



# POTTSTOWN AREA HEALTH & WELLNESS FOUNDATION

Community Benefit Report | Winter 2022



## Pottstown Students Are 'Created For Greatness'

*STRIVE mentors and students enjoy time together at Dorney Park last summer.*

When Pottstown School District resumed in-person learning this fall, the STRIVE Initiative was there from day one to ensure that the Created for Greatness school-based mentoring program would help support middle school students to take on the challenges of the year ahead.

STRIVE's coordinated, community-based approach to mentorship pairs volunteer adult mentors with individual Pottstown Middle School students to build the students' academic, behavioral, and social skills. Ultimately those skills translate to success in and outside of the classroom as well as helping young people discover passion and purpose in their lives.

Students commit to the mentorship program one year at a time, and often continue from year to year as they build trusting relationships with their mentors.

"The data shows that those relationships that carry on three or four years really can have significance for

students and their mentors," said David Charles, the STRIVE Initiative's executive director, noting that the benefits of the mentoring relationship go both ways. "Mentors want to stay committed. They want to keep growing those relationships because they learn from those students and feel good about being part of the life of a young person who they can help guide and pour their knowledge into."

While the pandemic created challenges for STRIVE's model of mentoring, which typically involves connecting in person over lunchtime at Pottstown Middle School, mentors found ways to build bridges and even forge new connections that make for a stronger community during remote learning.

"The way we build community is connecting with parents, even during COVID. Our programs are based on human connection and being with each other physically," said Charles. "We had to go to...

*Continued on Page 2*

## A Message from Our President



Dear Foundation friends,

We've emerged from another tough year together, and I believe we've come through as a stronger, more closely knit community. What I see on the horizon for this year is hope—hope that we can put the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic behind us, and hope that Pottstown is emerging as a more prosperous, healthy, and engaged community.

I think this optimism is justified. We've found new ways to look after one another in the past two years. We've listened to community partners and adapted our grantmaking processes to ensure equitable access and impact. And we're building on our investment core competencies and development efforts to encourage Tri-County residents to leave perpetual gifts for future needs of the region.

As we adapt to constantly changing conditions, we also recognize that positive, transformative change has arrived in Pottstown. New opportunities for education and employment are coming to the borough, with renewed support and energy to make fair funding a reality for local schools. Meanwhile, Amtrak's planned service to connect Pottstown with Reading and Philadelphia promises to connect residents with opportunities beyond the borough.

Our priority remains ensuring that all residents can partake of the opportunity we see on the horizon. I believe that greater prosperity will lead to improved health outcomes across the board. As a Foundation, we will continue to listen and learn about the needs of our neighbors, and work closely with our nonprofit partners to ensure that Pottstown's bright future leaves no one behind.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David W. Kraybill".

David W. Kraybill, President

houses of some of the students and parents with masks on. It became more about connecting with people. We would go and sit and be there for 45 minutes just talking about staying connected and keeping up with school online. We just wanted to make sure people had what they needed."

Those relationships between parents and mentors were strengthened in the process, but the return of in-person learning brought back opportunities for mentors and students to reconnect in a more structured way, and participants in the program kicked off the semester with an outing to Dorney Park to encourage the students and build mentor connections. However, one of the most fulfilling parts of the day was seeing students create bonds with one another.

"We had one student who didn't like heights, so he didn't ride the roller coasters. He came because he was invited and he felt welcome. It really opened my mind and my heart. These students in Pottstown, when you get them connected in a relevant scene or place, they will bond and they will join forces and be better together," said Charles. "They were laughing and having fun and by the time we got back they were really close. The opportunity is there."

Strengthening community connection in Pottstown is an important component of the STRIVE Initiative's ultimate purpose of empowering Pottstown youth. It's easy to see how the network of neighbors, teachers, students, adult community members, and local youth that the mentorship program brings together, but STRIVE also hosts community conversations and advocates for individual residents to become agents of change for a more equitable, inclusive Pottstown.



STRIVE's executive director, David Charles, puts an emphasis on building relationships to empower Pottstown's youth.

In a testimony to the strength of those connections, STRIVE received a gift of more than \$17,000 on behalf of former Created for Greatness mentor Jeff Richardson, who died of pancreatic cancer last September and wished to leave a lasting impact on Pottstown students through supporting the work of STRIVE.

"Building meaningful relationships—restoring community." That's STRIVE's motto, and the organization's leadership and volunteers are continually adapting to meet the ever-changing needs of the Pottstown community.

There are several ways to support the work of the STRIVE Initiative, including becoming a mentor, volunteering with STRIVE, or donating to the cause. [Learn more at https://striveinitiative.org/project/created-for-greatness/](https://striveinitiative.org/project/created-for-greatness/).



## TriCounty Health Council Website Offers Wellness Resources

Since 2013, leaders from healthcare institutions have been working behind the scenes under the auspices of the TriCounty Health Council to improve health and healthcare in the Greater Pottstown region. Now, as the public health concerns of our community are more pronounced than ever, [TCHC has launched a website](https://www.tricountyhealthcouncil.org) to help share the initiatives that we've undertaken to keep our community informed.

From virtual town halls to public health campaigns regarding preventive care and mental health, the TCHC website offers a wealth of information and insight for improving the lives of residents through better care.

TCHC partners include Community Health & Dental Care, Creative Health Services, TriCounty Community Network, Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation, and Pottstown Hospital--Tower Health. Learn more at [tricountyhealthcouncil.org](https://www.tricountyhealthcouncil.org).



## BUILD YOUR OWN ENDOWMENT TO CARE FOR PEOPLE AND CAUSES IN OUR REGION.

Consider making a gift through your will or trust.

### EASY

All it takes is a simple addition to your existing documents. We can provide you sample language to give to your attorney.

### CHANGEABLE

You can easily alter or revoke your gift down the road if needed.

### FLEXIBLE

Give a specific asset or a percentage of your estate. Support a particular program or let your gift go where it's needed most.

### MEMORABLE

If there's a special person you wish to honor, a gift through your will or trust makes a beautiful tribute gift.

### TRANSFORMATIONAL

When you leave us a gift in your will or trust, you build our long-term financial strength, enabling the Foundation to continue to help our community long into the future.

### INTERESTED?

Sheri Waldman, *Philanthropy Coordinator*

**SWALDMAN@POTTSTOWNFOUNDATION.ORG • 610-323-2006**

More simple ways to make your mark on the future:

- » Make a gift through your retirement plan
- » Give life insurance you no longer need
- » Donate appreciated stock and save on taxes
- » Make a gift that protects your assets

## Four Community Leaders Join PAHWF Board in 2021

The Foundation welcomed four new members to the Board of Directors last year, each of whom bring a wealth of experience and insight to the organization.

Many in Pottstown's healthcare sector will be familiar with John Buckley, who served as President and CEO of Pottstown Healthcare Corporation from 1995 to 2003. In that role, Buckley was responsible for what was then Pottstown Memorial Medical Center as well as a network of primary care practices.

Buckley's healthcare experience also includes administrative roles at Temple University Health System and Geisinger Health System, among many others.



*John Buckley*

"I spent close to 40 years in the management of hospitals," said Buckley. "It's an industry where you can impact the lives of others and really give back to the community, so I've thoroughly enjoyed it for those reasons."

Noting his role in the origins of the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation when it was created from the sale of the hospital back in 2003, Buckley returns with an interest in seeing the Foundation's continued success as it enters its second decade of community grantmaking.

"That decision was probably one of the most significant decisions that I've made in my career," said Buckley. "Now that I'm back in the area I'm just thrilled to become involved in the Foundation to see the reality of how those assets truly are benefiting the community."

Jose Fernandez who currently serves as Vice President, Operations at Savage Services brings a

world of practical perspective with his experience in operations management and logistics.

"What I found appealing about joining the board was seeing how the Foundation is working to improve the local area, not

only through health, but other initiatives as well," said Fernandez. "I hope I can contribute to the cause and help, and I see it as a great learning experience."

Now a resident of Reading, Fernandez grew up in Florida and worked at Savage Services locations across the country before coming to Savage's Pottstown office in 2001.

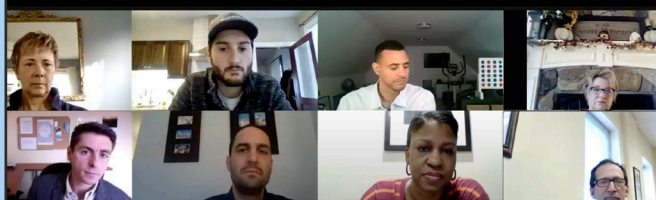
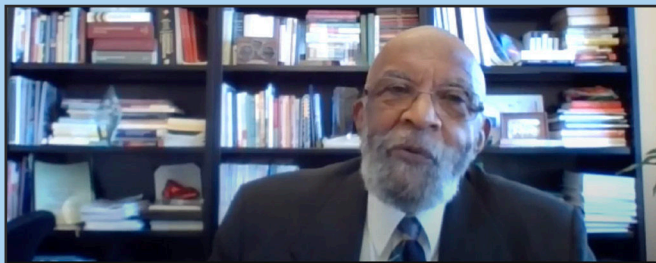


*Jose Fernandez*

*Continued on page 5.*

## In Memoriam

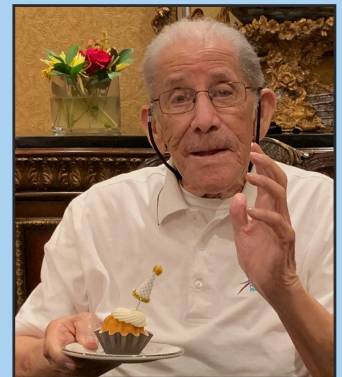
Last year was, in many ways, a year of loss for the Pottstown Community. Among those who passed away in 2021 were former Foundation board members and respected community leaders Jim Corum and John Foster. Both men left behind legacies of service and were dedicated mentors and advisors who served as role models for the next generation of Pottstown community servants.



Foundation staff members had the opportunity to speak with John Foster during a special learning session held in November of 2020.

Part of Mr. Corum's legacy is the success of Greater Pottstown Tennis and Learning, a nonprofit organization that brings tennis instruction to Pottstown youth, and which celebrated his contributions by [naming the tennis courts at Maple Street Park in his honor in 2019.](#)

Likewise, in addition to John Foster's three years on the Foundation's board, he was the founder of the [Bethel and Pottstown Community Toastmasters Club](#), a nonprofit organization that helps members come together to improve their communication, public speaking, and leadership skills.



Jim Corum was well known for his dedication to his many friends in the Pottstown community.

## Board Updates

Fernandez is a founding member of the DEI effort at Savage Services.

"What really resonates with me is for people to have opportunity," said Fernandez. "Both of my parents were born in Cuba and basically fled communism to come to the United States. So that sense of opportunity and freedom has always been something that's been really important to me, and I wanted to make sure that people of all different backgrounds and perspectives have opportunities in our company."

Another familiar face around Pottstown and Montgomery County is Dr. Win Somboonsong, who comes to the Foundation's board with decades of experience establishing and growing local businesses to the benefit of communities across the area.

Somboonsong was born in Thailand and came to the United States to attend college. A structural engineer by training, Somboonsong served six years in the United States Navy, retiring as a lieutenant before establishing a successful chain of restaurants across Montgomery County, including The Blue Elephant, located on Pottstown's High Street.



*Win Somboonsong*

"I find that my engineering degree has really prepared me for the restaurant business," said Somboonsong. "I use a lot of my engineering knowledge to solve problems and create structures that I can repeat again and again. It's just like what engineers do: make it simple, repeatable, and easy for people to follow."

Somboonsong is optimistic about the prospects for Pottstown, and

sees a bright future for a town with so many assets and areas for investment.

"It has everything. It has the river, it has easy access to main highways, it has a beautiful downtown," said Somboonsong. "We know from experience that when we put restaurants in a downtown area, other restaurants and businesses follow suit. Towns can come back so fast when you give people reasons to visit these downtown areas."

Win Signature Restaurants, which Somboonsong operates in partnership with his wife, Sutida, and his daughter, Pearl, currently operates five restaurants across the area, with a sixth restaurant to open soon.

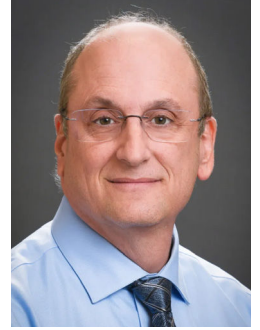
Back for a second stint on the Foundation's Board of Directors, Dr. William Taddonio, a family medicine provider based at Douglassville's Berks Family Care for over three decades, adds his experience in patient care to the Foundation's perspective. A testament to the care he has for his patients, Taddonio was named Family Physician of the Year in 2019 by Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians in Harrisburg. Taddonio has deep ties across the

Foundation's service area, with experience as the director of the Southeastern Veterans Center in Spring City and school physician in Pottsgrove School District.

"I was so happy to be asked back on the Foundation's board from the standpoint of being able to bring that kind of perspective to the board from caring for all ages--from veterans to school aged kids," said Taddonio. "So I'm really glad to be back on the board and was honored to be asked back."

Taddonio also shares a passion for our local trails and park resources that make the Pottstown area a healthy environment for local residents and a destination for outdoor pursuits.

"One of the things that gives me great pleasure is hiking and bike riding," said Taddonio. "Part of sitting on the board is being able to be a part of the grants regarding those outdoor activities for better health."



*William Taddonio*



**POTTSTOWN AREA**  
*Outdoors*

A wealth of research shows that spending time outside is good for your mental and physical health, and it's particularly good for your well-being in stressful times. Visit [pottstownfoundation.org/outdoors](https://pottstownfoundation.org/outdoors) for information on local resources, including an outdoor activity finder, which shows parks, open spaces, and active organizations near you.





## 2021 Home Garden Contest



The annual gardens banquet was a true community event as gardeners from all walks of life came together to recognize the Pottstown and Boyertown boroughs' best.

As the effects of the pandemic began to recede, the Pottstown and Boyertown gardening community took the opportunity to get back together in person for the annual awards luncheon at Sunnybrook Social House.

Congratulations to all the 2021 winners and participants! We look forward to kicking off this year's contest soon! Read more at the contest website, [homegardencontest.com](http://homegardencontest.com).



Category winners received hand painted flagstones at the gardens banquet in addition to cash prizes and recognition from fellow gardeners.

### POTTSTOWN

#### YOUNG GARDENER

- 3rd Elly Haigh
- 2nd Malcolm Haigh
- 1st Brooke Haigh

#### PLEASANT PORCH

- HM Angela Kearney
- 3rd Dave Hanlon
- 2nd Lisa Ridley
- 1st Sue Krause

#### VEGETABLE GARDEN

- 3rd Barb Rapchinski
- 2nd Joseph Lee
- 1st Joe Sweeney

#### OUTDOOR OASIS

- HM Nancy Bowman
- 3rd Tom & Gail Carroll
- 2nd Rose West
- 1st Heather Kurtz

#### GENERAL GARDEN

- HM Madison Dutko
- 3rd Joanne Taylor
- 2nd Shirley Grosser
- 1st Stephanie Beener

#### PEOPLE'S CHOICE

- Tom & Mai Lein Zaborski

#### BEST BLOCK

- West 5th Street

### BOYERTOWN

#### PLEASANT PORCH

- 3rd Diane Weller
- 2nd Arden Pengelly
- 1st Joseph Powers

#### VEGETABLE GARDEN

- HM Nadine Hoffman
- 3rd Kim Dougherty
- 2nd Joanne Lorah
- 1st Hunter Yoder

#### OUTDOOR OASIS

- HM Wendy & Marlin Eshbach
- 3rd Sheri Miller
- 2nd Sally Schaeffer
- 1st Angela Motter

#### GENERAL GARDEN

- 3rd Amy Arcuri
- 2nd Erma Reidenauer
- 1st Karrie Miller



## Join us for the 2022 Home Garden Contest!

If you're interested in being more active, beautifying your community, and possibly winning a little extra cash, [sign up!](#) The free Home Garden contest is open to **residents of the Boyertown and Pottstown boroughs**.

April 29: Registration Opens

June 24: Registration Closes

July 8-10: Garden Judging

September 25: Awards Luncheon

# Spring 2021 Grant Round

Twice a year, the Foundation seeks grant proposals that are consistent with our identified mission of improving health outcomes in the Pottstown region. The Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation awarded \$1,451,405 to 33 nonprofits, schools, and municipalities during the spring 2021 grant round. Grants were divided among five program areas: Healthy Behaviors-Schools, Healthy Behaviors-Parks, Healthy Behaviors-Networks, Physical and Emotional Health, and Strengthening Nonprofits. The spring 2021 grant round marked the end of our traditional grantmaking categories. The changes to our grantmaking framework are reflected on the next page, which details the fall 2021 grant round.

**Priority 1A: Healthy Behaviors—Schools**  
\$287,655 was awarded to fund seven projects intended to improve educational opportunities for students in public and private learning institutions.

## **Foundation For Boyertown Education**

Building Sustainability

## **Foundation for Pottstown Education**

General Operating Support

## **Holy Cross Regional Catholic School**

Buddy Benches for Holy Cross Regional Catholic School

## **Pottstown School District**

PTICC Coordinator and Organizational Learning

## **Pottstown School District**

Health & Wellness Grant Proposal

## **Spring-Ford Area School District**

Wellness Matters 2021-22

## **St. Aloysius Parish School**

St. Aloysius Spring 2021

**Priority 1B: Healthy Behaviors—Parks**  
\$45,400 was awarded to fund two projects with the aim of improving parks, programming, and the built environment to increase access to physical activity.

## **East Coventry Township Parks and Recreation**

Towpath Park Phase I Engineering

## **North Coventry Township**

Riverside Park Pickleball Courts

**Priority 1C-Healthy Behaviors—Networks**  
\$634,850 was awarded to fund 16 projects. These projects are intended to create and promote social networks involving healthy living.

## **Accion Comunal Latinoamericana de Montgomery County**

Pottstown Community Health Connections Program

## **Boyertown Area Multi-Service**

Ricketts Center

## **Camp Rainbow**

Life Skills Development

## **Chester County Food Bank**

Greater Pottstown Area Food Security Initiatives

## **Expressive Therapy Concepts**

Smashville Badminton: Kids and Adult Fitness Program

## **Greater Pottstown Tennis And Learning Association**

Game, Set, Advantage

## **Julian Dorsey Foundation**

Infrastructure Growth of Marketing, Leadership, and Development

## **Meals On Wheels Of Chester County**

Nutritious meals for northern section of Chester County

## **Michaels Community Services Corporation**

Outdoor Classroom

## **Mitzvah Circle Foundation**

Critical Needs for Healthy Families, Diaper Bank, and Period Supplies

## **Pottstown Children's Discovery Center**

Pottstown Children's Discovery Center Comes to Life

## **Project Purpose**

General Operating

## **Save Alliance Foundation d.b.a. GreenAllies**

The Community Empowerment Project: Building Social Capital through Volunteerism

## **Steel River Playhouse**

Healing on High Street

## **STRIVE Initiative**

Sustainability in Action Program

## **The Pennsylvania State University**

Promoting Physical Activity among Preschool Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Expanding the Capacity of Teachers and Caregivers to Engage Children in Active Play

## **Priority 2-Health Access**

\$46,000 was awarded for three projects offering learning opportunities for physical and emotional health.

## **Creative Health Services**

COVID Relief & Recovery Fund

## **Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County**

Healthy Start and Access to Benefits for Underserved Families in Pottstown

## **Tower Health Medical Group**

Pottstown Family Practice: COVID Relief & Recovery Fund

## **Priority 3-Strengthening Nonprofits**

\$437,500 awarded for five projects offering learning opportunities & strategic planning to strengthen nonprofits.

## **TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation**

Leadership Program

## **TriCounty Community Network**

Racial Equity Learning Community

## **TriCounty Community Network**

Community Collaborative

## **TriCounty Community Network**

Love Your Block

## **United Way of Boyertown Area**

Matching Grant with the United Way of Boyertown Area

# Fall 2021 Grant Round:

The Fall 2021 grant round marked the implementation of the [Foundation's new Results Framework](#). In implementing the framework, our goal is to hold true to our over arching funding principle--to foster a culture of transparency, equity, and learning in the community and with our partners. During the fall 2021 grant round, Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation awarded \$1,076,042 among 34 programs. Grants are categorized under two core pillars (Developing Youth Potential and Promoting Equitable Health & Wellness) and divided among a total of six program areas.

**Developing Youth Potential: Early Childhood Development**  
\$92,330 was awarded to fund three projects.

## **Carson Valley Children's Aid**

Women's Voices Healthy Choices

## **Family Services of Montgomery County**

Positive Parenting Program Initiative

## **Maternity Care Coalition**

Early Head Start (EHS) program in Pottstown

**Developing Youth Potential—School Programs (K-12)**  
\$12,000 was awarded to fund one project.

## **Traces Of Love Association**

Advancing Grief Support and Education

**Developing Youth Potential—Youth Preparedness**  
\$135,000 was awarded to fund four projects.

## **Pottstown Branch- Philadelphia Freedom Valley YMCA**

Dragonfly Forest Camperships: Structured Play, Socioemotional Learning & Disability Rights

## **Trellis For Tomorrow**

Building a Healthier Future through Youth and Food

## **TriCounty Community Network Inc**

C2 & Launching Leaders

## **TriCounty Community Network Inc**

C2 & Launching Leaders- Capacity Building

**Equitable Health & Wellness—Built Environment**  
\$356,212 was awarded to fund seven projects.

## **Borough of Pottstown**

Washington/West Street Park Improvements Project

## **Boyertown Area Multi-Service, Inc**

Interior and Exterior Basketball Court Improvement Plan

## **Boyertown Midget Baseball League, Inc**

Mackey Field at Boyertown Community Park

## **Lower Pottsgrove Township**

Sanatoga Park Playground and Signage Project

## **Pottstown Athletic Club**

Fitness USA, Continues.

## **Schuylkill River Greenway Association**

Pottstown Outdoor Recreation Hub

## **TriCounty Active Adult Center**

Prime Time Health for Older Adults

**Equitable Health & Wellness—Health Access & Delivery**  
\$67,500 was awarded to fund four projects.

## **Camphill Village Kimberton Hills**

Village Support Fund (General Operation Costs)

## **Child Advocacy Center Of Montgomery County (Mission Kids)**

Improving Access to Trauma-Informed Services

## **Health Care Access**

Health Programs

## **Visiting Nurse Association Community Services, Inc. (VNA)**

Personal Navigator Program: Improved Health Outcomes through Benefit Access

**Equitable Health & Wellness—Health Equity**  
\$413,000 was awarded for 15 projects.

## **Centro Cultural Latinos Unidos Inc**

Five Points To Achieve a Healthy Latino Lifestyle II

## **Developmental Enterprises Corp./Pottstown Training Center**

Healthy Eating, Healthy Living

## **Laurel House**

Clinical Counseling Services for Victims of Domestic Abuse

## **Mental Health Partnerships**

Project Restore/Renew

## **New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Church**

NHELC Loaves and Fishes & Garden of Hope

## **Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities**

Healthy Living through Accessible Services

## **Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities**

DEI in our Human Resources

## **Pottstown FARM**

Pottstown FARM

## **Preservation Pottstown Inc**

Pottstown Community Gardens

## **Royersford Outreach, Inc**

General Operating Funds for Building and Program

## **The Salvation Army, Pottstown**

Job Readiness training and counseling

## **Save Our Land Save Our Towns Enterprises Inc**

Growing and conserving Pottstown's street trees

## **The Lending Helping Hands Services**

The nurturing food services

## **TriCounty Community Network Inc**

MAHN 2022 Strategic Plan

## **Variety-Children's Charity of the Delaware Valley**

MAHN 2022 Strategic Plan

## [Key Grant Cycle Dates: Spring 2022](#)

- Application Due: April 1, 2022
- Final Approval and Declination Notifications: Week of May 31, 2022

- Signed Grant Agreement Due: June 16, 2022
- Grant Term Start Date: July 1, 2022
- Grant Term End Date: June 30, 2023

Please direct any inquiries, suggestions, or news items to [John Robertson](#), communications specialist.  
Copyright©2022 Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation, 152 E. High St., Pottstown, PA 19464.