

Well-Informed

Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation | Community Benefit Report | Fall 2019



STRENGTHENING NONPROFITS: Foundations for Pottstown Education & Boyertown Education

Unlike many of the grants the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation (PAHWF) awards each year, which are used primarily to promote healthy lifestyles and behaviors among residents in the region, some grants are used to help support the nonprofits themselves. These stories often go unnoticed because they focus more on behind-the-scene activities, rather than public-facing benefits. That's the case with [The Foundation for Pottstown Education](#) and [The Foundation for Boyertown Education](#). Both used PAHWF's grants to advance their organization's abilities to raise funds.

"Just in this grant cycle alone, which ended on June 30, 2019, we were able to increase the contributions we raised on our own by almost 60% over the start of the grant period," said Joe Rusiewicz, Executive Director at The Foundation for Pottstown Education.

Above: Students training with new welding equipment at Boyertown High School

"We couldn't have done this without the (PAHWF) Foundation's funding and, more importantly, their support."

The mission of both Foundations for Education is clear and straightforward: to raise money to support educational programs and services for their respective school districts. "We fund things that would otherwise be cost-prohibitive to the schools," said Tessi Melchior, Executive Director at The Foundation for Boyertown Education.

[The Foundation for Boyertown Education](#) has been in operation for six years, and the nonprofit has generated a ton of positive results for the school district.

a message from our president



Why does equity matter in the life of a Pottstown resident? Equity is justice—a principle that ensures each individual has a fair chance in life. A desire for equity is central to who we are, and it takes several forms in our community.

Health Equity: Consistent primary and behavioral care are cornerstones of a lifetime of good health. Community Health and Dental Care and Creative Health Services provide access for most, but not all, of our citizens. Our region's ability to support health and longevity is dependent on other integral factors.

Education Equity: There is a strong correlation between educational attainment and health outcomes. A recent Temple University [report](#), *A Tale of Haves and Have-Nots*, describes the current inequities in our school funding model. ACEs, adverse childhood experiences, can be overcome in fully funded school districts.

Economic Equity: Health outcomes are closely tied to economic attainment. Economic equity translates to opportunity for jobs and fair compensation. Access to locally created jobs that minimize residents' commutes can increase family time and in turn improve parental engagement.

Transportation Equity: We applaud the efforts underway to create a new alternative transportation study. Equal investment in transportation will create jobs and drive economic growth in Western Montco providing better access for all individuals.

Racial equity: Societal attitudes towards race need a continued spotlight. The above four equities can and will provide opportunities for the increasingly diverse citizens of the Pottstown area.

Our recently completed [Community Health Needs Assessment](#) provides facts and figures necessary to make a case for equity within Montgomery, Chester, and Berks counties—in addition to Pennsylvania as a whole. Read it, make the case, and bring grants back for the people in need in Pottstown, Boyertown, Spring City, and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David W. Kraybill".

David W. Kraybill, President

"With the grants from Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation in the past two years, we've been able to raise more than \$282,900 to fund \$108,000 in various projects. We funded \$90,000 last year alone and \$18,000 so far this year," said Melchior.

With the ability to offer more resources, educators have the potential to open students up to new experiences that can either enrich learning or, perhaps, introduce them to future career paths. For example, a laser engraver was funded for the high school, which supported technical education and giving students hands-on experience. There was also a piece of welding equipment that exposed kids to a new trade and may eventually allow the district to offer future welding certification classes.

The impact of the contributions has short-term gain for students and lasting impact for the community's sustainability. At the elementary level, new educational technology was added to the classroom to help engage kids more in the learning process. The Boyertown Foundation also invested in a Teachers in the Park summer learning program for students K-5 throughout the district held at Boyertown and Bally Community Parks.

"The grants we received from the Foundation have allowed us to get our story out to the community, and to garner more awareness and support for our mission," said Melchior. "This, in turn, has helped us grow our donor base, increase our budget, and become a stronger and more independent nonprofit. In other words, the Foundation has helped us become yet another successful partner in the community – one that is well-positioned to fund projects for the Boyertown School District well into the future."

Similarly, [The Foundation for Pottstown Education](#), which initially began in 1985 as the Partners in Pottstown Public Schools (PIPPS) and was renamed in 2009, has been able to improve their organization's fundraising activities — all to support

students in their district.

"To become better fundraisers, we used a grant from the Foundation to attend a series of nine different, all-day fundraising training sessions offered and taught by The Nonprofit Center at La Salle University," said Rusiewicz. "Through these sessions, we were able to establish a Development Committee that focuses on fundraising and launch a new Endowments and Annuities program to ensure the future growth of our organization."

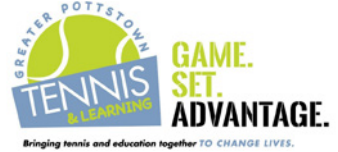
Some of the exciting initiatives The Foundation for Pottstown Education funded include **STEM & Robotics**, a national initiative that teaches students to build robots and relate the concept of Science, Technology,



Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness (**PEAK**), a nationally recognized Early Childhood initiative that prepares students for academic success; and the **Pottstown Early College Program**, which provides high-achieving, low-income students the opportunity to finish their first year of college during their junior and senior years.

"I truly enjoy working with the Foundation, not just because of the grants, but because of their interest in making Pottstown a better community," said Rusiewicz. "People are very proud to live in Pottstown. They're proud of what we have here. And I think the Foundation is central to that."

Greater Pottstown Tennis & Learning



To say Jim Corum is a tennis fan would be an understatement. In the early 1990s, Jim started tennis programs in the public parks in Pottstown, offering his services on the courts as a coach and mentor to underserved youth. What Mr. Corum began almost 30 years ago – along with his commitment to bringing tennis to underserved youth and promoting good health – has grown to become [Greater Pottstown Tennis & Learning \(GPTL\)](#).

In July, GPTL honored its founding father by naming the new courts at the Maple Street Park in Pottstown the *Jim Corum Community Courts* at an official ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"I could have never dreamed that the little community organization I founded in the early 1990s would have ever grown into the national organization it is today," said Jim Corum, 91.

Today, GPTL is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) which is directly supported by the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Foundation as part of a nationwide network of 300 nonprofit tennis organizations. This national network just celebrated 50 years of impact bringing tennis and education together to change lives.



L to R: GPTL Board member-Grace Musser, GPTL Development Director-Chrissy Sinatra, GPTL Finance Chair-Jim White, GPTL Executive Director-Kerriann Herdelin, Jim Corum, GPTL President-Joe Collins, GPTL Board Member-Deb Bennis, PAHWF President-David Kraybill

"Undoubtedly, from my perspective, GPTL would not be where we are without the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation supporting our mission and giving us a chance when our 501(c)(3) was pending. If it wasn't for their funding, we wouldn't have gotten to a national level of building these courts," said Kerriann Herdelin, Executive Director of GPTL.

GPTL continues to be inspired by Jim's original vision and the organization's humble beginnings. With an initial



Everyone celebrating the dedication of Greater Pottstown Tennis & Learning Maple Street courts to Jim Corum.

grant from the Foundation in 2011, GPTL was able to offer students at the Pottstown Middle School free tennis after-school programs Monday through Thursdays. "This program was the anchor of us fulfilling our mission," said Herdelin. The interest in the school program blossomed through the years, eventually leading to the development of a boys and girls middle school tennis team. "Hopefully, this feeder team will be the foundation for strong high school tennis teams in Pottstown, introducing a self-regulated sport at a younger age," said Herdelin.

GPTL's successes since 2011 has, indeed, bred more success for the organization. Today, GPTL runs free National Junior Tennis and Learning programs for over 1,000 youth in Pottstown School District as well as free adaptive (special needs) tennis year-round. By bringing free tennis into schools and communities, GPTL mentors life skills, healthy behaviors and learning.

The improvements at Maple Street Park Tennis Court – which included the resurfacing of two existing courts, construction of a third court, new drainage, new fencing, and building a new pavilion – was just the latest milestone in GPTL's ongoing success story. However, being able to name the courts after Jim Corum – the same courts where he initially taught tennis – was an absolute privilege.

The new courts are a pathway to expand GPTL programs and provide more opportunities to youth in Pottstown. As evidenced by so many success stories – from personal victories to college scholarships – tennis is their vehicle to an *advantage* in life.



Retiring Board Members

In 2019, the Foundation bid farewell to two of its board members – Dr. Keith Harrison and John Foster.



L to R: David Kraybill—Foundation President, Dr. Keith Harrison, and Dr. Myra Forrest—chair of the Foundation's board.

Grants & Impact committees. "It was an honor and pleasure to serve on the board, as I wholeheartedly support the mission of the Foundation to promote and facilitate community health and wellness," said Dr. Harrison. "I am confident that with the dynamic and intelligent leadership of the board, the Foundation will continue to serve and nurture the Pottstown community."

John Foster served on the PAHWF board of directors for three years, starting in October 2016 and ending in June 2019. During his tenure, Mr. Foster served on the

Nominating and Strategic Planning committees. "I grew up in the segregated south behind a mule and a plow, and cultural change is what enables people to reach the next level, to take another step on the ladder," said Foster. "The long-term vision of the Foundation – to enable a child or an adult to make lasting lifestyle changes, rather than simply satisfying an immediate need – is successfully creating cultural changes in our community. I wish the Foundation continued success in this endeavor because I believe it will make the greatest difference in Pottstown going forward."

Dr. Keith Harrison began his service on the PAHWF board of directors in July 2010, serving until June 2019. During his time spent on the board, Dr. Harrison proudly served as an officer on the Executive Committee as well as the Strategic Planning, Finance,



L to R: Dr. Myra Forrest—chair of the Foundation's board, John Foster, and David Kraybill—Foundation President.

Meet John!



In September 2019, the Foundation welcomed John Robertson to the organization as Communications Assistant.

"The Foundation has a huge role in the community, and its work to help residents lead healthy lives is vital," said Robertson. "I'm excited to be part of it and to continue to give the community a window into the impact the Foundation makes alongside its partners."

Before joining the Foundation, John was the Assistant Director of Communications & Marketing at the Virginia Military Institute. His previous experience in managing editing, writing, photography and graphic design at VMI is well-suited for his primary responsibilities at the Foundation, which includes coordinating all the communications of the Foundation as well as expanding the organizations multimedia options into video, photography and more.

His professional experience, combined with his passion for pursuing good health, ties in well with the Foundation's mission for area residents. John is an avid runner and has completed a dozen marathons – his most recent was the Boston Marathon in April. These days, you'll find John logging in the miles on the trails more than the track, treadmill, or roads.

"During my time at VMI, I coached the college's running club and served as the local Team RWB athletic director," said John. "These two roles allowed me to share my love of running with students and members of the community from all walks of life."

John, who grew up in Petersburg, Virginia, was surprised at the similarities between Pottstown and his hometown. He now resides in Harleysville with his wife, Brittany.

"You read about all that the Foundation does on paper, and it's impressive," said Robertson. "But I think the people here really make it a special place. It's just great to be a part of what is an exceptional group of people."

Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds Institute®



On August 14, 2019, educators, administrators, and researchers across the region gathered for a one-day annual immersive conference to learn new and innovative ways to infuse wellness into school culture. This can mean different things to different school populations, but, overall, the goal is to foster development of wellness in our school, adopt physical activity, and integrate wellness concepts into teaching.

Another key component that is critical to nurturing a safe, enriching school environment is an understanding of Social Emotional Learning. As this region continues to pioneer Trauma Informed Care, local experts led discussions on approaches to manage/overcome Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), nurture resilience and prevent negative, long-lasting effects. Equipped with the knowledge and resources, we can make a difference!



West-Mont Christian Academy was named as the winner of the annual Pottstown Area School Wellness Checklist Challenge during the Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds Institute August 14. The School Wellness Checklist is a nationwide effort to reshape school environments to promote good health and reduce obesity.

17
SCHOOLS / DISTRICTS
REPRESENTED

123
EARNING
ACT 48

135
TEACHERS
IN ATTENDANCE

77
FIRST TIME
ATTENDEES

Connecting People Who Care with Causes That Matter

The Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation has launched a planned giving program and is encouraging individuals in the region to consider endowment gifts during their lifetime or as a bequest to benefit specific causes and organizations.

Whether it's the arts, parks and recreation, education, social services, the environment, your faith community, or health and wellness—you can decide where your endowment goes to leave a lasting statement about who you are and what you're passionate about.

In other words, endowment funds created through the Foundation do not need to be designated for health and wellness purposes only. Your long-term plans can benefit the causes that matter most to you. And you can trust in the Foundation's proven history of expertise in managing investments and grants to non-profits.

For example, long-time residents of the region may remember the Porter sisters who managed a legacy

of businesses and investments. In 2009, the Porter bequest created a \$2 million fund focusing on health in Pottstown, which supported gifts to non-profits in our region. The fund still benefits the community today because it has been carefully managed to last in perpetuity.

Join with others who have taken the initiative to create a PAHWF endowment that benefits focused areas of interest, and discover how fulfilling, uncomplicated, and advantageous planned giving can be.

To learn more about the impact your support can make, visit our website at www.pottstownfoundation.plannedgiving.org, contact our Philanthropy Coordinator at 610-323-2006 X23, or talk with your financial advisor.

Consider a planned gift that not only makes your generosity endure—but also allows for a stronger and better future for our community and region.



October 15, 2019

24 hours of giving for good



On October 15, be part of something *Amazing*.

The Amazing Raise is, once again, ready to spark the incredible generosity of our entire community. Join this 24-hour giving challenge, which brings the region together to help raise \$500,000 for local nonprofit organizations in Montgomery, Eastern Berks and Northern Chester counties.

Unlike other fundraisers, 100% of the dollars raised by each participating nonprofit goes to that organization, and 100% of the money stays right here in our communities. Additionally, the TriCounty Community Network (TCN) proportionally distributes money to all participating nonprofit agencies, adding to their fundraising efforts.

One day.
One event.
Thousands of lives locally impacted.

Donate at:

www.AmazingRaiseTriCounty.org

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Explore the nonprofits you would like to donate to, and create an account.

Amity Township Athletic Club
Animal House Project
Ann's Heart
Art Fusion 19464
Association for Adults with Developmental Disabilities
Bon Homie Better Days Foundation
Boyertown Area Community Wellness Council, Inc.
Boyertown Community Library
Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles
Centro Cultural Latinos Unidos Inc.
Colebrookdale Railroad
Creative Health Services
Designing 4 Hope
Developmental Enterprises Corporation
Family Services of Montgomery County
Foundation for Boyertown Education
Foundation for Pottstown Education
Frederick Living
Genesis Housing Corporation
Greater Pottstown Tennis & Learning
GreenAllies
Innabah Camp and Retreat Center
KenCrest
MOSAIC Community Land Trust
Mother Goose: Read to Me
OJR Wildcat Crew Club
Open Hearth Inc.

Operation Backpack

PDIDA - Pottstown Downtown Improvement District Authority
Pottstown Children's Discovery Center
Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities
Pottstown GoFourth!
Pottstown Regional Public Library
Pottstown Works
Project Purpose
RSVP
Seniors and Sprouts
Steel River Playhouse
TCN - TriCounty Community Network
The Lincoln Center for Family and Youth
The Salvation Army of Boyertown
The Salvation Army of Pottstown
TriCounty Active Adult Center
TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce
Victim Services Center of Montgomery County
Women's Center of Montgomery County
YWCA Tri-County Area
For more information, contact TCN at info@tcnnetwork.org or call 610-850-0181.

TCN is proud to provide support services and lead collaborative projects with nonprofit organizations across the region throughout the year. By building long-lasting partnerships, we can resolve community issues that can't be solved by one organization alone.



Annual Home Garden Contest



Lily-Anne Wright and David Kraybill, Foundation President, display the fieldstone claimed by Wright after she took first place in the Pottstown Young Gardener category.—*Photo courtesy of Michilea Patterson.*

When it comes to developing physical and mental health, many residents in the Pottstown and Boyertown boroughs choose (and love!) to garden. In addition to the health benefits of gardening, the activity also promotes a sense of community, as it helps beautify neighborhoods across the region.

"Being able to see so many gardens in such a condensed period of time was an amazing experience for me. When you see people taking pride in their homes and property, you can see how it improves the community at large, even if it's just a little bit, because every little bit helps," said Daniel Price, Community Garden Manager, MOSAIC Community Land Trust.

Congratulations to the 2019 winners and participants!



David Kraybill, Foundation President, pauses with Boyertown resident Pat Keeler—who won first in the "A Lot with a Little" category—during the Home Gardens Contest awards luncheon. *Photo courtesy of Michilea Patterson.*

BOYERTOWN

GENERAL GARDEN

- 1st Karrie Miller
- 2nd Mary Kae Coy
- 3rd Adriene Billet
- HM Nadine Hoffman

Certificate of Participation
Samantha Green

A LOT WITH A LITTLE

- 1st Pat Keeler

BEES & BUTTERFLIES GARDEN

- 1st Angela Motter
- 2nd Heidi Bauer
- 3rd Angie Brudke

FLOWER GARDEN

- 1st Denise Trout

VEGETABLE GARDEN

- 1st Kim Dougherty

POTTSTOWN

YOUNG GARDENER

- 1st Lily Anne Wright
- 2nd Kirstyn & Abbye McCalicher
- 3rd Callie Gardner
- HM Madeline Heidel

Certificate of Participation
Elizabeth Haigh
Brooke Haigh

BEES & BUTTERFLIES GARDEN

- 1st Ron Richael
- 2nd Geri Kelly

FLOWER GARDEN

- 1st Richard Cressman
- 2nd Jody Wenzel
- 3rd Rose West
- HM Betsy Sovia

Certificate of Participation
Regina Astheimer
Debra Catanzaro
Charles Kanaskie

A LOT WITH A LITTLE

- 1st Joseph Wenzel
- 2nd Rosemary Keane
- 3rd Emilyann Zona
- HM Shona Williams

Certificate of Participation
Joseph Lee

GENERAL GARDEN

- 1st Nicole Leone
- 2nd Susan Klinedinst
- 3rd Frank & Tammy Raus
- HM#1 Bonnie Heath
- HM#2 Jean Palmer

Certificate of Participation
Karli Bare
Tom Gondal
Kurt Heidel
Dianne Heverly
Ruth Leyrer
Alicia Murray
Linda Ruffin
Eva Talbert
Debra Watland

VEGETABLE GARDEN

- 1st Michael Dagostina
- 2nd Becky Gardner
- 3rd Barbara Rapchinski
- HM Megan McConnell

Certificate of Participation
Barry Heverly
Joe Loftus
Robert Trojanowski

There were not participants in the following categories:

Young Gardener (Boyertown)

Visit www.homegardencontest.com to see photos of the entries and a gallery of photos from the awards ceremony – **grow for it!**

Women's Pro Golf Returns to Pottstown.

As an advocate for health and wellness, the Foundation is excited to be involved with activities and sports, like golf, that keeps men, women, and children of all ages active. It's a lifelong sport, and one we were excited to share with the community through our title sponsorship of the Symetra Tour's 2nd Annual Valley Forge Invitational, featuring professional women golfers vying for their chance to join the LPGA. The event was held at Raven's Claw Golf Club in Pottstown from May 28 to June 2, 2019.

For the past 15 years, the Foundation has had an unwavering commitment to motivating others to adopt a healthy lifestyle, which is why supporting this professional sports event means so much to our community. The Symetra Tour is a shining example of how powerful it is to have positive, strong role models who lead healthy, athletic



lifestyles. The Foundation is fortunate to have partners like [Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board](#), who enhance the quality of life through the work they do here in Pottstown.

This year the nonprofit selected to benefit from the \$35,000 proceeds of the tournament was the TriCounty Community Network (TCN). TCN builds partnerships with local organizations, providing services and collaborating on projects to support community needs in the Greater Pottstown Area. Additionally, proceeds will support the Amazing Raise, a 24-hour giving challenge to raise funds for nonprofits making the 422 corridor a better place to live, work and be active.

David Kraybill, Foundation President, announces the Valley Forge Invitational during a press conference held at The Carousel at Pottstown.

Thank you to everyone involved for making this fantastic sporting event possible in Pottstown, and we appreciate all the hard work TCN does, every day, in our communities!



Your Local Park Wants To Hear From You

Did you catch sight of her? In your park? Inspecting the plants? Or maybe the amenities? That's Karleigh Cimorelli. She worked hard this summer visiting local parks, recording data points, and collecting over 1,000 observations. What was Karleigh doing? She was helping the Pottstown Area Regional Recreation Committee survey your park and the residents who use it to find out what improvements could be made to make it even better. If you want improvements at your park, we want to hear from you. Visit your park in the next couple of weeks and look for signs that ask you to participate in a survey for your feedback.

