

# Well-Informed

Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation | Community Benefit Report | Spring 2014



## Collaboration: Making Us Better



### What are collaboratives? Leaders adopting a “network mindset” and working together in order to solve problems and enable transformational change.

Collaboratives in health and human services, education, recreation and economic development have been the strength of our tri-county area.

Throughout the past nine years, the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation has worked through and strengthened existing networks, or assisted groups to create new networks to link efforts in Western Montgomery, Northern

Chester and Eastern Berks Counties. In this issue of the Community Benefit Report, we celebrate the inherent power of organizations working together toward a common mission:

#### Economic Development

**Tri-County Area Chamber of Commerce (440 businesses):** Governed by 18 member board—efforts in leadership development, employee health and worksite wellness.

#### Pottstown Area Industrial Development (PAID):

Anchor institutions, government and business leadership working across sectors to attract and nurture new and existing business.

**Brand Image working group of PAID:** Anchor institutions seeking to link internal and external communication efforts to local and regional audiences through common messaging.

#### Governmental and Regional planning.

**Council of Governments (COG):** Seven townships and the borough meeting when needed to discuss shared purchase and services.

**Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee (PMRPC):** Seven townships and the borough meeting monthly to discuss and create tools for regional development.

**Recreation Subcommittee of PMRPC:** Active group working which has received capital grant funds for Parks from PA DCNR, soon to be joined by a circuit rider (recreation coordinator) for the borough and six townships.

#### Educational

**Pottstown Early Access for Kindergarten Readiness (PEAK):** What has become a state and national model involves private and publicly funded childcare agencies in dramatically improved early learning outcomes. United Way, Foundation, and private philanthropy and government have joined to provide ongoing funding and leadership.

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# a message from our director



Dear Community,

Welcome spring! The last reminders of a particularly harsh 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.

This issue showcases not only the best of what our area delivers, but also the collaborative spirit inherent in our growing community. According to recent Census information, our region includes approximately 233,000 people. By 2018, we're expecting to expand to 240,000. The collaboratives highlighted in the articles throughout serve that entire population. And as a result, they look to partner with other organizations to provide resources, support and best practices.

Grantmakers for Effective Organizations [recently published the four principles](#) necessary for collaboration to achieve its greatest impact:

- 1. Mission, Not Organization:** Leaders adopt strategies meant to advance the mission before advancing the organization.
- 2. Trust, Not Control:** Trust and shared values are more important than control.
- 3. Humility, Not Brand:** Organizations work alongside their peers as equals and take the back seat when partners are in a better position to lead.
- 4. Node, Not Hub:** Those who embrace these four principles see their activity as part of the whole, and not the hub.

Look for our region's collaboratives to generate solutions that will continue to shape our community!

David W. Kraybill, Executive Director

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**Foundation School Collaborative (7 public school districts and 7 private schools):** Approximately 50 educators meet twice a year to share best practices. The Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds Institute gathered 190 faculty and staff members of these organizations to focus on active learning at a two-day learning event—dual outcomes of improved health and higher educational attainment.

**School Superintendents (7 public school superintendents):** Superintendents meet twice a year through the Tri-County Area Chamber of Commerce (TCACC), and the Foundation to discuss items of mutual interest.

**Resiliency Working Group:** Working group of educators and non-profit leaders will be augmented by fall and spring presentations by Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg.

## Health

**Tri-County Health Council (TCHC):** In advance of the Affordable Care Act, this group was formed and is comprised of CEOs and some staff of the four major players in health in our region: Community Health and Dental Care (CHDC), Creative Health Services (CHS), Pottstown Memorial Medical Center (PMMC) and Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation (Foundation).

**Tri-County Worksite Wellness Initiative:** A joint effort of the TCACC, Montgomery County Health Department, Chester County Health Department, PMMC, Independence Blue Cross, and the Foundation. Efforts are focused on employers with fewer than 50 employees.

## Human Services

**Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities (46-plus churches):** Through adherence to strong strategic planning efforts, the Cluster has grown to provide services for economically and socially challenged residents. Next focus is "Steps out of Poverty" and a regional manager of "Your Way Home."

**TriCounty Community Network:** A network supporting networks of 85 for-profit and not-for-profit entities with working groups/learning platforms.

## Save the Date



**What:** Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds 2014 Institute

**When:** August 5 & 6

**Time:** Registration opens at 7 a.m. Breakfast Plenary starts at 8 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 2014 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, please visit the Foundation's [registration page](#) for more information.

For more insight into Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds Institute, visit our media section and view our three-part webisode series. In addition, [download our eBook on the connection between healthy bodies and healthy minds](#).

[www.pottstownfoundation.org](http://www.pottstownfoundation.org)



# TriCounty Community Network: Making an Impact on Community

It takes collaboration to find new and better ways to solve community issues. Take, for instance, the mission of the [TriCounty Community Network \(TCN\)](#), an organization striving to improve the health, social and environmental conditions of the Pottstown region by collaborating with local non-profits, businesses and public agencies.

“Community collaboratives have tremendous potential and can be very powerful,” said TCN’s Executive Director, Jen Doyle. “However, true collaboration is very challenging and requires a lot of support. We provide the operational infrastructure necessary for effective collaboration. Our monthly meetings allow members to connect with one another, learn more about educational and professional related topics, and participate on committees that work to address community issues. Current issues include unemployment, homelessness, domestic violence, caregivers’ support, youth development, and environmental health and safety. We also provide training and support services to assist with the collaborative process.”

Doyle continued, “For collaboratives to be successful and in order to have an impact on the community, they need to be open and flexible. For us that means being able to adapt based on the needs of our community.”

TCN follows an adaptive strategy, which means frequent piloting of new ideas and initiatives. Just a couple years ago, for example, TCN developed a workshop, in collaboration with the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation, to help the organization’s committee members facilitate more productive meetings. While the training was free, it was held



during the holiday season and only a few participants were expected. And yet, nearly 30 people attended. Now TCN offers a series of professional development workshops. “You can go to Philadelphia and find an enormous amount of training available, but there are limited training opportunities offered in Pottstown,” Doyle said. “We identified a need in our community and set about to offer a solution.”

### **Other examples of how this adaptive strategy has translated into action?**

*In 2008, the PA Cancer Registry DATA confirmed a number of new cases of cancer in the region. And, the EPA ranked Montgomery county in the worst 10% of counties in the United States for air quality.* TCN has stepped in to promote a number of area campaigns, from Radon Action Month to organic gardening workshops.

*Over the past few years, Pottstown’s unemployment rates have been some of the highest in the state, sometimes hitting nearly 12 percent.* Over the past three years, TCN has organized the TriCounty Community Career Fair, which

introduced over 80 employers to several hundred skilled job seekers.

*Approximately 6,000 young people (age 10 to 14) call Pottstown home. They are in need of opportunities to stretch their leadership potential.* In 2013, over 200 students participated in the TCN-sponsored Youth Leadership Conference. The event featured numerous teambuilding activities and workshops on topics as varied as cyber bullying, healthy relationships, geocaching, entrepreneurship and financial literacy, to name a few.

### **Upcoming activities**

As obesity rates climb and screen time increases, TCN will offer the “Treasure Hunt,” an event to promote outdoor physical activity with family and friends using geocaching.

As competition for funding and resources increases, TCN is partnering with several organizations to develop a joint fundraising gala at Sunnybrook Ballroom in October. Proceeds will benefit fifteen local nonprofits.





# Sharing Resources Is More Important Than Ever

In 2012, VideoRay came to downtown Pottstown. Each day the company's underwater ROVs (remotely operated vehicles) work to find and retrieve objects, inspect infrastructure inland and offshore, keep divers

community, it's a terrific outcome. Not only do they support area non-profits, but they're also conducting dozens of facility tours when requested. That enables PAID to familiarize people with the businesses that are here."

transportation infrastructure currently in place, especially the rail system, which can be an economical way to ship goods. And, our area provides a diverse and skilled workforce. That's a differentiator for a community."



*Milkman Lunch Company & Cake Shoppe celebrated its move to High Street in downtown Pottstown.*

safe from hazardous conditions and monitor for terrorism. And each day, the company's leadership and staff continue to become more engaged and woven into the fabric of the community.

For Steve Bamford, Executive Director of [Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc. \(PAID\)](#), the company's addition to the community is a success story: "Often in economic development, we can quantify the benefits of new businesses moving to the area through the number of jobs added. However, when a company goes the extra mile to become part of our business

## **Opportunities for businesses new to the Pottstown area**

Today, resources often feel limited, with many adopting a "do more with less" mentality. But to make that kind of mindset work, both partnering with other organizations and sharing ideas are a necessity. So is highlighting the best of what the area has to offer businesses that are coming to Pottstown—as well as those already doing business here.

"We are fortunate to be located in a tri-county area with a diverse population and great infrastructure," said Bamford. "Many businesses coming to the area while the

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*Steve Bamford, Executive Director of Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc. (PAID)*

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For the balance of 2014, PAID plans to continue to build on its strengths, one of which being to help spread the news of what makes Pottstown an ideal place to do business. "In the coming weeks, PAID, in collaboration with area organizations, will begin sharing the stories that make us proud of Pottstown whether residents, business owners or other stakeholders who have a vested interest in seeing our community prosper," said Bamford.



*New Pottstown restaurant, Lilly's Grill, opened its doors by serving up farm fresh, healthy, nutritious and great tasting food.*

# Moving from Dependence to Self-Sufficiency

Moving from shelters to stable homes can feel like climbing a mountain. Recently, the [Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities \(PCRC\)](#) worked with a young single mother who had been living in a shelter. She was exhausted, without support and reaching a point of hopelessness. Within a few weeks, the organization was able to help her find an apartment and create a housing stability plan in order to manage her living needs on her own without assistance. PCRC staff says that when she meets with them, she arrives more relaxed, with a smile on her face. “To see that kind of transformation from someone who three weeks prior didn’t know where she would lay her head is rewarding,” said Barbara Wilhelmy, Executive Director for Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities.



An organization that strives to provide basic needs and resources to the Pottstown population relies heavily on collaborative relationships. “Others are already doing an amazing job within their areas of expertise,” said Wilhelmy. “We don’t have to recreate the wheel. For instance, our relationship with worship communities provides food, financial and facility space donations, along with a wealth of volunteers.”

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***We are very much aware that without the community’s support, we wouldn’t exist. We have a strong volunteer base. We rely on them to do a significant amount of work. We’re grateful for that.***

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A few years ago, PCRC moved to a larger building in order to expand its operation and extend its mission to include case work and referrals. “Our new building has given us an opportunity to learn more about the people we serve, build lasting relationships and help them become more self-sufficient,” said Wilhelmy. “In addition, our new space offers more privacy for staff to meet one-on-one with individuals and get them connected with other staff.”

PCRC plans to continue aggressively tackling what’s at the heart of the organization’s mission—helping people in poverty to develop plans to live a more stable life with additional tools and resources. 2014 marks its second year supporting its 16-week workshop series called, Understanding Poverty to Plan and Persevere (UP3) Initiative, using a nationally recognized curriculum. Interested individuals complete



an application and interview process to determine if they are able to make a commitment for the 16-week workshop series to investigate poverty and ultimately develop a future plan emphasizing stability. A separate program, using the reference “Bridges out of Poverty” continues to educate the general public on common misconceptions of who utilizes PCRC services. “Many families who utilize our services are working full-time at minimum wage jobs and are unable to make ends meet,” said Wilhelmy. “Living in poverty doesn’t mean that people aren’t making an effort, and that’s a common misconception. We see ourselves as an organization helping people get back on their feet.”

Later this year, the organization also plans to kick off a new initiative in its pantry, which has been operating for the past 30 years. Modeled after the Kensington Green Light Pantry, PCRC plans to pilot a program by using the pantry to help people make more educated food choices. Foods will be designated highly nutritious (green light), moderately nutritious (yellow light) or little nutritious value (red light). “We’ve gone from packaging food in grocery bags, to setting up food grocery-store-style, to educating users on smart choices to take home,” said Wilhelmy.



## profile



### Sheri Waldman, Administrative Assistant

Sheri began working with the Foundation in December 2013, providing administrative and program support to our own Dr. Laurie Betts when it comes to the grants process, special projects and day-to-day operations. "I enjoy seeing all that the Foundation is doing to make our community healthier," said Sheri. "It encourages me to strive to be healthier and more active." In her spare time, she enjoys walking, going to the gym and spending time with her family. And since both of her sons are avid baseball players, she also spends a lot of time at the baseball fields.

In just a few months, she has had the opportunity to meet with numerous area organizations. Rather than simply getting her feet wet, Sheri dived into activity at the start of the year when Dr. Ken Ginsburg spoke to area schools on the topic of resilience. "Having children of my own," she said, "it's always helpful to learn more about being a better parent, as well as identify ways I can help others."

Sheri remains actively involved as a volunteer in the community. She volunteers with St. Columbkil's Church, Boyertown Schools, Boyertown Midget Baseball League and is a Board Member.

Sheri and her family have been residents of Gilbertsville for 19 years. In addition to her two sons, she also has a daughter who just graduated from Penn State.

## Preserve, Protect, Promote: Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission Plans for the Future

Can you name the eight Pennsylvania municipalities that make up the Pottstown metropolitan region? The answer is at the very bottom of the article, if you'd like to check your list.

Each is unique and special in its own way, yet all must work collaboratively in order to see sustained growth locally.

The [Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission](#) has made its mission one to direct attention to our region's older communities, particularly in the Borough of Pottstown, in order to preserve and protect rural areas, as well as promote long-term economic growth—all in an effort to revitalize our communities.

### Their nine goals for our community are:

1. Protect the unique, historical, cultural, and natural resources of the region.
2. Promote economic vitality and quality of life in our communities.
3. Preserve open space and agriculture.
4. Develop transportation choices for better mobility around the region.
5. Provide for orderly and well-planned new development.
6. Encourage walkable communities with a mix of uses and a ranging of housing options.
7. Maintain and improve recreation options.
8. Address the specific needs and unique conditions of each municipality.
9. Promote new economic opportunities and jobs.



It's no small task, but this group is dedicated and up for the challenge!

**Answer:** Douglass, New Hanover, Lower Pottsgrove, Upper Pottsgrove, and West Pottsgrove Townships, along with Pottstown Borough in Montgomery County. Also includes East Coventry and North Coventry Townships in Chester County.



### "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 challenges and your successes.

[Click here](#) to follow Dr. Betts today!

[www.pottstownfoundation.org](http://www.pottstownfoundation.org)



## Fiscal Year 2014

Grant giving for FY'14 (7/1/2013 – 6/30/2014) was based on the Foundation's long-term goals. The fall 2013 grant round includes 30 grants, totaling \$1,364,682 awarded to non-profit organizations, schools, and municipalities. These grants are funded according to the following priorities:

### PRIORITY #1: HEALTHY BEHAVIORS

**PRIORITY #1B: Improving parks, programming and the built environment to increase access to physical activity - \$27,500 awarded to support the following two projects:**

1. **Boyertown Area YMCA** – Sports & Wellness Training Center
2. **North Coventry Township** – Kenilworth Park Disc Golf Course

**PRIORITY #1C: Creating and promoting social networks involving healthy living - \$932,000 awarded to support the following 14 projects:**

1. **Boone Area Library, Inc.** – Collection Development of Non-Fiction Books and Related Items for Juvenile, Young Adult and Adult Library Collections
2. **Borough of Pottstown** – Walk & Bike Pottstown Project
3. **Boyertown Area Community Wellness Council** – 2014 Strengthening a Community Through Wellness
4. **Chester County Community Foundation, Inc.** – After School Programs at Park Springs Apartments
5. **Greater Pottstown Tennis & Learning** – Pottstown School District Free 10 & Under Tennis Clinics
6. **Maternity Care Coalition** – Pottstown Area Early Head Start
7. **Philadelphia Freedom Valley YMCA** – Nutrition Counseling/ Healthy Eating Classes
8. **Pottstown Area Police Athletic League** – PAL Operating Program
9. **Pottstown Area Seniors' Center** – Enhancing Prime Time Health
10. **Pottstown Athletic Club** – Pottstown Dragon Warriors – Community and Regional Dragon Boat Team Development
11. **Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities (PCRC)** – Opportunities for Improved Health of Clients and PCRC
12. **Preservation Pottstown, Inc.** – MOSAIC Community Gardens
13. **Schuylkill River Greenway Association** – 2014 Bike Pottstown Program
14. **Triskeles Foundation** – Food for Thought

**PRIORITY #2: PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH - \$345,182 awarded to support the following 11 projects:**

1. **Camphill Village Kimberton Hills** – Aging in Community
2. **Carson Valley Children's Aid** – Women's Voices, Healthy Choices
3. **Child Advocacy Center of Montgomery County (Mission Kids)** – Expansion and Refinement of Mission Kids' Family/Victim Advocate Program
4. **Child, Home & Community** – Pottstown Adolescent Prenatal, Parenting and Support Continuum
5. **Community Health and Dental Care, Inc.** – Outreach & Enrollment Assistance
6. **Creative Health Services, Inc.** – Healthy Weight Healthy Families
7. **Family Services of Montgomery County (Project HEARTH)** – Helping Elderly Adults Remain in Their Home
8. **Montgomery County Community College Foundation** – Dental Sealant Day
9. **Phoenixville Healthcare Access Foundation** – Health Care Access Vision, Dental, Prescription, Mammogram and Emergency Orthopedic Programs
10. **Pottstown Family Center (Family Services of Montgomery County)** – Resiliency Project
11. **Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) Community Services, Inc.** – Personal Navigator Program with Expanded Legal Support Services

**PRIORITY #3: STRENGTHEN NON-PROFITS - \$60,000 awarded to support the following three projects:**

1. **Montgomery County Community College Foundation** – Service Learning to Build the Capacity of Community-Based Non-Profit Organizations
2. **Royersford Outreach, Inc.** – Capital for building purchase and renovations
3. **The Wyndcroft School** – Create a Campus Building Campaign



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