

Well-Informed

Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation | Community Benefit Report | Summer 2017



GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT



Pottstown FARM Opens for Second Season

The Pottstown Farm & Artisan Regional Market (FARM) opened on June 1 for its second season, bringing locally grown foods, hand-crafted goods and fun family entertainment to the community.

This year, the FARM will be open Thursday afternoons and will run until November 21 (the Tuesday before Thanksgiving). The market also features new hours, 5-7:30 p.m., and a new location, moving to the south side of High Street and up onto the sidewalk.

Parking is available along the north side of High Street, behind the New York Plaza building, in the Charlotte and High Street lot, Evans and High Street, and the Reading Lot (at Hanover and Queen Streets). The FARM is [still accepting vendor applications](#) and will do so throughout the season, according to Sheila Dugan, Pottstown Downtown

Improvement District Authority (PDIDA) Main Street Manager and FARM Director.

"We asked a lot of orchards to bring fruit and things that are more fall-oriented, so they won't be here in June, so we're still hunting for vendors for September through November," said Dugan. "We have enough artisans. We're really looking for the food products, whether it be sauces or produce."

Dugan said the FARM is still in search of more produce vendors, citing Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) as one of the complications affecting markets all over the country, as farmers opt out of selling at local farmers markets.

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a message from our president



Welcome, summer! Days of extended sunshine, warm weather and great conditions for bountiful gardens are ahead. Many farm-to-table options are in abundance during this time of year and there's nothing quite like garden-fresh produce grown by your own two hands. It's something fun for the whole family to do together and teaches a valuable lesson on sustainability and nutrition, incorporating fresh fruits, herbs and veggies into a daily diet.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), you can burn up to 330 calories in just one hour of light gardening or yard work. Tending to a garden is considered a moderate-level physical activity that could reduce the [risk](#) of heart disease, lower blood pressure and help seniors stay [active and fit](#). Research also [shows](#) that children who grow their own food are more likely to eat fresh fruits and veggies and express a preference for these types of fresh foods.

If you're not ready to start your own garden, volunteer at a community garden such as MOSAIC Community Land Trust to learn the fundamentals of gardening. Help the environment, and the local economy, by shopping small for food produced in the region. Visit the Pottstown Farm & Artisan Regional Market (FARM) on Thursdays from June 1 to November 21 for an array of the best locally grown produce and goods from area farmers and artisans.

It's also important to note that what you put into your body not only benefits your overall health, but also the environment. According to the [USDA](#), 40 percent of all food produced in the U.S. is wasted. That equates to 133 billion pounds of food a year, representing 1,249 calories per person per day. Growing your own food is an impactful solution to reduce waste, as it puts you in control of the production process. A great way to reuse food waste is for compost, creating sustainable soil and helping your garden flourish.

Wishing you an active and adventurous summer!

David W. Kraybill, President

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"We have four small farmers who are going to be here," said Dugan. "However, remember that they are self-produced, smaller farmers. We would love to get another handful because, in our opinion, you can never have enough produce."

Food vendors that offer sauces, produce, honey, etc. will be at the FARM every week, and the artisans will be intermittent throughout.

"We have almost every one of the 24 vendors from the first year returning, along with the artisans requesting to attend intermittently this year," said Dugan. "That makes sense—you don't come to the market and buy art, jewelry and things like that every week, so they will be scaled back to every other week for the most part."

Dugan said the committee has used lessons learned from its first year to improve and make changes for the 2017 season.

"When we opened in May, everyone asked, 'Where's the produce?'" said Dugan. "Well, if you're self-produced in Pennsylvania, you're not making produce that early. It's very limited in what's available in May, so we learned a lot the first year."

The market's website was revamped recently to create a more user-friendly experience and give FARM goers better insight on the goods available.

"Every Wednesday, the website will list who we expect to have that week so people can reference it," said Dugan. "We'll also have signs at our information desk where we'll check off which vendors attend that day."

The FARM is also introducing several exciting elements this year, including "Almost Fridays" on the last Thursday of each month (except for October 19th). Almost Fridays will feature live music, special guest chefs doing farm-to-table meals at Smith Family Plaza, a beer garden and more.

Each month, the FARM will feature a special themed event (see chart on page 3), beginning with the [PDIDA 5K Run to the FARM](#) on June 29. Those who register for the 5K will receive a free ticket to enter to win an iPad, t-shirt, beer and much more.

"We now have the availability, thanks to some grant funds from the Foundation, to introduce the 'Two Bite Club' for kids," said Dugan. "It also allows us to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) access cards and have an incentive program for lower-income families in our community."

Dugan said the motivation behind this offering was to encourage lower-income families to eat healthier and give those who may not otherwise have access to purchase fresh, locally grown foods the ability to do so.

"To be able to give families healthier choices than boxed macaroni and cheese, we felt that it would be a really great thing to get them out to the FARM." Sheila Dugan

Each week, the first 25 SNAP program recipients to visit the FARM will receive an additional \$5 to spend in the market, while supplies last. The extra funds will be allotted as \$5 per family, once a week, every week and can be saved for use on a later date.

"We just feel as a whole that part of the farmers market's mission is to get this town healthy and help people afford healthy food," said Dugan. "If you're on the SNAP program, that's difficult to do sometimes. As an incentive we wanted to tell SNAP program recipients that they can come to the market planning to spend \$20, but actually be able to spend \$25."

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Kids ages 12 and under are eligible to participate in the "Two Bite Club," run by [MOSAIC Community Land Trust](#). "Once a month, the kids will be able to go and try the fruit, vegetable or vendor item of the week," said Dugan. "If they try it, they'll get five 'FARM dollars' they can use to shop in the market as a way to entice them to make healthier choices."

Similar efforts at other local markets have been successful in helping children stay away from junk food and opt for the veggies and new, healthy foods they had the chance to sample, according to Dugan.

The FARM is working to create passports so kids can log each time they try something new at the market, giving them a chance to work toward an end-of-the-season raffle.

"We want everyone to have access to the farmers market," said Dugan. "That was a big thing we heard last year. People came and they weren't able to buy because they didn't have the cash, so we felt it was important to have in our community."

Dugan noted that the committee received positive feedback from its first season and is confident it will keep growing. Word-of-mouth advertising, thanks to current vendors, is adding to this growth, including new vendors such as Bridge Street Chocolates from Phoenixville.



"We also have one of our farmers coming from the ArtFusion workforce group, so that's really neat," said Dugan. "We have local people learning, and kids especially, getting involved. It really is another outreach of the community that we're trying to pull together."

The committee is also working on a free ticket system to help track where its patrons come from. Patrons who sign up for a free ticket and bring it to the FARM when they visit will be entered into a raffle. Once a month on "Almost Fridays," the FARM will give away special buckets filled with items from the market that week as a fun way to entice consumers and track its reach.

"We want to invite the community to come check us out and understand that our products are mostly self-produced," said Dugan. "But we recognize that people are looking for things like oranges that are not self-produced in Pennsylvania. Now, we can offer that through select vendors that bring in produce from outside the state."

Additionally, select businesses will stay open later throughout the season, welcoming the increased foot traffic on High Street. The FARM also hopes to incorporate smaller-priced items like ice cream that don't really interfere with local restaurant offerings, so patrons can purchase on the street while browsing.

"We're still aware of what the community wants and what the businesses need, and are trying to get them moving," said Dugan. "The excitement is building, and the businesses are happy because they're seeing progress and people coming in that they haven't seen before. That's all good stuff."



FARM FACTS

DURATION:

June 1 - November 21, 2017

NEW HOURS:

Thursdays, 5-7:30 p.m.

NEW LOCATION:

South side of High Street (across the street and up onto the sidewalk)

Now accepting SNAP program access cards

Visit www.pottstownfarm.org
for more info!

UPCOMING FARM EVENTS

JUNE 29:

PDIDA 5K Run
to the FARM

JULY 27:

Christmas in July

AUGUST 24:

Celebrate Family

SEPTEMBER 28:

4-Legged Fun

OCTOBER 19:

Breast Cancer Awareness



GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT: Triskeles

Written by Hannah Davis, Outreach and Resource Development Director

Every gardener knows that an openness to learn is just as important as the process itself. A successful garden depends on factors that can be planned for, can be mitigated or are beyond our control. Planning requires vision, prioritization and a willingness to adapt. Mitigating requires innovation, problem-solving and collaboration. Problems beyond our control require resiliency and hopefulness.

Triskeles' Food For Thought program uses the garden to cultivate not only organic vegetables, but also lasting life lessons. Each summer, 45 teens participate in five weeks of intensive gardening, community engagement and enrichment activities that emphasize development of the individual, their community and our planet.

Each morning, teens enjoy a healthy breakfast before heading out to work on local Community Supported Agricultural (CSA) farms. Alongside knowledgeable farmers, teens engage in sustainable gardening practices, teamwork/collaboration, leadership, problem-solving, resiliency and good, old-fashioned hard work. Program Director Bob Steininger sums up the core purpose of the program, stating, "No matter who you are or what race or class you come from, on the farm, we all sweat the same. If you can work on the farm in July heat, you can succeed at just about anything."

As the temperature rises, teens return to Kimberton Waldorf School for a wholesome lunch, followed by an afternoon of fun, interactive activities in areas of cooking and nutrition, job-readiness, financial literacy, stress management and art. Once a week, the teens volunteer at neighboring organizations to give back.



ArtFusion introduces new programs

Local organizations have teamed up to provide community programming to engage young people, preparing them to enter the workforce and become active members of the community.

The ArtFusion 19464 Beech Street Factory Community Programs is a collaborative health, wellness and workforce development program established and implemented by staff/instructors from ArtFusion 19464, @107, Progressions School, Pottstown School District and many others.

"We're looking to provide enrichment workshops and programs that are related to a creative economy and also regular workforce development opportunities for students who are in alternative education programs, have behavioral issues or have physical/mental limitations," said Laura Cousins-Washington, Development Coordinator.

The collaborative plans to focus on combating Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) by working with the Pottstown School District to help children express themselves in a more positive way.

"The school district identifies kids who could benefit from this sort of programming," said Cousins-Washington. "Then, faculty and staff report back on any improvements or changes—such as better communication or focus—when it comes to their school work."

One of the programs it will offer focuses on small-scale farming, which includes the planning, designing and planting of a vegetable/herb garden, in addition to caring for small farm animals at Grace's Farm in Pottstown. The farm's owners have given the group long-term usage of their land, free of charge. Local businesses Colonial Gardens and Jermacans Style Landscaping also support the program by donating all of the soil, mulch and wood chips needed for the farm.

"We'll have a little over an acre of garden space with six chickens and two ducks to care for, so we'll hopefully be selling eggs, but definitely selling produce and herbs," said Cousins-Washington.

The students will also focus on colonial crafts, making soaps, fragrance sprays, basket weaving, dried herbs and other things using items from the garden. Every Thursday evening from June to November, the students will be a vendor at the Pottstown Farm and Artisan Regional Market (FARM).

"We'll be on the street along with the other vendors and artisans, selling our produce and our goods," said Cousins-Washington. "The proceeds will benefit next year's programming, but we also plan to pay the students who excel a stipend for their work."

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programs / local gardens

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Additionally, the students will have access to the commercial kitchen at @107, where they'll be able to bake and cook items they've grown, and sell the finished product at the FARM.

"Thanks to the funding from the Foundation, the program also allows two students that really love and excel at cooking to sit for the ServSafe Food Handling classes and proctored exam," said Cousins-Washington.

The collaborative welcomes local organizations to the garden to volunteer, participate in workshops or utilize the farm for team-building retreats. It will also partner with Montgomery County to provide community service opportunities for non-violent offenders, such as those who received DUIs or have unpaid child support fines.

"While our main focus is to work with the children to combat ACEs, we also recognize that there are still some adults out there that need the same level of support," said Cousins-Washington.

"Dirt-to-Tablecloth" is a program offered by the collaborative in which students will harvest the produce they grow at Grace's Farm and take it to @107's kitchen to wash and prep the vegetables for sale at the Pottstown FARM.

Students will also have the opportunity to host fundraising-related events at @107, providing a complete farm-to-table dining experience for community members.

"The idea is that the chef will go from vendor to vendor at the Pottstown FARM to pick up items to prepare. The kids would then work alongside him and other staff members to prepare the items and set the tables," said Cousins-Washington.

These dining experiences will occur one Thursday a month during the Pottstown FARM at Smith Family Plaza in Pottstown. Community members can purchase tickets online and can actually follow the chef as he walks through the market to gather the items needed.

"Guests can see where the items came from, so they can duplicate that same effort at home," said Cousins-Washington. "We're trying to make sure that we tap into as

many resources locally as we can to build an excellent experience not just for the students or businesses who participate, but also for the community members who attend and want to learn how to create different farm-to-table dishes."

The program is currently in need of items such as wood, an 8'x8' shed, park style picnic benches, a car port and power lawn tools such as a weed whacker. Donations are appreciated. Interested volunteers can contact Cousins-Washington at laura@artfusion1946.org for more information.

Cousins-Washington said the collaborative wants its participants to utilize their program experiences to fortify and focus on their talents, not their limitations.

"We will help the participants accomplish that by encouraging them to share ideas and work together to create and grow their talents," said Cousins-Washington. "While the remembrance of less-than-desirable experiences may never go away, the effects they have on the individual will diminish once they learn to focus more on all of the great possibilities ahead!"

Local Gardens

MOSAIC Community Land Trust

Pottstown, PA

<https://mosaicclt.org/>

MOSAIC Community Land Trust (MCLT) features three community garden locations: 423 Chestnut St., 615 Chestnut St. and 467 W. Walnut St. (Barth Elementary School). It also features a permaculture garden (a garden that works with the natural environment) at 301 Walnut St. MCLT recently welcomed a new garden manager, Daniel Price, who was born and raised in Pottstown and brings a wealth

of farming, organizing and community development experience to his new position. [Contact Price](#) or visit the website for community garden packets and information on how to lease a plot for the season.



local gardens

Holy Cross Regional Catholic School

Collegeville, PA

<https://www.hcrc.school/>

In its second year, the Holy Cross Green Kids garden club consists of 120 students. Parent volunteer Colleen McCabe and teacher Amanda Casey, with the help of many parent and grandparent volunteers, coordinate the efforts of four junior garden club groups (grades K-2) during recess and one group (grades 3-8) after school. The young gardeners learn about gardening and its benefits, grow flowers and vegetables, tend to the school courtyard garden, and develop friendship and fellowship.



Trinity Church of Boyertown: God's Community Garden

Boyertown, PA

<http://trinityboyertown.org/>

God's Community Garden at Trinity Evangelical Congregational Church in Boyertown has grown into a communitywide effort to increase local access to fresh foods and help residents lead healthier lifestyles. Grant funds from the Foundation were recently used for soil and to install an accessible pathway to the garden in addition to a shed, providing storage and shade on hot days.

The first crops of 2017, 25 lbs. of parsnips and 4 lbs. of carrots, were donated to the Salvation Army in Boyertown and used to prepare a stew for the free lunch crowd. Trinity also offers three beds that are handicap/child-friendly, and its Cornerstone Pre-School recently planted cucumber, bean, watermelon and squash seeds.

Project Purpose: Project Garden

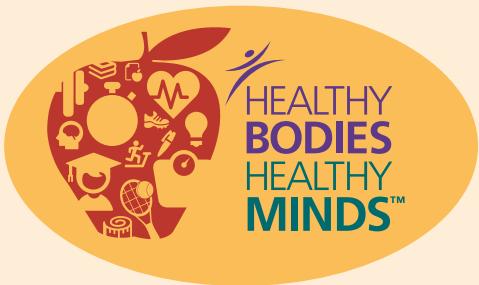
Pottstown, PA

<https://www.project-purpose.org/project-garden>

Project Garden is a program of Project Purpose, an outreach of Coventry Christian School. The garden serves as a means to build relationships between God's people and the families of Rolling Hills, a government-funded, low-income housing development. It provides educational and service opportunities for Project Purpose K-12 grade students, making locally grown veggies and fruits more affordable and accessible, and serving approximately 15 families. Tending to the garden are about 12 volunteers, in addition to the students. For the 2017 season, a picnic area with a table, chairs and a propane grill was added so kids can cook the produce they've harvested and enjoy a meal together.



upcoming events



Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds™ AUGUST 15TH & 16TH

POTTSTOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL

An annual event hosted by the Foundation designed to nurture the interdisciplinary roles of school personnel in the adoption of physical activity as a learning tool. Learn from leading neuroscientists, educators and psychologists about the best practices and evidence-based research to creatively incorporate physical activity into teaching practices and enhance students' ability to learn. We invite all educators who are motivated to transform schools into movement-centered buildings to attend this once-a-year opportunity!

Visit www.pottstownfoundation.org for more information!



OCTOBER 17, 2017 24 hours of giving for good

The Amazing Raise is a giving challenge that brings the region together to help raise needed funds, shining a spotlight on the work of non-profits in the Tri-County Area (Montgomery County, Eastern Berks County, Northern Chester County).

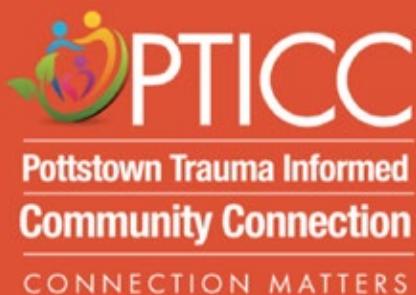
For every dollar raised by a participating non-profit on October 17, 2017, a funding match will be provided. The Amazing Raise is organized by the TriCounty Community Network (TCN).

TCN provides collaborative leadership, programs and initiatives to support community needs. [For more information,](https://tcnetwork.org/) visit <https://tcnetwork.org/>



ON YOUR PARK, GET SET, GO!® JULY 2017

A month-long race in which local parks compete to win grant funds toward park improvements. Follow the Foundation on [Facebook](#) to receive updates!



Together we can...

- Make Pottstown an even better place to form strong connections, experience belonging, put down roots, and blossom.
- Recognize, respond to, and reduce the struggles that kids and adults face every day.

Join Us!

Visit www.pottstownmatters.org for more info.

Follow PTICC for updates:



Pottstown Trauma Informed Community Connection
@PottstownTICC
@PottstownTICC
Pottstown Trauma Informed Community Connection

Spring 2017 Grant Round

The Foundation seeks grant proposals that are consistent with our identified mission of improving health outcomes in the Pottstown region. Within our mission, we have established priorities for which our grants are required to serve.

The Spring 2017 grant round includes 38 grants, totaling \$1,496,962 awarded to non-profit organizations, schools and municipalities. These grants are funded according to the following priorities:

PRIORITY #1A: Healthy Behaviors – Schools

Promoting healthy living through nutrition, activities and programs in public and private schools to reduce obesity and encourage healthy living. 17 grants were awarded totaling \$691,212.

Boyertown Area School District: Brain Body Connection

Brookside Montessori: BWell

Coventry Christian School: Project Purpose

Coventry Christian School: Boulder Wall (Climbing Wall) Addition

Daniel Boone Area School District: Healthy for a Lifetime Program

Falkner Swamp Nursery School, Inc.: Health and Wellness Proposal

Holy Cross Regional Catholic School: Healthy Hydration

Owen J. Roberts School District: Fit for Life Coordinated Wellness Programming

Perkiomen Valley School District: Perkiomen Valley Wellness Program

Pope John Paul II High School Office of Catholic Education:
Golden Panther Wellness Initiative

Pottsgrove School District: Health & Wellness Initiative

Pottstown School District: PEAK Health and Wellness Initiative

Pottstown School District: Healthy School Communities

Spring-Ford Area School District: Wellness Matters 2017-18

St. Aloysius Parish School: Health in Mind, Body, and Spirit

The Hill School/Hobart's Run Neighborhood District:
Mobile Ambassador Project (MAP)

West-Mont Christian Academy: Campus Wellness

PRIORITY #1B: Healthy Behaviors – Parks

Improving parks, programming and the built environment to increase access to physical activity. Two grants were awarded totaling \$62,500.

Schuylkill River Greenway Association: Manatawny Streambank Stabilization at the Schuylkill River Trail Footbridge - Phase 1

Schuylkill River Greenway Association: 2017 Bike Pottstown Program

PRIORITY #1C: Healthy Behaviors – Network

Creating and promoting social networks involving healthy living. 10 grants were awarded totaling \$397,500.

Accion Comunal Latinoamericana de Montgomery County:
ACLAMO Community Health Connections

Cradle of Liberty Council, Boy Scouts of America: Scouting:
Physical Fitness, Citizenship, Leadership, and Character Development
for Pottstown Area Youth



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