



## Community Benefit Report | Summer 2024



### ***Supporting the New Community Foundation - Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation***

Carl and Sylvia Landis were excited to be the first donor-advised fund at the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation as it became a “Community Foundation” on July 1, 2023.

While staying true to its core mission of health and wellness and its support of local charities, the Foundation can now further broaden the reach beyond just health and wellness purposes to other causes or passions that matter to people within our community. “The Foundation’s change in status from a private foundation to a public foundation will allow even more opportunities for the community,” noted Carl.

Carl and Sylvia have a hometown love story of their own, meeting in Pottstown in 1970 when they were both working as first-year teachers at Pottstown’s Northern Junior High School. Their story continued as they married a few years later, and moved down the street to North Coventry where they raised two sons, Paul and John.

[PRESIDENT’S LETTER](#) | [IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD](#) | [HBHM EMPLOYEE PROFILE/HOME GARDEN](#) | [GRANT UPDATES](#)

Carl’s path from teaching and graduate school led him next to become an engineering manager for a small company. But his strong, entrepreneurial spirit motivated him to start his own business, which was the step that laid the foundation for his robust and life-long work in the nonprofit sector. Sylvia, a retired teacher with a big heart, dedicates much of her time to causes near and dear to her, with both of their passions often aligning for greater good.

Carl and Sylvia Landis both give back to our community through their service, combination of skillsets, connections, and human interest.

In 1991, Carl was one of the original founders of the Pottstown SCORE Chapters, and Sylvia followed upon her retirement as a member. Together Carl and Sylvia contributed almost forty years of mentoring small businesses in the Pottstown community. Carl also served on Boards of the Visiting Nurses Association of Pottstown, Schuylkill River Greenway Association, Green Valleys Watershed Association, and the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation (PAHWF) where he serves as Chair of the PAHWF Development Committee.

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## A Message from Our President

Dear friends,

Recent months have shown the value of becoming a community foundation. Allowing our community to expand its focus beyond health and wellness is providing more opportunities for individuals to make an impact, as we reimagine what is possible for the future of Pottstown and the Tri-County Region.

### Honoring the ultimate service to community:

A new endowment fund was created at the PAHWF from the Estate of an Anonymous Vietnam Veteran – Member of Chapter 565 to create a fund that will provide a long-lasting tribute for our Pottstown Vietnam Veterans. As our veterans age, it is comforting to know there will be a symbolic space maintained in perpetuity at Memorial Park, memorializing those who gave so much.

### Responding to urgent community need:

We are currently working with a local family to help them honor the memory of a loved one through a Behavioral Health/Registered Nurse Student Loan Forgiveness Program in the Boyertown/Tri-County Area. You will be hearing more about this new fund in the coming weeks and the incredible life of a faithful community servant, and beloved nurse, wife, mother.

### Impact by the next generation:

Lilly and Natalie, two inspiring 11-year-old girls from Gilbertsville, have a love for hockey. When they learned their community hockey rink was in jeopardy of being removed they reached out to their township officials to share their concerns. Their hard work and determination resulted in a generous \$200,000 donation from the Philadelphia Flyers Charities to transform the current hockey rink into a state-of-the-art facility at New Hanover Community Park. The Foundation is honored to work with the girls, the Flyers Charities and New Hanover Township to make this gift a reality.

The Foundation continues to support businesses and nonprofits through diverse initiatives and grants. Whether making dreams come true or creating opportunities for community reflection, healing, and enjoyment, the Foundation is nurturing a supportive community, expanding opportunities and improving quality-of-life for all ages and backgrounds.

David W. Kraybill, President

## All Aboard! Pottstown’s Thriving Communities Initiative Moves Full Steam Ahead

As the [Thriving Communities](#) project gains momentum, current goals focus on bringing together stakeholders. This transit-oriented development, initiated by the proposed reactivation of the [Philadelphia to Reading passenger rail line](#), is in its learning stage. The Foundation is working to bring awareness of the opportunities this reactivation will allow and to acquire a knowledge base of best practices.

Recent progress included a local visit from the Department of Transportation to share more about the proposed transportation system, develop action items, and provide tours. The Foundation has been concentrating on recruiting attendees for the national [Mpack Transit + Community Conference](#) being held in Philadelphia from October 20-23 this year.

PAHWF’s senior program officer, [Howard Brown](#), is part of the Mpack national steering committee. Brown was chosen to be featured in their blog and to contribute an article. His enthusiasm is contagious as he leads the effort to increase interest.

The learning cohort will focus on equitable transit-oriented development and how that can be leveraged to benefit our Pottstown community. Our ultimate goal is to build opportunities and infrastructure for education, workforce development, revitalization, sustainability, and, of course, transportation. Through collaboration, we combine diverse strengths to maximize resources and impact.



*Department of Transportation visits Pottstown, June 2024*

Those who wish to attend the Mpack conference are invited to apply for a scholarship. “Participants will engage as a community in defining what is equitable. That’s empowering,” notes Brown. There is a lot of work to be done, which includes ensuring we mitigate any displacement issues that may result. The more voices involved, the more proactive the Foundation can be in predicting any challenges and working toward solutions.

The Foundation is working with a team of consultants to help pursue the extensive grants available nationwide. This will strengthen our ability to obtain funding without burdening our current resources. The project completion date is predicted to be about three to five years from now.

“Our current goal is to continue increasing awareness of this rail project. Those interested are encouraged to contribute by helping create the infrastructure for tasks ahead. We are looking for motivated community members who are dedicated to joining us at the table in a thoughtful way,” states Brown.

The Foundation continues to accept scholarship applications to attend the Mpack Transit + Community Conference this fall. The scholarship award is prioritized for Pottstown residents who reside in the Pottstown Community Survey area, employees of Pottstown-based microbusinesses, and non-profit staff whose organization meets the budget restrictions. The Foundation’s support includes the conference costs and travel stipend. In return, the recipient enjoys the opportunity to participate in the next steps of this rail reactivation journey.

## Play Streets 2024

The first Pottstown Play Streets was held Thursday, June 13, at Pottstown's Washington/West St. Park.

Play Streets temporarily closes streets to traffic in Pottstown neighborhoods and provides free play games and recreational equipment to create safe, fun, and healthy spaces for children, families, and neighbors to connect and play right outside their doors. The program runs from 5:30 to 7:30 PM on seven select Thursdays throughout the summer.



Play Streets program is led by the Borough of Pottstown's Department of Parks and Recreation. The Pottstown Area

Health & Wellness Foundation, a 501(c)3 community foundation, brought together the resources and partners needed to launch the program in the summer of 2022. 16 partners, including the Borough and the Foundation, eventually joined together and formed the first Pottstown Play Streets Coalition to deliver six events serving 467 audience members. This collaborative effort won the Borough its first ever Excellence in Recreation and Parks Award from the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society in 2023.



2023 Play Streets, June 15 event at Maple Street Park

The partner network expanded to 27 for the 2023 season, but hazardous weather conditions limited partners to five events that served 427 residents. The Borough has continued to support program model improvement by including a rain date in 2023 and expanding to two rain dates in 2024 if two or more cancellations happen. The Foundation continues to support and coordinate the efforts of the Borough and an ever-growing network of private and non-profit partners to reconvene the Pottstown Play Streets Coalition on an annual basis.

For more information about Pottstown Play Streets, visit [pottstownfoundation.org/playstreets](http://pottstownfoundation.org/playstreets) or contact Andie Graham, programs coordinator at Pottstown Parks and Recreation, by phone at 610-970-6618 or by email at [AGraham@pottstown.org](mailto:AGraham@pottstown.org). If you would like to support the work of Pottstown Play Streets through sponsorship or individual giving, please email Chris Wierzbowski, Grant Writer at PAHWF, by email at [cwierzbowski@pottstownfoundation.org](mailto:cwierzbowski@pottstownfoundation.org).



2024 Play Streets, June 13 event at Washington/West Park

### The 2024 Pottstown Play Streets Coalition (as of May 31, 2024):

- ACLAMO
- Be ReZilient
- Borough of Pottstown Parks and Recs Dept.
- Centro Cultural Latinos Unidos, Inc.
- Community Health & Dental Care
- Citizen Advocacy
- Community First Development Corporation
- Family Services of Montgomery County
- Genesis Housing Corp.
- Greater Pottstown Tennis & Learning
- Habitat for Humanity of Montgomery and Delaware Co.
- Hearts For Humanity
- Jefferson Health Plan
- Maternity Care Coalition: Early Head Start
- Montgomery County Community College
- Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation
- Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities
- Pottstown Community Arts
- The Ray
- The STRIVE Initiative, Inc.
- Traces of Love Association
- Trellis for Tomorrow
- Tri County Area Federal Credit Union
- YWCA Tri-County Area

[Event Schedule on page 6.](#)

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Sylvia served on the Creative Health Services Board, the Boyertown Historical Society, and is currently on the Board of the Tri County Active Adult Center and the General Carl Spaatz World War II Museum in Boyertown. "We enjoy connecting people with charities and love to spread the wonderful news of this beautiful area and all it has to offer. There is so much to experience and gain – right here in our own backyard," shares Sylvia as she noted the free biking and outdoor opportunities through the Schuylkill River Greenways, Challenger Learning Center and the "Science on a Sphere" exhibit at the Montgomery County Community College.

To the Landis family, charity begins in one's hometown. While donating to a few large national charities, Carl and Sylvia soon realized they wanted their efforts to benefit the place they call home in the Pottstown area. "We want to experience not only the joy of giving through our living years, but we also want to leave a lasting legacy so our work can be continued and our generosity can live on." It is inspiring to see what our donations to local charities have accomplished. For our own personal situation,

the most-tax efficient methods of donating have been through qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) directly to charities and appreciated assets to the Community Foundation," noted Carl.

Carl also shared that "In the past, Pottstown residents have been generous, but now Pottstown can benefit even more from having its very own Community Foundation". He added that there are requirements to maintain Community Foundation status, and that with his expertise and background, as well as both his and Sylvia's extensive networking in everything from nature to educational initiatives, they are committed to helping meet those goals.

"Carl and Sylvia lead by example every day in support of their many passions. Our community is fortunate to have such loyal friends and supporters like them. They are changemakers who dream and do, and are clearly leaving a wonderful legacy in a special place where they met, raised a family, and created their home. Having Carl as our Development Chair has been instrumental as we move forward to work with charitably-minded people," said Dave Kraybill, President of PAHWF.

## Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds Institute 2024



The much-anticipated professional development conference returns this summer with another timely theme: Charting the Course: A Professional Development Voyage toward Engagement and Wellness. Perhaps more than ever, we need to focus on promoting wellness in our schools. This year's tracks include:

- Community Connections
- Nutrition and Physical Activity
- Wellness Initiatives and School Wellness Checklist®
- Supporting Mental Health
- Fostering Positive Relationships
- Social and Emotional Learning

Attendance is open to all educators as well as the community at large. As always, professional development credit will be provided to participating Pennsylvania educators. Aside from the keynote as a hybrid option, this year's conference will be held in person only at Montgomery County Community College, Pottstown campus, on August 6, 2024. [Learn more specifics](#) on the conference's page on the PAHWF website.

Since 2011, PAHWF has sponsored this conference, which provides free public and private school programming. Each August, we eagerly anticipate positively impacting our future by supporting the educational leaders of our community.



## A Warm Welcome to Mina!



Earlier this year, [Mina Pomante](#) joined the Foundation as controller. A native of Nigeria, Mina went to school in Texas and has extensive experience in nonprofit work, finance, and agriculture. Her educational background includes a MS in agricultural business and economics from West Texas A&M University and an MBA from Texas A&M University. Mina is a certified public accountant, with specialized certifications on effective grant writing, participation infrastructure development and project finance, and financial modeling for infrastructure projects. Formerly, she has worked as a controller in corporate and academic settings. Her knowledgebase aligns with the Foundation's mission to leverage funds to improve the Pottstown community.

Mina believes when everyone performs to the best of their ability, in unison, we can effect positive change. "Being part of a growing organization is exciting. There are many opportunities to pursue. I'm excited to build on financial

goals that will allow us to maximize our leverage," Mina shared. She is particularly excited about the Foundation's relatively new status as a community foundation.

Prior to joining the team, Mina created her own private, nonprofit organization, which plans to do work in the Pottstown area. This local work will aim to provide economic mobility for single moms of color through home ownership initiatives. Along with improving lives, the venture increases home and property values in the area, further indicating her passion for PAHWF's mission.

"The Foundation truly cares about progress. I love that we are a very intentional group without the need for egos," Mina says. She considers PAHWF a sort of "silent foundation" that steps in and acts without needing credit or kudos. "I like what we do here. Being part of this worthy journey is great, both professionally and personally," she says in English, one of the four languages in which Mina is fluent.

"We are confident Mina's work will be instrumental in supporting the vision and long-term plans of the Foundation," stated Dave Kraybill, President.



## 2024 Regional Home Garden Contest

This year the Free Home Garden Contest is going REGIONAL! Residents from the following municipalities are invited to participate in this year's contest: Boyertown Borough, Pottstown Borough, Colebrookdale Township, Douglass Townships (Berks & Montgomery), East & North Coventry, Lower, Upper & East Pottsgrove Townships, and New Hanover Township.

Registration for the garden contest is open through Friday, June 21. For more information on location eligibility, category descriptions, and to register, visit [homegardencontest.com](http://homegardencontest.com), call 484-214-5046, or email [tracy.purdy@temple.edu](mailto:tracy.purdy@temple.edu). Judging will take place July 12-26.

For more summer fun, visit [Mosaicclt.org](http://Mosaicclt.org) for information about these two annual events (Ticket purchase required):

- **June 21:** Summer Solstice 2024 from 6-8 p.m. @ Hillside Manor, Rosedale Dr., Pottstown
- **July 13:** Summer Garden Tour from 8 a.m.-Noon (Maps will be available for pickup day of Tour).



## Pottstown Community Voices Grant Fund: For Residents, By Residents



A new initiative for the Foundation, the [Pottstown Community Voices Grant Fund](#) (PCVGF) has enjoyed meaningful participation by residents and nonprofit organizations. This opportunity prioritized community voice in the design and implementation of the framework to address

specific issues that were identified during a recent health needs assessment.

This participatory grant-making fund granted a total of \$100,000 in response to a community health survey that focused on six census block groups within the Borough of Pottstown. Decisions on how the funds were distributed were driven by a group of community members that live in the survey area and are committed to accelerating change. This PCVGF Advisory Council met multiple times to review the applications and discuss their alignment with the request for proposals. Each of the programs and projects awarded met the requirement of positively impacting the community through: access to parks, recreation, and green spaces; positive mental health solutions; neighborhood safety; housing support; and elimination of barriers to employment.

The following nonprofits are the recipients. Each met at least one of the aforementioned criteria, focused on improving the health and well-being of Pottstown residents in neighborhoods of historic disinvestment.

- Mission Kids Advocacy Center
- Pottstown School District
- Making a Difference Economically
- Borough of Pottstown
- Pottstown Red Cloud Kung Fu Club
- Hearts for Humanity
- Centro Cultural Latinos Unidos
- Be ReZilient

We are proud to support these organizations, which align with the priorities of the PCVGF. Through vigorous review, the Advisory Council ensured they are committed to growing a thriving, healthy, and successful future for Pottstown, informed by, and invested in, the community.

Participatory grant making requires a different approach to implementation. PAHWF worked with Strategy Arts, a consultant group with expertise in equitable community engagement, to facilitate the process. Through engaging directly with residents that live, work, and play in the impacted neighborhoods, a uniquely personal perspective guided the selection process.

“This new initiative prioritized the community voice in the grantmaking process. The outcome reflects the value of the lived experience in decision making, and the residential engagement required in cultivating the healthiest community possible,” says Craig Colistra, PAHWF program officer.

### 2024 Pottstown Play Streets Dates and Locations:



**June 13:** Washington/West Park

**June 20:** Pottstown Middle School Field  
(N. Franklin St.)

**June 27:** Maple Street Park

**July 11:** Prince St. (Bright Hope)

**July 18:** Chestnut Street Park

**July 25:** Cherry Street Park

**August 1:** Spruce Street Park

**August 8:** Rain Date 1

**August 15:** Rain Date 2 (only if more than  
two cancellations occur)

The public will be notified of any cancellations through the Pottstown Parks and Recreation Facebook page by 3:30 p.m. the day of the event.

# Spring 2024 Grant Round

The Foundation awarded **\$1,170,900** in grants to **43** projects and programs in the Pottstown area.

Developing Youth Potential: Early Childhood Development  
\$45,000 was awarded for one project.

## Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County

Ensuring a Healthy Start & Access to Benefits (\$45,000)

Developing Youth Potential—School Programs (K-12)  
\$310,000 was awarded for eight projects.

## Boyertown Area School District

Whole Child Wellness (\$100,000)

## Brookeside Montessori

B Well-Elementary (\$5,000)

## Coventry Christian Schools Inc.

Life to the Full Capstone Campaign (\$40,000)

## Daniel Boone Area School District

DBASD Wellness Program (\$55,000)

## Owen J. Roberts School District

Fit for Life Strategic Wellness Program (\$45,000)

## Perkiomen Valley School District

Storybook Trails (\$15,000)

## Pottsgrove School District

Pottsgrove Health and Wellness Program (\$40,000)

## Spring-Ford Area School District

Spring-Ford Wellness 24-25 (\$10,000)

Developing Youth Potential—Youth Preparedness  
\$282,500 was awarded for 12 projects.

## American Diabetes Association Inc.

2024 ADA Camp Freedom (\$5,000)

## Centro Cultural Latinos Unidos Inc

Camp Hope & Recreational Pottstown Soccer Club (\$20,000)

## Expressive Path

STEAM @ PRPL (\$5,000)

## Foundation for Boyertown Education

Strong Schools Strengthen Communities: Expanding support for our community by enriching the student experience in the Boyertown Area School District (\$25,000)

## Foundation for Pottstown Education

Enhancing educational opportunities inside and outside the classroom (\$40,000)

## Greater Philadelphia Young Men's Christian Association

Pottstown Achievers: College and Career Readiness through Youth-Driven Social-Emotional Learning (\$25,000)

## Greater Pottstown Tennis and Learning Association

Game, Set, ADVANTAGE (\$40,000)

## Norchester Red Knights Parents' Organization

Norchester Red Knights Football & Cheer 2024 Season (\$7,500)

## Pottsgrove-Pottstown Little League

Maple Street Softball Field Rejuvenation (\$15,000)

## Pottstown Social Innovations Lab

Empowering Youth: Building Skills for College, Career, and Purpose (\$25,000)

## Project Purpose

Mentoring with a Purpose: After School Homework Help (\$70,000)

## TriCounty Community Network, Inc.

The Reach Group Special Education Advisory Project (\$5,000)

Promoting Equitable Health & Wellness—Health Access & Delivery  
\$120,000 was awarded to three projects.

## Accion Comunal Latinoamericana de Montgomery County

ACLAMO's Pottstown Community Health Connections Program (\$75,000)

## Camphill Village Kimberton Hills Inc.

Living Well: The Health and Wellness of Adults with Intellectual Disabilities (\$10,000)

## Vision to Learn

Access to Vision Care for Pottstown Students (\$35,000)

Promoting Equitable Health & Wellness—Built Environment  
\$78,400 was awarded to four projects.

## Expressive Therapy Concepts Inc.

Community Badminton & Pickleball: Kids and Adult Fitness Program (\$8,400)

## Pottstown Area Regional Recreation Committee

PARRC's Regional Nature Based Placemaking Program (\$30,000)

## Pottstown Area Regional Recreation Committee

### (Douglass Twp., Montgomery)

Douglass Park Tennis Court Renovation and Pickleball Court Conversion (\$20,000)

## Pottstown Area Regional Recreation Committee (Washington Twp.)

Barto Community Park Master Plan Project (\$20,000)

Promoting Equitable Health & Wellness—Health Equity  
\$335,000 awarded to 15 projects.

## Boyertown Area Multi-Service, Inc.

Community Case Management (\$20,000)

## Boyertown Community Library

Infrastructure Updates for Improved ADA Access (\$5,000)

## Chester County Food Bank

Fresh2You Mobile Market and Fruit & Vegetable Prescriptions (\$20,000)

## Family Services of Montgomery County

Project HEARTH (\$20,000)

## Meals on Wheels of Chester County Inc.

Purchase of nutritious meals for homebound seniors in northern Chester County (\$5,000)

## Mitzvah Circle Foundation

Critical Needs for Healthy Families, Diaper Bank, and Period Supply (\$20,000)

## MontCo Anti-Hunger Network

Pottstown Strategic Food Innovation and Capacity Improvement Program (\$20,000)

## Pottstown Regional Public Library

Wellness on Our Minds (\$7,500)

## Prepared to Thrive

Bright Futures Program (\$5,000)

## Royersford Outreach Inc

General Operating Funds for Building and Program (\$20,000)

## The Salvation Army- Pottstown

Job Readiness Training and Counseling (\$12,000)

## Traces of Love Association

Supporting Bereaved Children and Families in our Community (\$5,000)

## TriCounty Community Network, Inc.

Community and Nonprofit Capacity Incubator (\$150,000)

## United Way Boyertown Area

Supporting Gilbertsville/Boyertown Area Residents to Attack Homelessness and Near Homeless (\$15,000)

## YWCA Tri-County Area

Pottstown Trauma Informed Community Connection (PTICC) (\$10,500)