



## Community Benefit Report | Winter 2025



# "Seeds of Change" - Celebrating 20 Years

Current Board Members being recognized.

The Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation (PAHWF) marked a major milestone in its journey of fostering regional health and wellness with its "Seeds of Change" anniversary event on October 10, 2024. Held at the historic Sunnybrook Ballroom in Pottstown, the event commemorated 20 years of impactful work, bringing together nearly 200 attendees, including nonprofit partners, government representatives, community leaders, and long-time supporters. The evening was a celebration of PAHWF's two decades of dedication, with over \$55 million invested in programs that have transformed the Pottstown region through health equity, youth development, and wellness initiatives.

PAHWF President Dave Kraybill captured the spirit of the evening with his remarks. "These past 20 years have been a testament to the power of partnership. Every grant, every donation, and every initiative have been a collaborative effort to weave a stronger, healthier future," he said. Kraybill emphasized the importance of PAHWF's transition to a community foundation, noting how the change will enable the organization to broaden its impact and better address the needs of Berks, Montgomery, and Chester Counties.

The event highlighted the Foundation's rich history and its ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life for residents in the Pottstown region. A special video presentation shared stories from grantees and community members

who have directly benefited from PAHWF's support. Since its establishment, PAHWF has touched the lives of over 64,000 individuals, funding projects that enhance access to healthcare, improve mental health resources, create community spaces, and promote youth development.

The event highlighted key aspects of PAHWF's work, including:

- Spring 2024 Grantmaking Milestones: Over \$1.17 million awarded to support 43 community-driven projects. These projects focused on advancing youth development, health equity, and regional wellness, reflecting PAHWF's commitment to fostering holistic growth.
- Youth Development Programs: More than \$637,000 was allocated in 2024 to initiatives that nurture the potential of young people. These programs aim to ensure future generations have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

The "Seeds of Change" event also symbolized a new chapter for PAHWF as it transitions from a private foundation to a community foundation. This shift provides greater flexibility to align funding with the evolving needs of the community and allows for stronger collaboration on innovative projects. Attendees participated in a rebranding survey, providing input on how the Foundation can further its mission to support long-term health and wellness outcomes. Read more on page 3.



# A Message from Our President

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Reflecting on the past twenty years, I am filled with profound gratitude and pride in what we've accomplished together. Serving as President of the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation (PAHWF) has been an honor. I want to thank our community members, non-profit partners, stakeholders, current and past board members and staff for their collaborative spirit in making the Pottstown Region a healthier, more vibrant place to live and thrive.

Over two decades, our focus has been on advancing health, education, and economic equity through youth programs, health infrastructure, equitable living initiatives, recreation, and regional planning. Notable efforts include the Fair School Funding Initiative, which advocates for equitable school funding, achieving significant milestones this year, and the Thriving Communities Program, promoting sustainable transit options like biking, walking, and railway connections.

This past year has been transformative as we transitioned from a private to a community foundation. This shift enables greater flexibility and impact, ensuring every dollar reaches farther to address community needs across Berks, Montgomery, and Chester Counties.

Thank you for your trust, partnership, and belief in our mission. As we move forward, I am optimistic about what we can achieve together in creating a healthier, stronger future for all.

David W. Kraybill, President

## Thriving Communities Project - MPact 2024

The Thriving Communities Program (TCP), supported by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), is bringing transformative change to Pottstown, PA, and 63 other communities nationwide. Focused on **Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD)**, TCP is dedicated to improving infrastructure, fostering economic growth, and ensuring underserved residents benefit from community revitalization.



Recently, TCP showcased its mission at the **MPact Conference** in Philadelphia, supporting over 70 local businesses and organizations to attend and participate. The conference highlighted innovative solutions for building healthier, more inclusive communities and reinforced the importance of collaboration in creating lasting change. Four sessions showcased work being done in Pottstown.

Pottstown's rich history contrasts with significant disparities in income, homeownership, and access to resources. Rates of home ownership and household income are consistently lower than the rest of Montgomery County. TCP aims to address inequities in home ownership by increasing access to affordable housing, enhancing economic opportunities, and engaging residents in shaping their future. Projects like the revitalization of Pottstown's historic train station reflect models in Fredericksburg, Texas, and Northfield, Minnesota, where transit improvements spurred economic growth and livable neighborhoods.

The project is guided by data from the 2023 Pottstown community survey, and TCP is addressing needs in housing, employment, and healthcare while amplifying residents' voices. Through collaboration with local leaders and organizations, the program envisions vibrant, sustainable neighborhoods that promote equity and opportunity.

### Key Program Goals

- **Economic Equity & Workforce Development:**  
Expand job opportunities and access to resources.
- **Community Engagement Hubs:**  
Create platforms for residents to voice concerns and ideas.
- **Affordable Housing Expansion:**  
Ensure accessible housing options for all.

Together, we can shape a thriving Pottstown where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

To join the effort or learn more, visit [www.PottstownFoundation.org/TCP](http://www.PottstownFoundation.org/TCP)



Pottstown Area Regional Delegation at the MPact Conference 2024.

## "Seeds of Change" - Celebrating 20 Years



The evening included a dinner reception and remarks from community changemakers and PAHWF leaders. Attendees highlighted the Foundation's role in supporting the region and local non-profits by providing funding, fostering collaboration, and advocating for sustainable health solutions.

"The Foundation has been a cornerstone for our community, consistently stepping up to meet challenges and create opportunities," said a member of the community. "Their focus on equity and youth development ensures that the impact of their work will be felt for generations to come."

As PAHWF moves forward into its next chapter, its commitment to fostering partnerships and addressing the region's most pressing needs remains steadfast. With a focus on youth development, health equity, and economic wellness, the Foundation is poised to continue its legacy of transforming lives and building a stronger region.

For more information about PAHWF and its programs, visit: [www.pottstownfoundation.org](http://www.pottstownfoundation.org).



# Behavioral Health & Registered Nurse Student Loan Assistance Fund

The Smith family, in partnership with the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation (PAHWF) and Creative Health Services, has announced the recipients of the inaugural Behavioral Health & Registered Nurse Student Loan Assistance Fund. The fund, established in memory of Diana Smith, a beloved school nurse from the Boyertown Area School District, honors her legacy of compassion and service.

Several applicants submitted their candidacy for this inaugural award, and while all were exceptional, Caleigh Bohner, a school nurse in Boyertown, and Adam Lutz, behavioral health counselor within the Boyertown School District through Creative Health Services were selected.

The fund aims to address the shortage of skilled healthcare workers and behavioral health professionals in our region by providing \$3,000 in student loan forgiveness over two years to each recipient. This initiative celebrates Diana Smith's lifelong commitment to the Boyertown community and continues her mission by supporting professionals who are dedicated to improving local healthcare and behavioral health services.

The Smith family, PAHWF, and Creative Health Services hope this fund will inspire others to contribute and help expand access to important healthcare and behavioral health services in the Boyertown area. Please stay tuned by following PAHWF on social media for announcements for the second round of this loan assistance fund.

To support and donate directly to the Behavioral Health & Registered Nurse Student Loan Assistance Fund please go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/DSmithDonate>



## 20 Years of Impact: Hear From Community Leaders

Our journey has been one of growth, dedication, and community engagement—planting seeds of hope and watching them flourish into healthier futures. We are deeply grateful for the partnerships, support, and commitment that have made this possible.

Hear directly, on YouTube, from some grantees and non-profit community leaders about the impact of our work, head over to:

<https://tinyurl.com/2024SeedsOfChange>





# 2024 Home Garden Contest

The 2024 Home Garden Contest Awards Ceremony, held on September 29 at Brookside Country Club, honored exceptional gardeners from Pottstown, Boyertown, and nearby townships. With over 50 entries and more than 60 attendees, this year's event highlighted the region's passion for beautifying green spaces.

Winners were recognized across multiple categories, including General Garden, Edible Garden, and Outdoor Oasis. Organizers look forward to an even bigger contest in 2025, inviting gardeners of all experience levels to showcase their creativity and community spirit.

Celebrate the creativity and dedication of our local gardeners! Explore the full list of winners and view all the beautiful garden submissions that made this year's contest unforgettable.

Visit: [www.homegardencontest.com/2024-winners](http://www.homegardencontest.com/2024-winners)



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**VALLEY FORGE**  
TOURISM & CONVENTION BOARD





# 2024 Pottstown Play Streets

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.

To view the [Pottstown Play Streets 2024 Evaluation Report](https://tinyurl.com/PPS-ER-2024), visit:  
<https://tinyurl.com/PPS-ER-2024>



## Marketing & Communications Specialist



*Samuel Mirarchi*

In July 2024 we welcomed Samuel Mirarchi to the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation team as our new Marketing & Communications Specialist. Samuel grew up in the Reading area and began working in Pottstown in 2023 at the YWCA Tri-County Area. It was during his time there that he realized he wanted to continue his career in Pottstown, helping to foster growth and positive change in the community. "It's truly unbelievable how deeply rooted the Foundation is in the region. The impact it has

had, not only by supporting numerous programs and nonprofits, but by helping them take root and grow, is inspiring," remarked Samuel. "To make a real, lasting difference in this community, the Foundation is without a doubt the driving force behind that change."

Samuel holds a B.A. in Communications (2018) and an M.B.A. (2020) from Alvernia University. His responsibilities at the Foundation include a broad range of multimedia design and production, which is crucial to amplifying the impact of the

Foundation's work. Samuel's expertise spans photography, video production, graphic design, and illustration, enabling him to create visually compelling content that tells the story of the Foundation's initiatives and community partnerships. From capturing powerful images and producing high-quality videos to designing eye-catching graphics and illustrations, Samuel will ensure that our messaging is engaging, impactful, and consistent across all platforms.

In addition to his design work, Samuel manages our social media platforms, website, and internal communications efforts. He attends committee meetings, supports community events, and conducts research and interviews to develop marketing campaigns that drive engagement and collaboration.

Reflecting on his first few months with the Foundation, Samuel shares, "It has been an absolute privilege working alongside such a fantastic team over the past six months. I feel truly fulfilled being able to continue working in the nonprofit sector, helping a community thrive while making a positive impact. I'm excited to be part of the Foundation's mission and see what we can accomplish together!"

We are thrilled to have Samuel on board and look forward to the valuable contributions he will make in advancing our mission!

## Grants Manager

The newest member of our team is Brendan Stengle, who joined us in October 2024 as our Grants Manager! With his extensive experience in community grants and program development, Brendan will play a key role in managing all aspects of our grant processes. This includes overseeing grant applications, ensuring a streamlined and transparent application process, providing guidance and support to grantees, and working closely with community partners to align grant funding with the Foundation's mission and strategic goals.

"I am thrilled to be a part of the incredible team at the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation," Brendan shared. "Every day, I'm inspired by the Foundation's collective dedication to fostering health and wellness in ways that truly change lives."

Before joining the Foundation, Brendan served as Director of Operations for Music For Everyone, a community benefit organization dedicated to cultivating the power of music as an educational, community-building, and well-being tool in Lancaster County. With over a decade of experience in the nonprofit sector, Brendan has a proven track record of facilitating community grants, developing impactful programs, and advocating for equitable access to resources. His deep commitment to fostering positive change in underserved communities makes him a natural fit for our team.

"The opportunity to collaborate with such talented and passionate individuals, all driven by a shared goal of strengthening communities in the Pottstown area, is incredibly exciting," Brendan continued. "I look forward to continuing to connect with our partners and supporting initiatives that make a meaningful difference for so many."

Brendan holds two B.A. degrees from Millersville University: one in Music Business Technology and another in History. His academic background, combined with his hands-on experience, will be invaluable as he works to enhance the Foundation's grantmaking efforts and support the growth of transformative community initiatives.

We are excited to have Brendan on board and look forward to the positive impact he will bring as we continue to advance our mission. Welcome to the team, Brendan—we can't wait to see all the great work you'll do!



*Brendan Stengle*

# Staff Updates - Position Updates

The Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation is excited to celebrate the growth and contributions of two key members of our team, Craig and Chris, whose expanded roles reflect their continued dedication and leadership.



Craig Colistra, PhD

First, we are proud to announce Craig's promotion to Senior Program Officer – Research & Evaluation! With over eight years of dedicated service at the Foundation, Craig has played a crucial role in managing grants for recreation and park initiatives, assisting grantees with impact management, and building partnerships across the region. His extensive experience has been instrumental in shaping the Foundation's approach to grantmaking and ensuring the effective implementation of key community projects.

Craig shared, "For most of my professional and educational career, I have been designing and conducting research to measure the impact of programs and projects, guide strategic plans, and inform best practices."

In his new role, Craig will lead measurement, evaluation, and learning activities to assess the impact of the Foundation's efforts and investments. This includes developing and refining methodologies for tracking long-term outcomes, ensuring our initiatives create sustainable, positive change.

"I will continue to manage aspects of our grant portfolio and collaborate with grantees and community partners to carry out our mission to improve the health and well-being of the region. However, in this role, I will also be leading measurement, evaluation, and learning activities to monitor the impact of our efforts and investments and our progress towards our strategic goals," he explained.

This critical work will help ensure that the Foundation continues to make measurable progress toward its strategic goals and uses resources effectively to drive meaningful change for everyone in the community.

Equally deserving of recognition is Chris Wierzbowski, whose updated title as Associate Program Officer – Community Engagement & Government Relations reflects his expanded responsibilities and steadfast dedication to the Foundation's mission.

"I am deeply grateful for this new opportunity presented to me by the Foundation and for the trust placed in me to help further its mission and strategic priorities," Chris shared.

Chris has consistently demonstrated strong leadership in a variety of key initiatives, including his role in coordinating the launch of Pottstown Play Streets in 2022. Partnering with the Borough of Pottstown and a network of community and nonprofit leaders, Chris helped bring this program to life.

"These experiences have deepened my connection to the Foundation's mission and the community we serve."

Additionally, Chris has provided invaluable leadership for the U.S. Department of Transportation's Thriving Communities Program, advancing initiatives that foster equitable development in the region. He was also instrumental in launching PAHWF's first Public Information Meeting for the results-oriented Grantmaking Program, ensuring greater transparency and collaboration with the community.

Beyond his project work, Chris stepped up to fill critical gaps by providing coverage for both the Program Officer and Grants Manager roles in 2023 and 2024, demonstrating his flexibility and unwavering commitment to the Foundation's success.

Chris remarked, "I look forward to continuing to strengthen these partnerships and fostering new opportunities through thoughtful dialogue with community partners who share our commitment to improving health, economic, and education equity. Together, we can expand the impact of our work and create lasting change."



Chris Wierzbowski

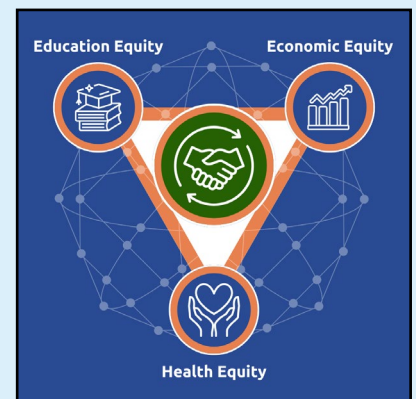
## Amplify Your Giving

Your support can make all the difference. At the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation, we are committed to fostering a healthier, stronger community for everyone. We can't do it alone. Your donation will help us continue our vital work—providing grants for health initiatives, supporting education, and driving outreach programs that improve lives right here in our region. Every dollar you contribute goes directly toward creating lasting, positive change for families, children, and individuals in need. Together, we can plant the seeds of change and watch them grow into brighter futures for our neighbors.

Please, join us in our important mission. Your generosity today ensures a healthier tomorrow for our entire community.

To donate to **YOUR Community Foundation**, please go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/PAHWF-Give>





## Make an Impact with Planned Giving

Did you know there are creative ways to support the causes that matter most to you? Whether it's promoting music and the arts, enhancing parks and recreation, advancing education, or improving health and wellness, planned giving allows you to make a lasting impact in your community.

There are many ways to structure a planned gift:

- **Bequests**
- **Retirement Plans (Qualified Charitable Distributions)**
- **Stocks & Securities**
- **Life Insurance Beneficiary Designation**
- **Donor-Advised Funds**

A planned gift is a meaningful way to ensure your generosity continues and your legacy lives on. These gifts are **revocable, flexible, and cost you nothing during your lifetime**, making them a simple way to leave a lasting statement about your values.

At PAHWF, we're proud to offer tools and resources to help you create a planned gift that reflects your passions while supporting the health and well-being of our region. Together, we can build a healthier, more vibrant community—now and for years to come. Already included us in your estate plans? Let us know!

Get started today:

[pottstownfoundation.plannedgiving.org/](https://pottstownfoundation.plannedgiving.org/)



## Site Visits - Boyertown & Pottstown School District

We believe that awarding grants is just the beginning. To ensure those funds are making a real impact in our communities, we conduct site visits with our grant recipients. These visits give us the chance to see how programs are improving lives of adults and youth and how wellness remains a key focus in their efforts.

Recently, we visited Boyertown & Pottstown Area School Districts, where wellness initiatives are shaping stronger, healthier students. These schools are using foundation support to promote student and staff wellness, strengthen family connections, and improve academic success. During our time there, we saw programs that encourage physical activity, support mental well-being, and bring families and communities together.

Seeing this work firsthand reinforces the importance of these partnerships. Boyertown and Pottstown schools truly embody what it means to be Wellness Champions—putting students and families at the center of everything they do. We're proud to stand beside them in building healthier futures.



### Consolidated Statements of Financial Position

June 30, 2024 and 2023

<b>Assets</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 689,847	\$ 577,235
Contributions receivable	79,244	-
Long-term investments	73,041,842	70,319,116
Equipment and other furnishings-net	22,501	30,392
Right-of-use asset	435,944	485,878
Other assets	14,126	38,262
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$ 74,283,504</b>	<b>\$ 71,450,883</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Grants Payable	\$ 221,352	\$ 108,500
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	258,070	288,485
Lease liability	444,641	490,288
Other liabilities in connection with the sale of assets*	8,063,868	10,471,822
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 8,987,931</b>	<b>\$ 11,359,095</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Without donor restrictions	\$65,010,573	\$60,091,788
With donor restrictions	\$285,000	-
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>\$65,295,573</b>	<b>\$60,091,788</b>
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>\$74,283,504</b>	<b>\$71,450,883</b>

\* Long Term Liability for PMMC Pension Plan

# Fall 2024 Grant Round

The Foundation awarded **\$1,027,519** in grants to **40** projects and programs in the Pottstown region.

## KEY PILLAR: **DEVELOPING YOUTH POTENTIAL**

Program: **Early Childhood Development** - \$74,000

### **Maternity Care Coalition:**

Early Head Start (EHS) program in Pottstown

### **Family Services of Montgomery County:**

Triple P - Positive Parenting Program

Program: **School Programs (K-12)** - \$10,000

### **The National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE):**

PA Needs Teachers

Program: **Youth Preparedness** - \$257,500

### **Trellis For Tomorrow:**

Building Stronger Communities through Youth Development and Career Readiness

### **TriCounty Community Network, Inc:**

1. C2: Community Camp & Launching Leaders
2. Sweatchasers: Building Bridges

### **Strive Initiative, Inc:**

Middle School to Mastery: Creating and Sustaining Student Success Pipelines II

### **Making a Difference Economically:**

Capacity Building

### **Big Brothers Big Sisters Independence Region:**

Beyond School Walls - TRAAC

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

VarietyWorks: Vocational Training and Workforce Development for Individuals with Disabilities

### **Norchester Red Knights Parents Organization:**

Dek Hockey Program

### **Boy Scouts of America:**

Subsidized Scouting Programs in the Pottstown School District

### **Community First Development Corporation, Inc:**

Pottstown Youth Empowerment Program

### **Project Libertad:**

Juntos para Jóvenes: United for Youth Case Management Program

Program: **Built Environment** - \$100,920

### **East Coventry Township / PAARC:**

Towpath Park Boat Ramp Engineering Project

### **Borough of Pottstown / PAARC:**

Brookside Park Redevelopment Project

### **Lower Pottsgrove Township / PAARC:**

Pleasant View Park Revised Master Plan Project

### **Upper Pottsgrove Township / PAARC:**

Community Trail Connections Study

### **Boyertown Community Library:**

Infrastructure Updates: Bathrooms

### **Pottsgrove Recreation / PAARC:**

Summer Playground Support

## KEY PILLAR: **PROMOTING EQUITABLE HEALTH & WELLNESS**

Program: **Healthcare Access & Delivery** - \$104,599

### **Phoenixville Free Clinic:**

Comprehensive Healthcare for Uninsured Individuals in the Greater Pottstown Area

### **Mission Kids Child Advocacy Center:**

New, Improved Equipment to Enhance the Quality of Forensic Interviewing

### **Pottstown Beacon Of Hope:**

Paratransit Vehicle Support

### **Health Care Access:**

Health Programs

Program: **Health Equity** - \$480,500

### **Pottstown Athletic Club:**

Pottstown Athletic Club Community Support Center 2025 and Beyond

### **Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities:**

PCRC Food Services

### **Schuylkill River Greenway Association:**

2025 Pottstown Outdoor Recreation Hub

### **TriCounty Active Adult Center:**

Prime Time Health for Older Adults

### **Orion Communities, Inc:**

Bridge Case Management and Financial Assistance Program

### **Mosaic Community Land Trust:**

Community Garden - Building Year Round Food Equity in Pottstown

### **Pottstown Childrens Discovery Center:**

Common Ground

### **TriCounty Community Network, Inc:**

1. PCA: Health Equity and Resident Engagement
2. Inclusive Clay: Arts Access and Skill Building for Intellectually Disabled Adults
3. Resilient Students Network

### **Mission Kids Child Advocacy Center:**

Core Direct Services for Child Advocacy in Pottstown

### **Pottstown FARM:**

Pottstown FARM Programs - SNAP Incentives, Two Bite Club & Partnership with Operation143

### **Save Our Land, Save Our Towns:**

Growing and Conserving Pottstown's Street Trees

### **Hearts Of Humanity Community Development Corporation:**

Winter Planter Project

### **Episcopal Legal Aid Of The Diocese Of Pennsylvania, Inc:**

Support of Pottstown Legal Aid Clinic

### **Hedwig House, Inc.**

Food Insecurity and Social Isolation Prevention Program

Please direct any inquiries, suggestions, or news items to **Samuel Mirarchi**, Marketing & Communications Specialist. [smirarchi@pottstownfoundation.org](mailto:smirarchi@pottstownfoundation.org)

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Passion, and Partnerships**



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The spring grant cycle will open March 1 for applicants, and an information session will be held on Feb. 19. For more information: [pottstownfoundation.org/grantmaking](http://pottstownfoundation.org/grantmaking)