise, nutrition and more. She will cover topics everyone can relate to, so join in the conversation and share your successes and your challenges.

In addition, two Foundation guest bloggers are also joining the mix. Look for posts from both Lindsey Patience and Skye Tulio.

Lindsey is creative, energetic and a little quirky. In addition to her duties as a Grants Assistant, she is also a Certified Personal Trainer with a specialization in core strengthening, nutrition guidance, strength and endurance training, and women’s fitness.

Skye is a 2014 graduate of St. Bonaventure University and holds a bachelor’s degree in journalism and mass communication. She is currently completing her master’s degree in integrated marketing communications through the University’s 4 + 1 program and will graduate in May.

[Click here](#) to read the latest from our bloggers today!

PottstownFoundation.org

Here at the Foundation, we are all about helping people improve their health and well-being. That includes having a website that is easy for visitors to navigate—whether they are interested in applying for a grant, learning more about the initiatives we support or finding helpful resources.



We invite you to take a moment and visit www.PottstownFoundation.org.

A few highlights include:

- Detailed and easy-to-follow guidelines meant to make the [grantmaking](#) process easier. Whether it’s promoting healthy living through healthy eating or active living, or providing accessible and quality health care, we look forward to hearing from you.
- Whether you are interested in the latest news from the Foundation, downloads of insightful studies and reports, links to a variety of Healthy Living resources, and more, [our Resource section](#) can help.
- Learn more about the Foundation—including its [mission](#), its [staff](#) and its [history](#).
- Find out how the Foundation connects to the community through a number of [initiatives](#) and [collaboratives](#).

[Let us know what you think!](#)