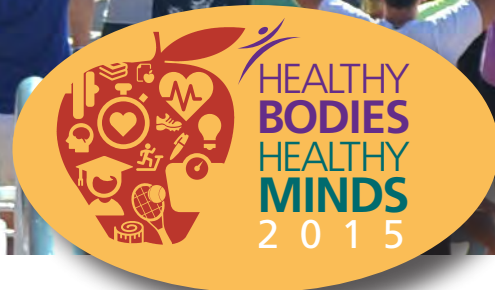
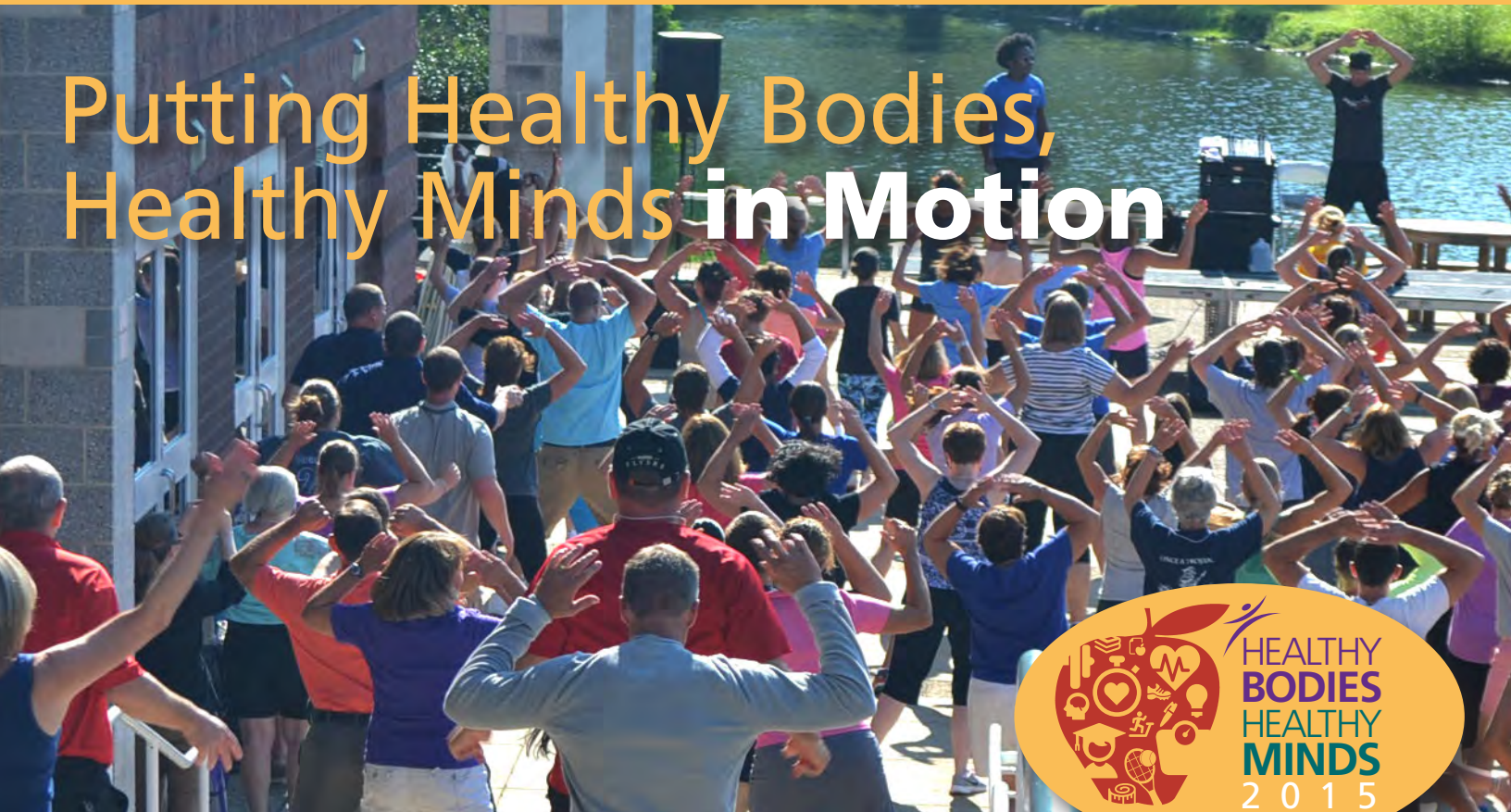


Well-Informed

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



Putting Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds in Motion



School may have been out for the summer, but for the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation, an army of influential instructors, and passionate local educators, learning was in full swing at the annual Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds Institute.

Held at The Hill School from August 4th – 5th and organized by the Foundation, the Institute (otherwise referred to as HBHMI) has been a driving force in the community over the last few years in investigating the relationship between exercise and the development of the mind. Using physical activity as a guiding learning tool, leading neuro-scientists, educators, and psychologists spearhead the two-day event through a sequence of breakout sessions that are comprised of interdisciplinary topics such as nutrition,

techniques for integrating movement into the classroom, community partnerships for schools, and staff wellness. Attended by administrators, teachers, nurses, health/physical education teachers, and school counselors, the seminar fosters inventiveness in incorporating movement into their individual teaching practices.

For David Genova, District Wellness Coordinator for the Pottstown School District, lending support for HBHMI is a no-brainer, and it boils down to one reason – his confidence in its mission.

Acknowledging that each program is developed and instructed based on indisputable scientific evidence, the valuable conclusions that have been drawn have fueled his school district's participation in the program over the last several years. In the three years since

their first experience, attendance has exponentially grown from 43 to 74– which included administrative faculty members.

“The program helps teachers understand what active learning is and encourages them to implement it into their teaching. This method helps to create more opportunities for kids to be physically active all day long, not just within a school day,” said Genova.

Since his school's involvement with HBHMI, Genova remarks that a vital key takeaway has been instrumental in increasing engaged learning and memory retention among students. The concept?

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a message from our president



It's hard to believe another summer has gone by in what feels like the blink of an eye, but what a summer it was!

June came with the news that The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) chose Pottstown as the host site to announce its [five-year strategic outdoor recreation plan](#). The ceremony, held in Memorial Park, took place during the 24th annual [Pottstown Rumble](#), the world's largest grass doubles volleyball tournament. The two events came together in what was a monumental day for the Borough and region.

Shortly thereafter, our 2nd annual "[On Your Park, Get Set, Go!](#)" contest, a month-long challenge to help get local communities into their parks, kicked off on July 1st. Congratulations to first-place winner, Hollenbach Park of Upper Pottsgrove Township, and to the other 13 participating municipalities who showed their support for their parks by voting all month long.

Pottstown gardeners also got in on the fun! Beginners and experts alike had the opportunity to showcase their individual or neighborhood gardens during the 3rd annual [MOSAIC Community Land Trust Home Gardens Contest](#) this summer. Congratulations to all 2015 participants, winners and honorable mentions who got creative with their entries, growing their own vegetables and herbs, planting flowers, etc., dabbling in all areas of gardening.

Great things continue to happen in Pottstown as we work together to better our community!

David W. Kraybill, President

(continued from page 1)

Action-Based Learning Seminars (ABL), where educators learn about putting movement into the teaching process. Through this interactive technique, studies have correlated the rate of stimulation in the brain to the absorption of information. Known as "brain energizers", Genova doesn't necessarily need supporting scientific data to backup this theory – he has witnessed the difference himself.

Thanks to instructional guidance gained at the HBHMI, every building within his school district has a special wellness committee composed of motivated, inspired teachers who are armed with creative lessons and are ready to take action. Additionally, since their initial attendance, a Brain Energizer Team has emerged and meets on a quarterly basis to integrate programs that include ABL methods. Since this shift in learning practices and adoption of new approaches, Genova has seen a significant decrease in Body Mass Index (BMI) among the student body population, particularly in elementary schools. He also reports that not only are students healthier as the result of a movement activity, but they are also better-behaved.

Lucie Bergeyova, Boyertown District Wellness Leader and a second-year HBHMI instructor, shares in Genova's experience.

As a longtime fitness guru who currently serves as a health/physical education teacher, the one critical thing that people of all ages need to understand involves the connection between the body and mind.

"Most people don't comprehend how activity positively affects the brain. If you have a better quality of life, you become a better learner," Bergeyova states.

Like Genova, for Bergeyova, the time spent at HBHMI has instilled within her the importance of ABL and "brain breaks". Learning about the benefits of physical activity and how it impacts the learning process as energizing forces has allowed her to find ways for students to excel and reach their full potential both in and outside of the classroom. A great example illustrated this year was the idea of formulating a "Health Club", which would serve as a series

"The program helps teachers understand what active learning is and encourages them to implement it into their teaching."

of after-school activities for kids who don't belong to an organized sports team.

Bergeyova also shares that the lessons acquired from past years have been transformative in unimaginable ways.

Following the 2014 seminar, Bergeyova's school implemented a program in which heart rate monitors were purchased for high school students and thereafter tracked and monitored for progress. Moreover, just prior to the conduction of statewide testing, the school held a mandatory physical activity 20 minutes prior to the examination. Scores revealed an increase in performance, and Bergeyova reports that children were much more receptive after these brain breaks.

To those who previously attended the Institute, but have yet to develop or execute ideas from the program – or to future participants – Genova and Bergeyova offer sound advice.

"Lead by example, and be open minded. If teachers are into it, kids will follow and it will work. You can't force something like this on kids, and they know it. Educators are the best influencers," exclaims Bergeyova.

For Genova, it all starts with the superintendents.

"Get support from the top down. You need the administration's support to do ABL. Teachers can implement these lessons in their classroom, but without having administration support, it won't go further," he stressed.

For more information on HBHMI, please visit the [Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation website](#).



MUSC Checklist Contest Winner



In June, The Wyndcroft School was named the inaugural winner of PAHWF's [School Health Initiative](#) at the Wellness Achievement Celebration. Wyndcroft earned the most points for its school, following a wellness checklist, in a contest between area school districts to create healthier school environments. Brought to the region from the experts at the Medical University of South Carolina's (MUSC) Boeing Center for Children's Wellness (formerly known as Lean Team), the contest aims to reduce childhood obesity through innovative wellness initiatives in schools.

Nine additional school buildings in the region participated in the contest in its first year:

- Franklin Elementary School*
- Boyertown Area Senior High School*
- Colebrookdale Elementary School*
- Boyertown Elementary School*
- Brookeside Montessori*
- West Pottsgrove Elementary*
- Pottsgrove Middle School*
- Pottsgrove High School*
- Coventry Christian School*

Each school was awarded \$1,000 to be used towards wellness programs of their choosing. As the contest winner, Wyndcroft received an additional \$2,000 as well as a trophy to be displayed on its campus. Wyndcroft, Franklin Elementary School (Pottstown School District), and Pottsgrove Middle School were the three top point earners of the participating schools.

2015 "On Your Park, Get Set, Go!" Contest



"On Your Park, Get Set, Go!" is an annual competition during the month of July in which parks (located within the Foundation's service area) vie for the highest number of votes to win grant funds for improvements. "On Your Park" was designed to be part of a bigger vision to promote physical activity and community pride. This year, PAHWF was excited to have 14 participating parks from Chester, Montgomery and Berks Counties, competing for the top prize in the form of a \$10,000 recreation grant!

Congratulations to **Hollenbach Park** in Upper Pottsgrove Township, the grand prize winner of our 2nd annual "On Your Park, Get Set, Go!" contest!



Pineland Park in Exeter Township claimed the second place title in our contest. As a first runner-up, Pineland received a \$7,500 grant.



Connie Batdorf Park in South Coventry Township finished third in the competition. As a second runner-up, Connie Batdorf received a \$5,000 grant.

Congratulations to all of this year's winners, and many thanks to all of our participants and to those who supported their parks! We look forward to seeing you next year!



2015 Home Garden Contest

MOSAIC Community Land Trust hosts an annual gardens contest for beginners and experts alike in which participants are given the opportunity to showcase their individual or team creations. In its third year, the contest accepted entries from the entire Borough of Pottstown and added both a neighborhood and junior category. The purpose of the contest is to educate the community on the benefits of gardening, fostering teamwork, creativity and camaraderie amongst the residents of Pottstown.

Congratulations to the following winners and honorable mentions:

Residential Front or Side Yard Gardens:	Neighborhood Gardens (one entry - shared first place):
1st – Rich Cressman	Charlene Charles
2nd – Charles Kanaskie	Betty Weller
3rd – Ray Shaffer	Hub Glenn
Residential Backyard Gardens:	Honorable Mentions:
1st – Gayle Kramer	Tina Williams
2nd – Barb and Steve Toroney	Darlene Bainbridge
3rd – Sandy Hingsman	Larry and Vanessa Wyatt
Junior Gardener (one entry):	Tanya Brewer
1st – Madisyn Williams	



Welcome, Rachael!

Rachael Giambone is the newest face at the Foundation office, joining the staff in August 2015 as the grants & projects assistant. After close to 15 years in the financial industry, Rachael desired to pursue a career more aligned with her passions — health, nutrition and serving others in the community, finding a perfect fit with the Foundation.

“I’m most looking forward to building relationships with the different organizations we serve,” Rachael said. “My position allows me to work with grantees to promote health and wellness in the community.”

For Rachael, healthy living has always been a priority, flourishing during her time at Pennsylvania State University where she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in hotel, restaurant and institutional management in 1999.

“I wanted to lead a healthy lifestyle for myself because I feel it’s important to keep your body healthy and to stay in shape,” Rachael said.

To support her own health and wellness, Rachael walks and jogs at Manderach Memorial Park in addition to eating healthy. She also exercises at home with her vast collection of workout DVDs and enjoys an indoor cycling class when she can.

Rachael enjoys spending time with her family and friends, going to the movies, reading, and cooking for others. She also volunteers with organizations such as Project HEARTH, Open Door Ministries and Daily Bread Pantry where she enjoys helping others and meeting new people in the process.

Rachael believes healthy living starts with eating right.

“Cut down on processed foods and eat as naturally as possible,” Rachael said. “What you put into your body is really important.”



school district happenings

Boyertown Area School District (BASD)

BASD promotes and supports health awareness and individual responsibility for a healthy lifestyle to all students, staff and community. [Get on Track with Your Health.](#)

2015-16 District-Wide Health & Wellness Happenings:

- **Cub STEALTH Summer Workshop:**
The Cub STEALTH Summer Workshop is offered to all district students entering grades 3-7 at no charge. Students have



the opportunity to participate in various fitness activities and learn about healthy diet by making their own nutritious snacks.

- **Junior High to the Y:** On Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the school year, free bus transportation will be provided to 7th, 8th and 9th grade BASD students to the Boyertown YMCA. Programs such as team and individual sports, fitness and wellness classes, and electronic and board games will be offered.
- **Climbing to New Heights:**
To reinforce the brain-body connection, BASD's Junior High West added traverse climbing to their curriculum as a mode to increase fitness and support physical, mental, social and emotional growth of each student. The school's gym is now home to a traverse wall that students will be able to utilize during their physical education classes.

- **Elementary Student Assistance Program Pilot:** The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a process for identifying and helping students who are experiencing behavior or other difficulties posing barriers to their learning and success in school. Recognizing the value of earlier intervention, BASD plans to pilot an elementary SAP program at Gilbertsville Elementary School by providing SAP training for several faculty members to form the SAP team as it already has established programs at the junior high and high school levels.



Owen J. Roberts School District (OJR)

OJR developed an active wellness council in 2004, and a district-wide wellness campaign, [Fit for Life](#), in 2006. [Fit for Life](#) projects encourage positive lifestyle adoption for students, staff, and community.

2015-16 District-Wide Health & Wellness Happenings:

Worksite Wellness: The District installed some active desk equipment for office staff such as standing desks that can alternate and be adjusted throughout the day. These desks include an app which allow staff members to set personal goals for themselves. It also placed 20 exercise ball chairs in seven different schools and two office buildings.

Run 101 Color Run: A fun, 5K color run to be hosted by the District and open to the community on Saturday, November 7th.

To prepare for this event, the elementary schools will offer [Run 101](#) conditioning clubs, containing approximately 30 students per building. This will be a free after-school activity similar to Girls on the Run, but open to all elementary school students. The goal of these clubs is for students to learn how to run and build endurance in order to participate in a 5k event but also to build a sense of community.

Healthy Lifestyles Program: Designed at the high school level, this program exposes students to life-long methods to allow

them to remain active such as utilizing kinesthetic teaching, providing hands-on nutrition classes, engaging students with a positive active living example and more.

A part of this program is an annual [Resiliency/Challenge Day](#). This event demonstrates the possibility of love and connection through the celebration of diversity, truth and full expression.

Farm Day: A PA-acclaimed "day at the farm" like event for kindergarten students. The goal is for students to learn where their food comes from and the process from soil to plate.

School Gardens: An opportunity the District provides that gives students in grades K-8 a chance to grow their own veggies, herbs, etc. and get a hands-on learning experience in gardening and eating fresher, home-grown foods.



school district happenings

Pottstown School District (PSD)

PSD is proud to offer special programs this academic school year that allow its students to enjoy the benefits of healthy, active living.

2015-16 District-Wide Health & Wellness Happenings:

Girls on the Run: This is a 12-week program that runs in the spring semester. Last year, more than 60 girls in grades 3-6 participated. Lessons included peer pressure, healthy eating, cooperation, positive self talk, positive attitude, healthy body image, etc. This year's program will continue to build on last season's successes.

Kids in the Kitchen: A program that teaches students and parents how to cook and eat healthy foods on a budget! Every Thursday for six weeks, the students and their guardians were invited to participate in an educational evening of fun, food and facts about nutrition at Barth and Franklin Elementary. This program was instructed by Karen Dilliplane, a Barth school nurse.



Before/After School Fitness, K-6: In the mornings, students and teachers watch fun exercise videos from Adventure to Fitness to get the kids up and moving for the first 10 minutes of school. Additionally, 5th and 6th grade students participate in a 40-minute physical activity class before school to get them energized and ready for a day of learning. Every Tuesday and Thursday after school, 12 classes in all elementary school gymnasiums participate in a variety of games, work on team building activities and learn how to make healthier lifestyle decisions.

The Walking Classroom: Two 5th grade classrooms use The Walking Classroom three times per week. For this program, each student will walk a mile each time around the track while listening to an academic lesson on a podcast.

Stability Balls: Stability ball-chairs are in place in a variety of classrooms throughout the district.

Heart Rate Monitors: The PE department uses heart rate monitors at the middle school and high school. This gives students and staff immediate feedback of the level of intensity that each student is performing. Students can then see what activity level is needed to get them into the fitness zone that is appropriate for their age in order to achieve cardiovascular fitness.



Thank You, Jim!

In June 2015, the Foundation recognized Board Member James R. Bush who retired after nine years of service. Bush has been on the Board since November 2006 and sat on the Finance, Marketing/Communications and Facilities committees during his terms.

A highlight of his time on the Board was helping the community to embrace healthier living, according to Bush.

"The people we are able to help with the funding we provide our grantees is the most rewarding part of serving on the Board," Bush said. "They are then able to provide healthy programs for their participants."

To support his own health and wellness, Bush makes time for regular exercise and ensures he is eating right after a health scare in 2003 motivated him to change his lifestyle.

"Never feel that you are invincible," Bush said. "See your doctor for periodic physicals, watch your diet and exercise as often as possible even if it's only for 30 minutes. Also, reference the [Mission Healthy Living website](#) for great healthy living information."

Bush appreciated the opportunity to serve on the Board and expressed his thanks to his fellow Board members as well as the Foundation staff as a whole.

"When I came on the Board, I was fortunate to serve with many of the original Board members and with them as mentors, I felt very comfortable as a new Board member," Bush said. "The work of the Foundation is very important to the communities it serves, and I wish the current and future Boards and staff members the best."

Foundations for Life

Seeking a healthy balance

[Foundations for Life](#) is the blog of the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation. Follow along as members of our team discuss all things health and wellness as it relates to their day-to-day lives! They'll talk healthy living, personal experiences, family life, exercise, nutrition and so much more, providing fresh perspectives and a wide array of topics for your reading pleasure each week. Share, comment and join the conversation!

Explore the new and improved Mission Healthy Living!



1 Don't miss a thing in the world of Mission Healthy Living (MHL) thanks to our new centralized dashboard!

2 Our "Healthy Hub" section features original MHL articles on all things health and wellness.

3 Check out our "Events" calendar and find fun health and wellness activities in your area!

4 Connect with us! Follow, like and share MHL on Facebook!

5 Learn about current health and fitness subjects with MHL's eBook series!

6 Discover delicious and healthy recipes! Have a favorite dish that's always a hit? Become a contributor and add your own recipe to the mix!

7 Follow along with our "Foundations for Life" staff blog and engage with your favorite author on a variety of topics!

8 Lace up your sneakers and get moving with our "Have Fun, Be Active" activity guide.

9 Stay up-to-date with *The Mercury's* "Fit for Life" initiative and local happenings.

10 Look here for regular updates on current health and nutrition-related news and trends

11 Interact with MHL via mobile device, tablet or desktop!



Missed the 2015 Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds Institute? Take a look at how administrators, teachers, and educators got in on the action in the pursuit of health and wellness both in-and-out of the classroom!



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