



# Pottstown Play Streets

Evaluation Report  
Fall 2024



Report prepared by Laura Lessard, PhD, MPH and Kristin Kelly, MA

# Overview

Play Streets is a summer outdoor program which temporarily closes a neighborhood block to traffic and provides play equipment to **create safe, fun, and healthy spaces for children, families and neighborhoods** to connect and play right outside their doors. Pottstown Play Streets aims to increase physical activity opportunities and promote community cohesion for children and families.

The Pottstown Parks and Recreation Department **provides equipment for activities** including connect four, jump rope, sidewalk chalk, cornhole, life-size jenga, bean bag toss, hula hoops, footballs, kickballs, basketballs, and soccer balls. Community organizations provide outreach and offer individual programs and activities.



## Evaluation Approach

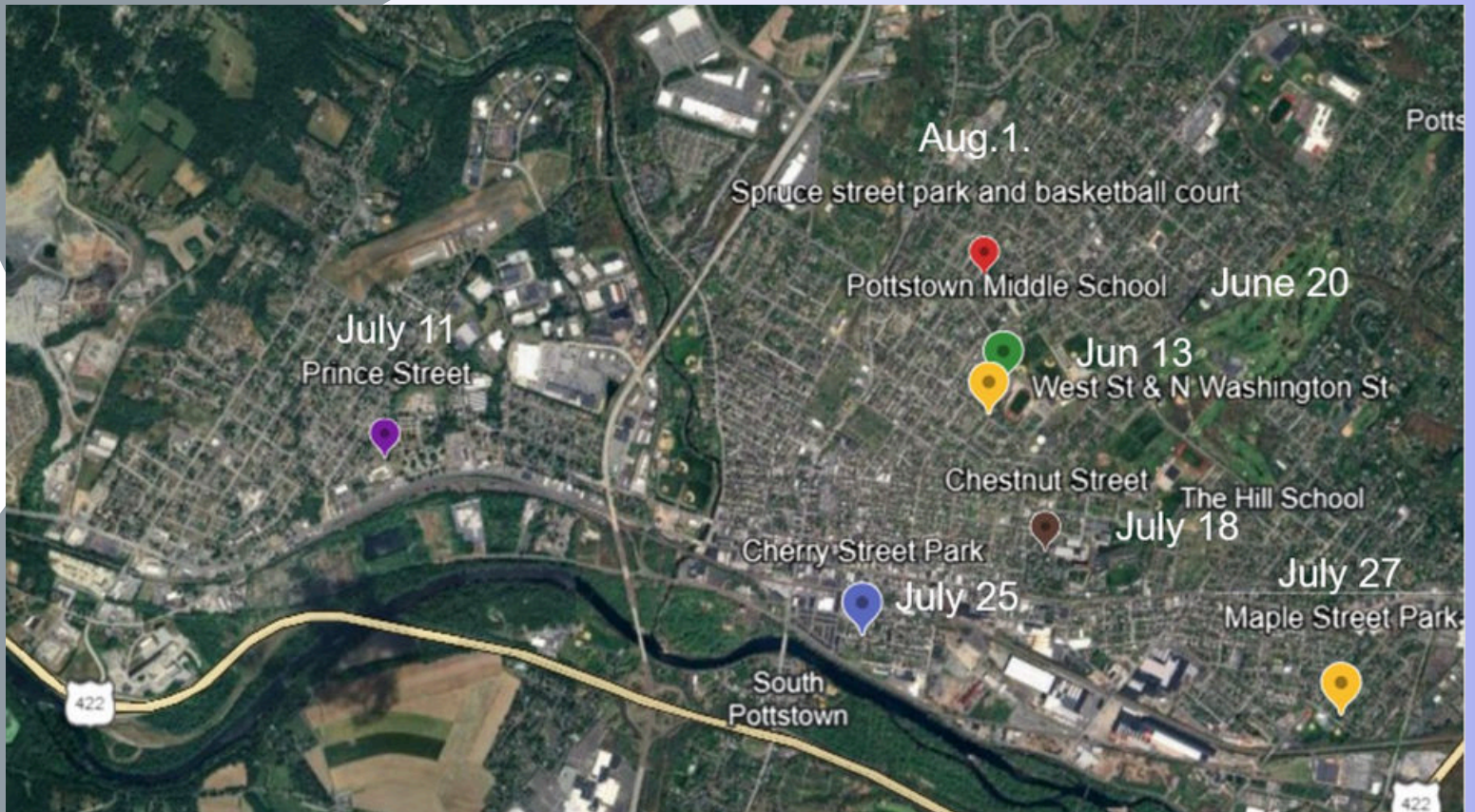
To continue to learn about how to improve Play Streets in the future, the Coalition partners with evaluators from the University of Delaware. The evaluation approach is designed to capture both **stories of impact and also opportunities to learn and improve**. For example, at each event, volunteers count participants and record their thoughts about successes and challenges.

Additional information was gathered from program stakeholders during informal discussions and a debrief meeting in September 2024. This evaluation report summarizes what was learned through those processes.

# Locations

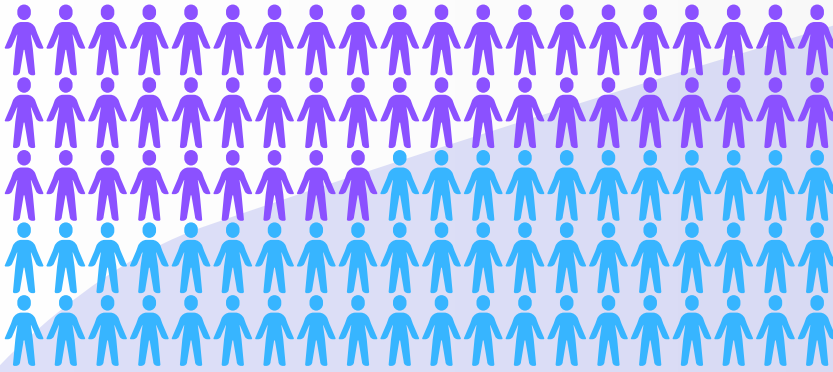
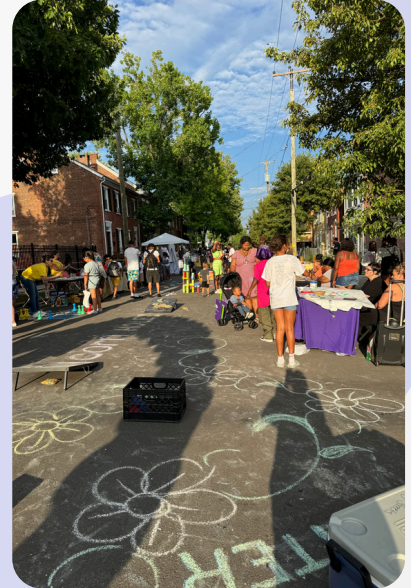
Seven Play Streets events were planned across Pottstown. Locations and Census tract information is provided in the map below.

- 1 Washington West Street Park, June 13 (2089.06)
- 2 Middle School Field / Franklin Street, June 20 (2089.06)
- 3 Maple Street Park, June 27 (2088.02)
- 4 Cherry Street Park, August 3 (2088.01)
- 5 Barth Elementary School field, July 11 (2090.00)
- 6 Chestnut Street Park, July 18 (2089.03)
- 7 Spruce Street Park, August 1 (2089.06)



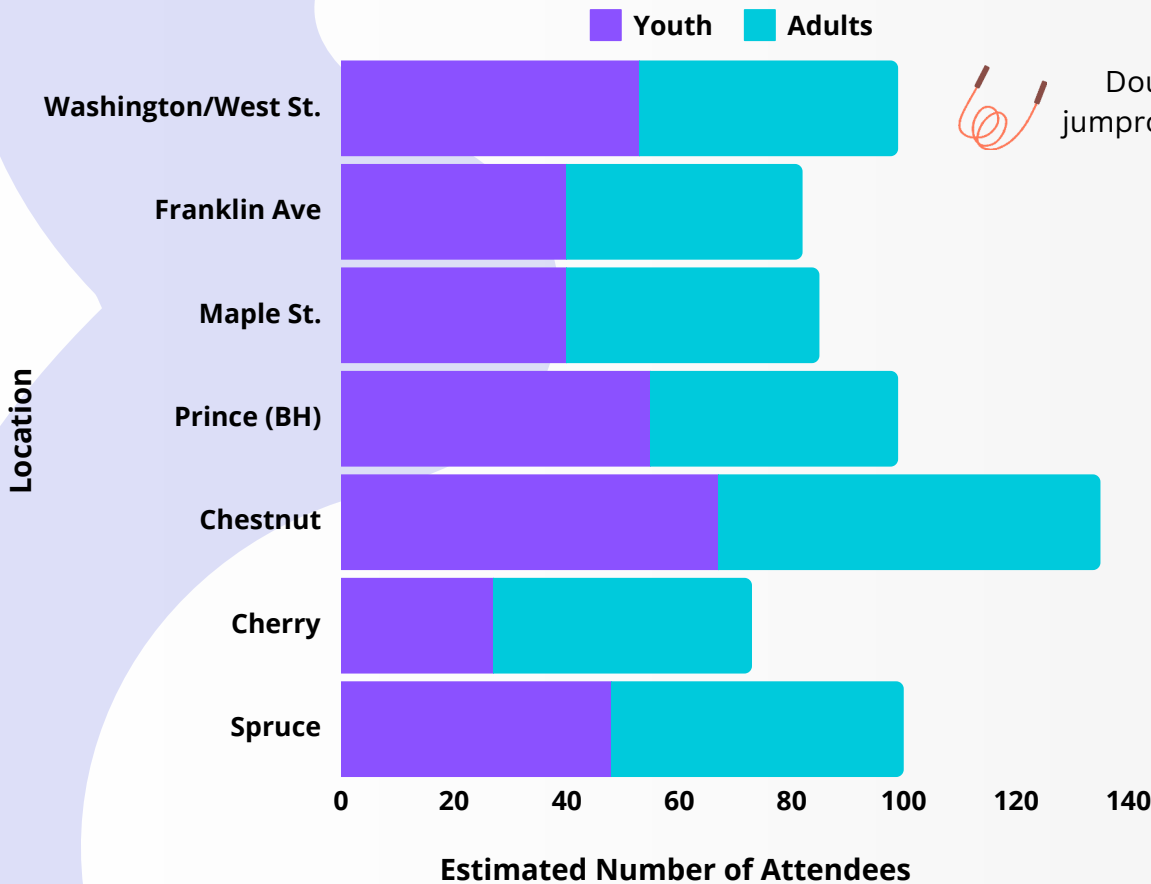
# Reach

During the summer of 2024, Pottstown Play Streets drew over 673 neighbors across seven events. About half of the attendees were children and teens.



49% Children and Teens 51% Adults

## In total, 673 people attended Pottstown Play Streets 2024



Double dutch and jumprope were a big hit



Sunny weather for all events

# Impact of Play Streets



Impact on Children  
& Families



Impact on  
Community  
Organizations

Play Streets promotes **safe and fun recreational activities** in Pottstown, reducing access gaps to social resources like **food, housing, benefit navigation, and healthcare**. These events enhance community and youth engagement, foster social cohesion, and improve interactions with community agencies, ultimately aiming to boost overall community health and wellness.

Pottstown Play Streets **fosters community connections** beyond benefiting children and families. Managed by the Pottstown Parks and Recreation Department, it collaborates with the Pottstown Play Streets Coalition, which includes local businesses, organizations, and funders, to plan, implement, and evaluate the program each year.

## What's New in 2024?

- Beautiful weather for all events supported full program implementation.
- Improved paperwork and event set-up processes contributed to better communication and more efficient events.
- Increased opportunities for partner participation and evaluation, which promotes inclusivity and ease of experience for new and existing partners.
- New connections with organizations serving individuals with disabilities to improve access and inclusion across events.
- More than a dozen community partners have become multi-year partners with Play Streets, plus a dozen new partners joined this year.

# Programs & Activities

Pottstown Play Streets Coalition members include non-profits, healthcare providers, youth-serving organizations, social services, schools, and religious organizations coordinated to provide outreach, programs, and activities at one or more Play Streets events. The full list of coalition members can be found on page \_.

While every coalition member provided activities for community members, some activity highlights in 2024 included:

- **Pottstown Parks and Recreation** supplied the free play equipment for each event as well as free t-shirts and water.
- **Pottstown Children's Discovery Center** provided mystery STEM boxes and books for children.
- **Mother Goose Read to Me** provided free books for children.
- **Pottstown Community Arts** provided art activities, including bubble wands and sidewalk chalk.
- **Greater Pottstown Tennis & Learning** offered an introduction to tennis with fun games.
- **Tower Health** provided educational materials for children focused on health.
- **YWCA** supplied additional free play equipment, including double dutch, giant jenga, human ring toss, a family obstacle course, and four square.
- **Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities** provided information on food insecurity and engaged community members in an interactive healthy food game.
- **Family Services of Montgomery County** supplied outdoor games and activities for families as well as outreach for their programs.



- **Habitat for Humanity of Montgomery and Delaware Counties** had conversations with community members about neighborhood needs and housing repairs, with the goal of helping homeowners in Pottstown get their home repairs done.
- **Trellis for Tomorrow** offered games, like wiffle ball, and did a produce giveaway.

# Future Directions

## What Went Well

Coalition members celebrated **increased efficiency** as a result of intentional program improvements. Partners noted that reduced paperwork and more accessible, digital processes during this year's program contributed to **smooth event set-up** and **reduced administrative burden**.

In 2023, coalition members recognized the need to increase youth engagement at events. Both event attendance and partner feedback confirmed **increased youth participation** in 2024.



Overall, Play Streets also reached a larger audience in 2024, reflecting **increased community awareness** of the event and program expansion in 2024. Play Streets 2024 included a new program site on Spruce Street, as well as a dozen new coalition members. In addition to new members, Play Streets has had **excellent partner retention**, with over a dozen coalition members sustained since 2022. Multiyear partnerships and increased event attendance indicate overall satisfaction with the program and prospect for future growth.

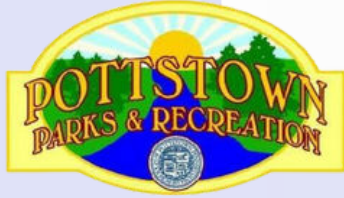
Coalition members consistently spoke highly of how Play Streets created a sense of community and provided an **opportunity to meet and connect** with organizations similar to their own. The **colorful and festive ambience** of events also made a lasting impression on coalition members and event attendees.

## Opportunities for Growth

Coalition members identified several opportunities to expand the reach of Play Streets in the future. In addition to current social media efforts to promote the events, coalition members highlighted the need to **optimize and expand the existing social marketing and communication strategies** for the events, including partners sharing the existing marketing materials across their own platforms. Partners also expressed the importance of maintaining the coalition network throughout the year, in order to **increase community awareness and partnerships**. Finally, coalition members noted the opportunities to expand the Play Streets network at other related community events, like the Harvest Festival and National Night Out.

Please visit [www.pottstownfoundation.org/playstreets](http://www.pottstownfoundation.org/playstreets) for 2025 location announcements and volunteer and organization sign-ups.

# Coalition Members



**Mission statement:** Pottstown Parks and Recreation strives to create, support, and promote diverse recreation opportunities in the Borough, to enhance existing park facilities and promote tourism with new attractions and amenities for residents and visitors of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds. We seek to provide park improvements and recreation programming that promotes healthy lifestyles, benefits the community, connects residents and helps build a better Pottstown.

[www.pottstown.org/135/Parks-Recreation](http://www.pottstown.org/135/Parks-Recreation)

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**Mission statement:** Transform the lives of those we serve through educational, workforce, and cultural experiences and programs that drive success both at the College and beyond.

[www.mc3.edu](http://www.mc3.edu) | 215-641-6551 | [admissions@mc3.edu](mailto:admissions@mc3.edu)

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**Mission statement:** Be ReZilient Healing Through The Arts is an innovative, creative wellness organization that strives to help eradicate the stigma of mental wellness. Through the use of fine art and other mediums, as well as aromatherapy-infused educational programming. We strive to bring self-awareness, help to identify emotional triggers, and provide lifelong strategies to foster a resilient mindset.

<https://berezilient.org>

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**Mission statement:** We are committed to providing life enriching community-based services and resources that will inspire and strengthen individuals and families in areas of health, life skills, education, social development and engagement, and economic empowerment. Our vision is leading people to opportunities essential to achieving full potential.

<https://c1dc-pa.com/>

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**Mission statement:** Our mission is to foster compassion and resilience in people and inspire them to build more sustainable communities.

[trellis4tomorrow.org/en](http://trellis4tomorrow.org/en) | (610) 886-4900

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**Mission statement:** The mission of the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) is to strive to maintain and improve Montgomery County's quality of life by promoting sound planning, strengthening the transportation network, supporting healthy and prosperous communities, and working to create vibrant places and protect natural and historic resources. We will use our expertise to proactively guide strategic and long-range decisions through high-quality and innovative plans, promotion of choices, collaboration, engagement, and balancing competing interests, under the direction of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners.

[www.montgomerycountypa.gov/490/Planning-Commission](http://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/490/Planning-Commission) | 610-278-3722





**Mission statement:** Our ultimate goal is to become a beacon, a ray of hope, that we can be seen as those who show the way.

[www.pottstowncommunityaction.org](http://www.pottstowncommunityaction.org) | [PottstownCommunityAction@gmail.com](mailto:PottstownCommunityAction@gmail.com)



**Mission statement:** Genesis Housing Corporation is dedicated to the development of affordable housing, neighborhood revitalization and the education of consumers on housing and financial issues.

[genesishousing.org](http://genesishousing.org) | 610-275-4357 | [info@genesishousing.org](mailto:info@genesishousing.org)



**Mission statement:** The Foundation enhances the health and wellness of area residents, providing education, funding, and programs that provide equitable access and opportunities for all residents to adopt healthy lifestyles.

[pottstownfoundation.org](http://pottstownfoundation.org) | 610-323-2006



**Mission statement:** ACLAMO is a nonprofit community service organization that provides educational programs, social services, and access to health and wellness programs to Latinos and other community members to empower them to fully achieve their life potential.

[aclamo.org](http://aclamo.org) | 610- 277-2570



**Mission statement:** To be your trusted financial partner as you navigate through life's journey. We will fulfill our mission by educating, empowering, and encouraging our members to realize their potential and achieve their goals.

[www.tcafcu.org/](http://www.tcafcu.org/) | 610-326-3705



**Mission statement:** Our mission is to provide pathways to quality education for children. Our vision is to ensure all children have equitable access to high-quality education led by trusted professionals that engages families and has a measurable impact on lifelong success.

<https://wonderspring.org/> | 610-617-4550



**Mission statement:** The Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities transforms lives by offering basic needs assistance, spiritual guidance, and self-sufficiency programs to improve people's socio-economic stability in the Greater Pottstown Area through cooperation with our faith and community partners.

[www.pottstowncluster.org](http://www.pottstowncluster.org) | 610-970-5995



**Mission statement:** Empowering community members with life skills to grow their own small, organic gardens in their own homes.

<https://hearts-of-humanity-community-development-corporation.ueniweb.com/> | 877-460-4160



**Mission statement:** Family Services is committed to improving the lives of individuals, children, seniors, and families in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania by providing a comprehensive array of human services. We envision a strong, caring community of individuals and families meeting the challenges and opportunities of life.

[fsmontco.org](http://fsmontco.org) | 610-326-1610



**Mission statement:** We bring the community together through art and beauty. Collaborating with professional artists, art students and individuals in and around town, we help beautify public spaces in Pottstown.

[pottstowncommunityarts.org](http://pottstowncommunityarts.org) | 610-574-8016 | [topottstownarts@gmail.com](mailto:topottstownarts@gmail.com)

eliminating racism  
empowering women



Tri-County Area

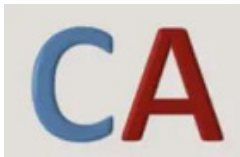
**Mission statement:** YWCA Tri-County Area is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

[www.ywcatricountyarea.org](http://www.ywcatricountyarea.org) | 610-323-1888 | [info@ywcatricountyarea.org](mailto:info@ywcatricountyarea.org)



**Mission statement:** PART aims to provide safe, affordable, and reliable quality transportation service in the Borough of Pottstown and surrounding region.

<https://pottstownarearapidtransit.com/> | 610-326-5413



**Mission statement:** To find isolated people with intellectual disabilities in our community and connect them to community members for advocacy, friendship and to widen their circle of support.

<https://citizenadvocacycc.org/> | 610-933-1299



**Mission statement:** Community First Development Corporation Inc is committed to providing life enriching community-based services and resources that will inspire and strengthen individuals and families in areas of health, life skills, education, social development, and economic empowerment.

<https://c1dc-pa.com/> | 484-949-8473



**Mission statement:** To provide CHIP, Medicaid, and Medicare insurance statewide.

<https://www.jeffersonhealthplans.com/>



Mother Goose Read to Me

**Mission statement:** We are a non-profit with the goal of reaching as many parents as possible to explain the importance of reading to young children as a way to boost their literacy in preparation for school.

<https://www.mothersgoosereadto.me/>



**Mission statement:** It is the mission of Community Health and Dental Care to identify gaps in health services and to ensure access to appropriate levels of care for all people in the service area regardless of their ability to pay.

<https://ch-dc.org/>



**Mission statement:** The mission of Maternity Care Coalition (MCC) is to improve the health and well-being of pregnant women and parenting families, and enhance school readiness for children 0-3.

[www.maternitycarecoalition.org](http://www.maternitycarecoalition.org) | (215) 972- 0700



**Mission statement:** To mentor life skills, healthy behaviors and learning through tennis.

<https://greaterpottstowntennis.org/>



<https://www.hedwighouse.org/>



**Mission statement:** to provide an educational, hands-on, interactive atmosphere promoting healthy living for children, families and schools by stimulating curiosity and motivating learning. All children learn through hands on interactive experiences. These experiences enhance social/emotional growth by exposing children to interactions such as collaboration, exploration and self-control which lead to critical and creative thinking, self-confidence and healthy communication skills.

[www.pottstowndiscoverykids.org/home](http://www.pottstowndiscoverykids.org/home)



**Mission statement:** JW, INC is not just an organization, we are an organism for the community. We feel the heart of the community and people and give what is needed through housing, education, employment, community building, and spirituality as agents of change.

<https://joannewashington.com/who-we-are>



**Mission statement:** The Ray in cooperation with US DOTs Thriving Communities program and other partners is working with communities like Pottstown to build capacity to achieve equitable transportation oriented development goals and success in funding infrastructure projects.

<https://theray.org/>



**Mission statement:** Habitat for Humanity of Montgomery and Delaware Counties brings people together to build homes, communities, and hope.

<https://habitatmontdelco.org/>

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**Mission statement:** STRIVE's mission is to cultivate positive perceptions and provide relatable and diverse mentorship to Pottstown youth to realize their academic and individual aspirations.

<https://striveinitiative.org/>

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**Mission statement:** TOLA offers grief support and education to children, parents, families, and educators in our community.

<https://www.tracesoflove.org/>

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