

Well-Informed

Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation | Community Benefit Report | Winter 2011



PEAK Initiative

Good Nutrition + Physical Activity

Provides Foundation To Better Learning

There are many community outreach programs in the greater Pottstown area that achieve success by touching the lives of others. But, it is rare you find a program that touches many lives at a very early age for whom successful outcomes can last a lifetime. That program is the Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten Readiness, or [PEAK](#).

The PEAK initiative focuses on building partnerships with the early learning programs in the Pottstown community. The goals of PEAK are:

- Every three- and four-year-old child has access to high-quality child care, early childhood education, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten.
- Every parent of young children has access to the high-quality skill-building and resources needed to prepare them to be their child's first "teacher," and to prepare their children for success in school.

- Every child has access to health and wellness services to ensure that they are prepared to maximize their potential in school.

Why coordinate an initiative that starts at such an early age? The [PEAK managing partners](#) determined that there was a lack of knowledge in the community concerning the importance of high-quality early learning experiences and limited information about the resources available to families and the importance of the family in the child's educational process.

"Providing a solid foundation that includes good nutrition and physical activity will lead to better learning," says David Kraybill, Executive Director, Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation. PEAK, which is funded in part by the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation and its other [community and funding partners](#), understands the need

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a message from our director



Dear Community,

Happy New Year! I would like to take this opportunity to thank the township and borough managers for nominating us for the Tri-County Area Chamber of Commerce 2010 Economic Development Impact Award—we proudly accepted it at the Chamber's Economic Development Luncheon this past October.

Our grantees work tirelessly to make our community a better place to live and work. All their efforts serve to improve our quality of life, which of course, contributes to the overall economic success of the area. Clearly, if people want to live, work and play in our area, that will have a ripple effect that positively impacts every aspect of our local economy.

The Foundation shares a long-term view for our community that many of our leaders, business owners, schools and families have—to experience a better quality of life. We are well on our way and starting to see a difference. People are using our new and improved [park and recreation areas](#), and our hiking and biking trails. The improvements are getting noticed and are definitely having an impact on the health and wellness in our community.

On a side note, just because it's cold out there, don't lose sight of staying fit and healthy. Take this New Year and make a commitment to yourself—start taking small steps toward living a more healthful life.

David W. Kraybill, Executive Director

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to have a strong focus on improving the health, nutrition, physical activity and safety of children. "We appreciate the partnership with the Foundation as we work together to create a comprehensive system to meet the needs of our young children and families," comments Mary Rieck, PEAK Coordinator.

The other key is to get parents involved, especially in the classroom. Engaging parents in their child's education and providing them the resources they need to help their child be successful is also a major part of what PEAK sets out to accomplish.

The PEAK program is making a difference just five years after its inception. "We impact more than 500 three- to four-year-olds in the Pottstown community each year," says Rieck. "We are seeing that more children are entering kindergarten more prepared, so they can be more successful." This parent comment says it all: "My son attends the Pre-K Counts program and this is his first experience in school.... This program has allowed him to express his curiosity in learning. He is writing his name and learning to spell. For only being four, he impresses our family by showing us all how interested he is in school and how much information he is retaining. When I ask my son how school was today, he has so much to tell me. He tells me about his friends he has made and about his teachers...and activities from the day. I am so glad that I learned of [this] program. [Now my] my son will start his school career with a positive outlook.... It is truly a gift that there are programs out there that give funds for children's education. As a single parent, knowing that my children are in a safe environment and filling their minds with new things lifts a great deal of weight off my shoulders. Many thanks to PEAK and most of all to the teachers who make it their lives to teach children."

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profile

Art Green, Board Member

Art Green joined the Pottstown community back in 1965 to take a job as a teacher at the Pottstown Senior High School. His career path eventually led him to a job with the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA), which represents teachers and school support personnel. He worked there 27 years, and is now part of the "working" retired.

"I became involved in the community as soon as I became part of it," comments Art Green. "I've coached sports and served on many boards, including the Visiting Nurse Association, Fellowship House Farm and the Pottstown Public Library. My daughter, Amanda, has Spina Bifida, so for many years, my wife Judy and I were very active in the Spina Bifida Association of the Delaware Valley, too." He joined the board of the Foundation in 2008.

When asked why he accepted an appointment on the Foundation board, his answer was genuine, "The Foundation is about prevention. They want to make people think about the way they live and give them the tools to make good decisions about their health. This really appealed to me, I'm invested in Pottstown, and this organization is about giving people another way to have a good life. They are also investing in our community's future—specifically, the kids. Having spent my career in education, this was important for me to see, and something I wanted to be a part of fostering." Green is a member of the grants and strategic planning committees and chairman of the communications committee.

What would Green like to see for the Foundation moving forward? He is quick to answer. "The Foundation should continue contributing to Pottstown's economic development by being the glue that pulls the right organizations together to get the work done that improves our quality of life. We are accomplishing things other communities cannot even begin to do."

On a personal note, Art likes to travel with his family. He cherishes time spent with his three grandsons and is also an avid reader and movie buff.



grants in action

Olivet Boys & Girls Club offers something for everyone at Pottstown's Ricketts Center

Residents of all ages benefit from the programs offered at the Ricketts Center. After-school programs teach children about nutrition and physical activity. Teens benefit from the "SMART Girls" program and "Passport to Manhood." Even adults join in the fun with Zumba classes and Fitness Boot Camp.

Kimberly, an adult member of the Pottstown club, started exercising at the Ricketts Center in September 2009. She not only works out regularly with Paul Winterbottom, physical trainer, but she also participates in the Center's Fitness Boot Camp. By implementing what she learned about the importance of both a healthful diet and an exercise routine, Kimberly has lost 60 pounds.

"I love my new lifestyle of working out and adding more fruits, vegetables and yogurt to my diet. Even with one bad eating day a week, I have been able to reach my goal," stated Kimberly. "But I would not have been able to do it without my trainer, Paul. He is the best trainer in the world."



Open Door Ministry's "BEST" program is the "best"

Teresa found a new beginning at the Open Door Ministry in Royersford. "I was unemployed, newly married and a mother of two," explains Teresa. Not knowing where to turn, Teresa learned about the Open Door Ministry and sought help through their BEST program.

The BEST program, which stands for Basic Employment Skills Training, assists individuals in preparing them to return to the workplace. "Participants are taught appropriate behavior in the workplace, customer service and how to work well with others," according to Laurie Faust, the organization's Executive Director.

Teresa has worked for Open Door for five months and is now a single mother who has also survived emotional and physical abuse. Through the support of employees and volunteers at Open Door, she is working toward her goal of living an independent life and providing for her two children. The skills Teresa has learned also enable her to help others in similar situations.

"Even if I could work somewhere else for more money, I wouldn't," says Teresa. "I get so much joy from working at Open Door. It truly is the 'BEST'."



“Enabling the youth with this knowledge and motivation provides them with a sense of self-worth.”



The Kindergarten Real Food Initiative

Expecting the usual excitement, Rena Jones asked her children if they would like ice cream. “I would prefer a healthy snack,” replied her 5-year-old daughter, who asked if she might have carrot sticks instead.

Stories such as these come back to kindergarten teachers in the Owen J. Roberts School District often. Owen J. puts a lot of focus on nutrition education in kindergarten to start students out right and welcome families into the district with the understanding that wellness is important.

For five years, the district’s kindergarten classes of approximately 500 have been learning what kinds of foods their bodies need to assure they feel their best. Through grant funding, many books, cooking supplies and teaching tools have been purchased that support these messages. Grant monies have helped bring farmers and local foods into the classrooms. Partnerships with PTAs have allowed children to visit working farms. These types of experiences all tie in to create powerful lessons that help children learn to value the real foods that we now know help prevent illness.



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The Triskeles Foundation provides “Food for Thought”

Lonnisha, a teen from Park Spring Apartments in Spring City, reaps the rewards from The Food For Thought program provided by The Triskeles Foundation. Empowered with the skills to grow organic vegetables, she has been able to share her knowledge with others.

The Food For Thought program starts by teaching youth like Lonnisha how to plant and maintain organic gardens. The food is then harvested and used in preparing dishes during cooking classes. “Enabling the youth with this knowledge and motivation provides them with a sense of self-worth,” states Mark Birdsall, the Foundation’s Executive Director.



This program provides important lessons such as leadership skills, time management, and responsible work skills through hands-on activities. Participants learn about smart food choices and share this knowledge with their families in an effort to encourage healthful lifestyles.

“Growing a garden is a lot of hard work, but it’s fun too, even when it’s 90 degrees outside,” says Lonnisha. “But my favorite part is teaching others how to cook things like zucchini brownies (they are my favorite). Helping others makes me feel special!”



Spring 2010 Grant Round: During Fiscal Year '10 (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010), the Foundation distributed more than \$2.3 million dollars to the community. Following is a list of grant awards to 25 community organizations and schools during the Spring 2010 grant round, which totaled more than \$787,000.

Goal #1: Reduce Behavioral Risks

Boyertown Area School District – Brain Body Connection

Brookeside Montessori – Growing Up Fit Wellness Program

Carson Valley Children's Aid – Women's Voices, Healthy Choices Program

Daniel Boone Area School District – Coordinated School Health Program

Developmental Enterprises Corporation/Pottstown Training Center – Healthy Eating, Healthy Living

Fellowship Farm, Inc. – Continuation of HOPP program (Healthy Options for the People of the Pottstown Region)

The Growing Center, Inc. – Horticultural Therapy

NAACP – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – Youth HDAV Prevention Program

Olivet Boys & Girls Club – Services to Pottstown Ricketts Center

Owen J. Roberts School District – Fit For Life Program

Perkiomen Valley School District – Comprehensive School Health Programs

Pope John Paul II High School – Program, equipment and formation of Wellness Council

Pottstown School District – PEAK (Pottstown Early Action for Kindergarten) Readiness initiative

Pottstown School District – Healthy School Communities Initiative

Royersford Outreach, Inc. – Operating Expenses for Open Door Ministry

Sacred Heart School – Playground Equipment & C.A.T.C.H. Program

Spring-Ford Area School District – Healthy Choices 2010 – 2011

The Tennis Farm – Summer Scholarship Program for free tennis instruction

The Triskeles Foundation – Food for Thought Nutrition Education for Youth

YWCA Tri-County Area – Summer Out of School Quality Time Program

YWCA Tri-County Area – Healthy Choices Program

Goal #2: Improve Access to Medical Services

ACLAMO – Conexiones por Salud – Community Health Projects

Goal #3: Enhance Formal and Informal Supports

Building a Better Boyertown – Boyertown Farmer's Market

TriCounty Community Network – Community Collaboration, Prevention, Education

United Way of Boyertown – Matching Grant for Annual Campaign

United Way of Southeastern PA – Matching Grant for Annual Campaign

Goal #4: Improve Physical and Social Environment

Preservation Pottstown – Bike Pottstown

Consolidated Statements of Financial Position June 30, 2010 and 2009

	2010	2009
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$171,237	\$625,271
Accrued interest income	-	130,653
Long-term investments	70,181,108	65,350,684
Equipment and furnishings – net	23,671	68,489
Other assets	10,870	18,313
Total Assets	70,386,886	66,193,410
LIABILITIES		
Grants payable	838,700	1,705,512
Account payable and accrued expenses	97,254	161,042
Other liabilities in connection with the sale of assets	27,206,212	21,307,099
Total Liabilities	28,142,166	23,173,653
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	42,244,720	42,019,757
Total Net Assets	42,244,720	43,019,757
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	70,386,886	66,193,410

Funds are to be used to benefit Tri-county residents from the following zip codes:

18074	19470	19512
19435	19472	19518
19442	19473	19525
19457	19475	19545
19464	19492	19548
19465	19504	
19468	19505	



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