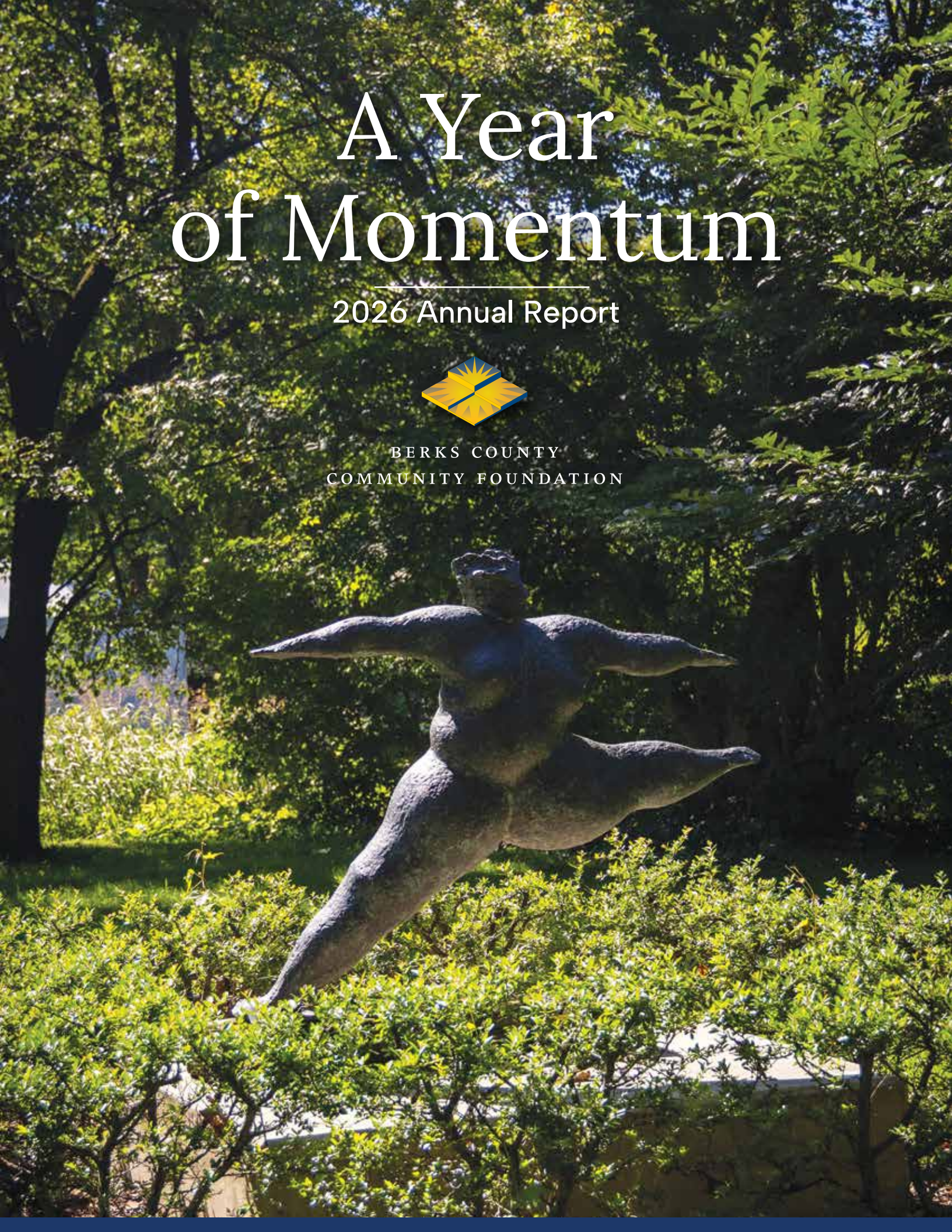


A Year of Momentum

2026 Annual Report

BERKS COUNTY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Letter from Board Chair, Tom Flynn

As I begin my service as the Chair of Berks County Community Foundation's board of directors, I do so with a deep appreciation for the momentum that has been building at the Community Foundation since its founding in 1994. Having served on the board through a period of both challenge and opportunity, I have seen firsthand the steady growth of the foundation and its powerful and positive impact on its community.

For the past three years, Susan Denaro has provided outstanding leadership as our Board Chair. Her dedication to the Community Foundation; her thoughtful guidance and effective partnership with our CEO, Kevin Murphy; and her unwavering commitment to Berks County helped steer the organization towards continued success. I am grateful for Susan's service and her mentorship and honored to build upon the strong foundation she fostered.

This past year demonstrated what momentum looks like in action. Across Berks County, donors, nonprofit organizations, community leaders, and residents worked together to address challenges, create opportunities, and strengthen our community. The stories in this report reflect what is possible when generosity is matched by purpose and collaboration.

Throughout my career in higher education, I learned that lasting progress is achieved through strong partnerships. The same is true with the Community Foundation. By connecting people, ideas, and resources, we help transform charitable aspirations into meaningful and enduring impact.

Thank you for being part of this year of momentum. Together, we are creating opportunities today and building a stronger future for generations to come.



Sincerely,



Tom Flynn,
Board Chair

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Cover Image: Matteo Lo Greco (Italian, b. 1949), Danzatrice, early 1990s, bronze, Collection of the Reading Public Museum, Reading, Pennsylvania. 2021 gift from Irvin and Lois E. Cohen.

All photos in the Annual Report are courtesy of Jenny Foster @fosterjfoster unless otherwise noted.

2026 AT A GLANCE

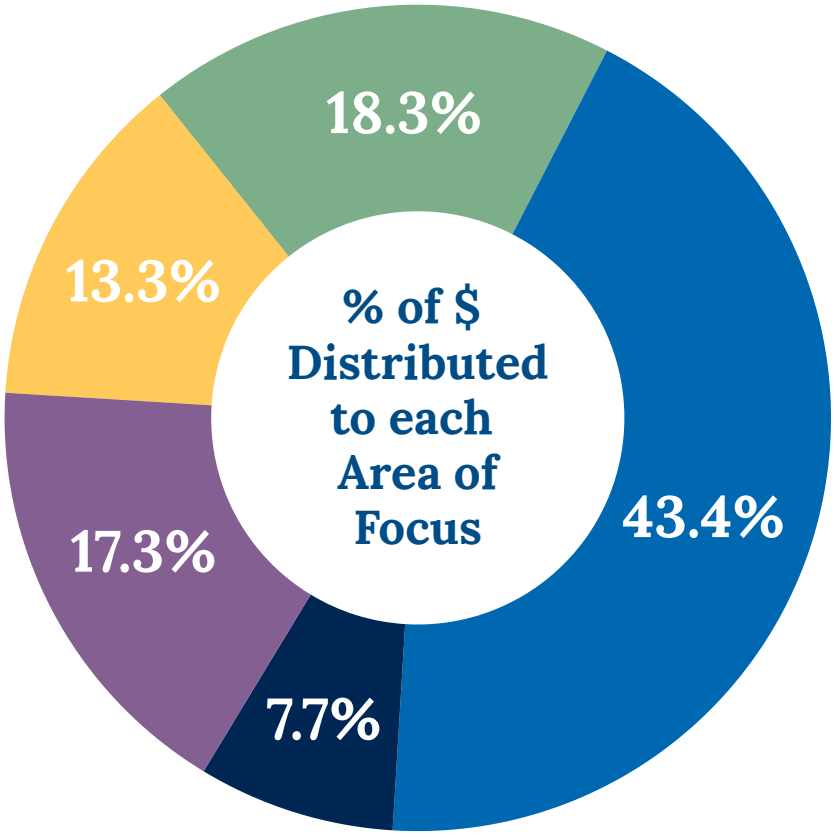
During Fiscal Year 2026, Berks County Community Foundation distributed over

$7.2 MILLION

in Grants & Scholarships

*July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

GRANTS IN EACH OF OUR AREAS OF FOCUS



Arts & Culture
Driving connection and civic dialogue through the arts, culture, and humanities.

Environment & Energy
Supporting climate resilient and energy efficient projects and organizations that help keep Berks beautiful.

Health & Human Services
Advocating for the accessibility and affordability of services to improve public health and to assist those in need.

Lifelong Learning
Encouraging curiosity, affordable education, and professional development for individuals at any stage in their lives.

Neighborhood Vitality
Contributing to the vibrant rural, urban, and suburban communities of Berks County.

A Year of Momentum

Dear Friends,

Over the past 32 years, I have seen firsthand that meaningful change rarely happens all at once. It builds over time through thoughtful investments, strong partnerships, and a shared commitment to improving our community. Momentum grows when people work together toward a common purpose, and once it takes hold, it creates opportunities that extend far beyond what any one organization can accomplish alone.

At Berks County Community Foundation, fiscal year 2026 was truly a year of momentum.

Throughout the year, our team continued to support the charitable visions of our donors while advancing initiatives that address some of Berks County's most pressing challenges and great opportunities. Thanks to the generosity of our donors and the dedication of our nonprofit partners, grants distributed from funds at the Community Foundation helped strengthen organizations that improve the quality of life for the residents of Berks County every day. The stories in this report demonstrate how those investments are creating a lasting impact across our community.

Our Program Team played a vital role in translating community needs into action. Through ongoing engagement with nonprofit leaders, school districts, local governments, and residents, they identified opportunities to build on existing successes and accelerate progress. Whether convening stakeholders in rural parts of the county, supporting innovative programs, or guiding grantmaking strategies, their work ensured that resources reached areas where they could make the greatest difference.

Momentum is also evident in the initiatives we have nurtured over time. Projects that began as conversations are now delivering results. Partnerships have deepened. New collaborators have joined the work. Ideas that once seemed ambitious are becoming realities because community members and organizations chose to move forward together.

This report highlights several examples of that progress. You will read about organizations expanding their reach through grant support, communities coming together to address local challenges, and initiatives gaining traction because of sustained commitment and collaboration. These stories remind us that meaningful change is not measured by a single grant or a single year. It is measured by the cumulative effect of investments that help individuals, families, and neighborhoods thrive.

Perhaps what is most encouraging is that our momentum continues to grow. As new donors establish funds, existing fundholders deepen their engagement, and community

partners pursue innovative solutions, Berks County Community Foundation is well-positioned to increase its impact in the years ahead.

While grantmaking remains at the core of our work, our role extends beyond distributing resources. We bring people together, cultivate ideas, and help create conditions for long-term success. The momentum we celebrate this year belongs to the entire community: our donors, fundholders, nonprofit partners, volunteers, and civic leaders who share a belief in Berks County's future.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are creating momentum that will benefit our community for generations to come.



Sincerely,

Kevin K. Murphy,
President and CEO

Connect with us

Visit our website at www.bccf.org or scan the QR code.

Call us at
610-685-2223

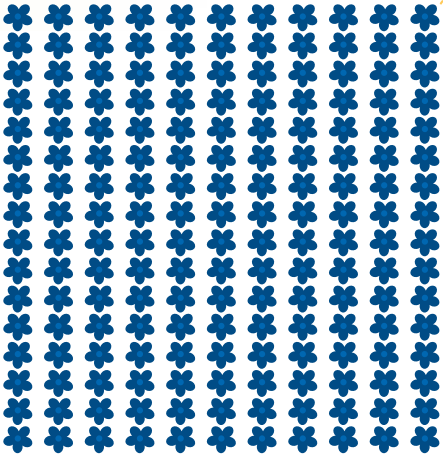
Listen to our Podcast! Scan the QR code.



Real impact.
Real change.

Change can start with one charitable spark. *Your spark.*

$183 Million
IN TOTAL ASSETS





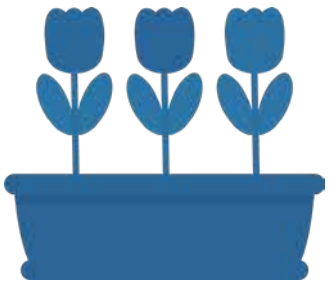
$7.2 Million
DISTRIBUTED IN GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS



370 Funds Total
IN OUR COMMUNITY'S ENDOWMENT

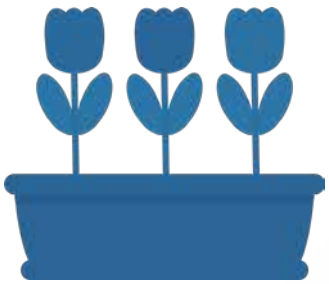


17 New Funds
ESTABLISHED FISCAL YEAR 2026



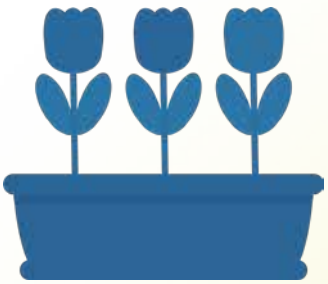
286

ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED WITH GRANTS



127

INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED WITH GRANTS



239

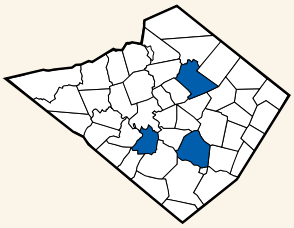
STUDENTS SUPPORTED WITH SCHOLARSHIPS



State representatives, school district leadership, Generation180 team members and other stakeholders pose for a photo. Photo by PA House of Representatives Communications.

Solar Energy Projects in Berks Schools Bring Financial, Infrastructure, Health Benefits

ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY



Generation180 has assisted three Berks County school districts in securing Solar for Schools grants. These grants will help implement solar arrays at the school buildings, promising millions of dollars saved in utility bills and better health outcomes for the community.

Owatin Creek Elementary School of Exeter Township School District sits on a hill overlooking the fringe rural area between Oley and Exeter. On sunny days, Owatin Creek absorbs the full spectra of the sun's rays, making it an ideal location for a solar array.

The idea of a solar array in Exeter persevered through years of debate—but the path to solar was hard-won.

Generation180, a national nonprofit inspiring and equipping individuals to take action on clean energy, assisted the school district through site assessments, proposal management, board meeting presentations and applying for grants. Through funding changes at the federal level and skyrocketing electrical costs, Exeter questioned if a solar array would pencil out. But with a $344,051 grant in hand, the pieces came together, and the board of directors unanimously voted "yes" to the project in 2025.

According to Shannon Crooker, Pennsylvania Director of Generation180, the Solar for Schools program was originally designed to pair state support with federal incentives. "Schools that

own their solar arrays are able to get anywhere from 30 to 50 percent of the total cost of the project covered by the state," Crooker said.

Federal support for solar energy has fluctuated over recent years. According to the U.S. Department of Energy's website, in 2022, the Inflation Reduction Act expanded the Federal Tax Credit for Solar Photovoltaics. This law allowed schools and other tax-exempt entities to access clean energy tax credits as a refund payment from the Internal Revenue Service. In July 2025, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act repealed the Inflation Reduction Act seven years earlier than its anticipated expiration date, making individuals, schools, and businesses suddenly ineligible for additional funding.

"For schools, their second-highest expense is usually electricity," said Crooker, during a recent appearance on "Sparking Change: The Official Podcast of Berks County Community Foundation". "We're all feeling the shock of our electricity rates increasing month to month. Schools have to be really responsible in making sure they can manage these costs with the same amount of money that they've always had."

Implementing solar today can help schools save money long-term. According to Exeter Township School District's website, the solar array is expected to "save Exeter taxpayers more than $10 million over the next 30 years while generating approximately 40% of the district's electricity for seven buildings and its transportation garage."

Exeter is not the only Berks school district taking advantage of the free



Dr. Haller, Superintendent for Exeter Township School District, gives remarks about Exeter receiving a Solar for Schools grant at the Pennsylvania State Capitol in Harrisburg. Photo by PA House of Representatives Communications.

services provided by Generation180. In July 2026, Wyomissing Area School District announced two state grants from its Solar for Schools Grant Program, totaling $720,000. This grant means Wyomissing joins Exeter and Fleetwood in the cohort of Berks schools going solar.

Wyomissing's rooftop solar arrays will "reduce dependency on electricity by nearly 61% at a cost of nearly $3.3 million," said Mark Boyer, CFO of Wyomissing Area School District. Solar for Schools funding will "significantly reduce the immediate cost of the project to the District."

Such savings at both Exeter and Wyomissing could be reinvested into the school's curriculum or to pay back what balance remains on the solar project.

"The payback period for solar has reduced in recent years. Before, it could take fifteen years to pay off an array: now, we are seeing commercial entities paying off their arrays within as little as four years' time," said Emily Smedley, Environment and Energy Program Officer of Berks County Community Foundation.

In addition to alleviating financial burden and developing a more energy-resilient community, there are health and security benefits to schools adopting solar energy.

Schools play a vital role in the health and safety of a community. Whether a community is experiencing a severe weather event, infrastructure failure, or other crisis, schools have the capacity to house residents for an extended period of time.

"Over half of the FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency of the federal government) shelters are K-12 schools, but hardly any of them have battery storage," said Crooker. "If you're able to pair battery storage with solar, it's a win for the community, because

you can actually serve them when they are in the most need."

The collection of solar energy during a crisis is a unique feature of solar arrays that have battery backups, which Exeter's array will have. A battery backup stores excess solar energy for use during outages, providing energy independence and resilience. Solar arrays with a battery backup can also continue to collect energy during a power outage, so the cache does not deplete.

The short-term health benefits of implementing solar are equally appealing.

According to Generation180's website, Pennsylvania schools that go solar could cut carbon dioxide emissions—the leading cause of global warming—by 1.4 million tons per year, the equivalent of annual emissions from nearly 300,000 typical gasoline-powered cars. Installing solar panels can also help schools reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which are linked to respiratory issues, cardiovascular diseases, and heat-related illness—all of which can be exacerbated during times of crisis. By implementing clean energy, schools can help protect the planet and reduce the adverse health effects of climate change.

"A student's ability to learn is directly linked to their health and ability to be present in the classroom," said Smedley. "When we support our schools and students, we are supporting the future of our Berks community. The Community Foundation is happy to support Generation180's work in helping schools pave the way for a brighter energy future."

Support for Generation180 came from the Metropolitan-Edison Sustainable Energy Fund of Berks County Community Foundation.



Wyomissing Area School District is the latest Berks school district to receive grants from the state's Solar for Schools program.

STORIES BEHIND THE FUNDS

Safe Berks Endowment Fund

"When Safe Berks launched our endowment campaign 7 years ago, we knew we needed to think beyond the immediate needs of the organization and build a stronger financial foundation for the future. I'm grateful for the partnership and professional investment management the Community Foundation has provided in helping us steward those funds over the years.

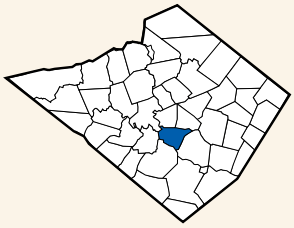
As CEO, I think a lot about what it will take to ensure Safe Berks is here for the next 50 years and beyond. The need for our services isn't going away, and we have a responsibility to make sure we are financially strong enough to meet that need. An endowment is one important piece of that long-term sustainability, and I'm proud that we have continued to build on that foundation."

– Beth Garrigan,
CEO of Safe Berks



COR Tennis and Education Clubs Promote Children's Wellness, Confidence, and Life Skills Through Sport

NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY



The Reading Recreation Commission is a community partnership between the City of Reading and Reading School District. COR Tennis, a program of the commission, provides Berks County children and adults with a fun, quality tennis program to enhance their knowledge of tennis, social skills, critical thinking skills and physical fitness.

Did you know? Historians date tennis back to the 12th century in France, and today, the sport is played globally. Tennis defies language barriers and national borders: the sport welcomes players of all abilities who may otherwise have limits in mobility. Tennis teaches players strategy and helps develop social skills. As a mentally engaging and physically demanding sport, tennis is for everyone.

So why isn't tennis more generally accessible?

"Despite the low cost for personal tennis equipment, the sport requires adequate infrastructure, court maintenance, and training," said Emily Smedley, Environment and Energy Program Officer. "Accessibility is always a multifaceted issue. When a community lacks access to certain spaces—such as recreational facilities—we must question why that is. It may seem small, but these spaces mpact the health and happiness of Berks County residents."

Tennis courts, whether they are grass, clay, or hard courts, require extensive planning and upkeep. Construction, court fees, and equipment costs can deter potential players and perpetuate a culture of inclusivity.

Inadequate wellness and sports education can also prevent players from joining in on the fun.

For these reasons, COR Tennis and Education Clubs host summer programming to meet young athletes where they are.

Brian Wardhammar, RSPA, Director of Racquet Sports for COR Tennis, is happy to "provide an enhanced summer program," which touts up to six trained staff members, program scholarships, transportation for participants, and more.

COR Tennis offers programming at Hampden Park, as well as two recreation centers at 3rd & Spruce Streets and 11th & Pike Streets. For Wardhammar, "providing safe fun before school and after school," is a big draw to the program.

The program even impacts how its participants perform in the classroom.

"Teachers in the schools our clubs are in regularly comment on how the students are more energized and focused when they come to class," said Wardhammar.

Sports may not be the answer to a community's challenges regarding infrastructure, but they are vehicles for personal growth and civic engagement. According to Wardhammar, parents of COR Tennis participants comment on how Hampden Park is a "gem" of the



Hardcourt tennis courts are made from asphalt and concrete with either an acrylic or synthetic layer over top. This assures a medium-fast to fast level of play and requires regular maintenance.



Participants in the COR Tennis program learn the sport from local instructors on an open-air hard court.

City of Reading, noting the beautiful outdoor setting and safe environment created by the COR Tennis team.

"With continued support, we will provide a low cost, quality recreation program for both children and adults throughout the city and surrounding area," said Wardhammar.

Support for COR Tennis and Education Clubs comes from the Berks County Tennis Fund of Berks County Community Foundation.

STORIES BEHIND THE FUNDS

Pets in Need Fund



"Pets are such an important part of our families. The Pets in Need Fund was created to help with vital lifesaving veterinary care of these very special beings. So far, the fund has helped over 50 pets. I'm thrilled about the fund's past contributions and excited about the future of helping other pets in need."

– Pamela Ely

" Teachers in the schools our clubs are in regularly comment on how the students are more energized and focused when they come to class."

–Brian Wardhammar, RSPA, Director of Racquet Sports for COR Tennis

Trusted Advice, Lasting Impact

Professional Advisor's Relationship with the Community Foundation



Susan Denaro, former board chair for the foundation, is an estate attorney.

From her professional perspective as an estate planning attorney and her leadership as the Community Foundation's immediate past board chair, Susan Denaro has seen firsthand how the Community Foundation helps donors transform charitable intentions into meaningful community impact.

Susan first heard about the Community Foundation in its early days in the mid- to late 1990s. She learned more about its work through Franki Aitken, CFO and COO, who worked closely with the Berks County Bar Association and shared options for professional advisors working with charitably minded clients.

Denaro's law practice is primarily concentrated on adoptions, estate planning, and estate administration. When discussing estate planning with clients over the years, she has found that many don't know where to begin, including which charities they would like to support. "Those are some of my favorite conversations, when we can really dig into what is important to them and help them create a lasting legacy," Denaro recalls.

Many of her clients begin by including a fund in their estate plans as part of their will. After that initial introduction to the foundation, quite a few of them, after seeing the foundation's impact unfold, have circled back and established an additional fund in their will.

One of Denaro's favorite stories involved Gloria Rank, a widowed client who had no close family. Rank had intended to leave her entire estate to charity but wasn't sure which charities to support. When Denaro asked Rank what she enjoyed, she said her local police department was important to her because officers had helped her and her husband in a time of need. Rank also mentioned her love for dogs. After a little brainstorming, she established the Darrell & Gloria Rank K9 Corps Fund to support the acquisition, training, and ongoing maintenance of K9 corps for governmental entities in Berks County.

Not long after the fund agreement was signed, Gloria Rank passed away unexpectedly. Gloria had arranged for the fund to be the beneficiary of her IRA, so when those funds became available, Denaro called Aitken to let her know. Aitken mentioned that the foundation had just received a grant request from a local police department whose K9 had to be taken out of service after his police officer passed away. The department needed to purchase a new service animal to be assigned to a new officer, so the first grant was distributed from the Darrell & Gloria Rank K9 Corps Fund, even before her estate administration was completed. The entire process was gratifying for Denaro because she and Gloria had discussed how that specific K-9 was going to need to be replaced before she passed and she knew her client would have been pleased to know she had been instrumental in making it happen.

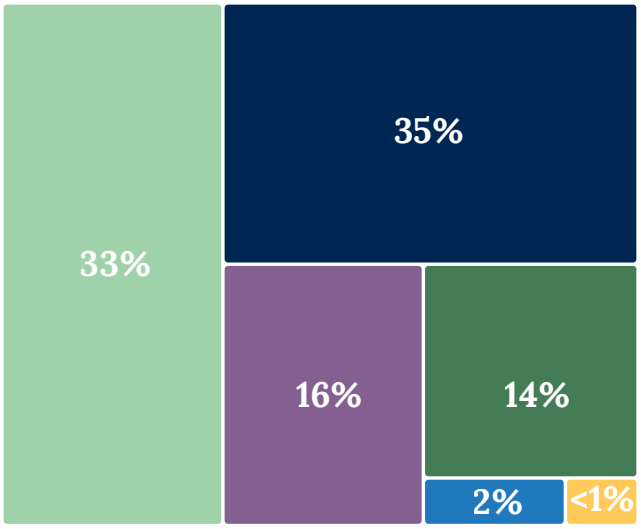
When asked what she wished others knew about the Community Foundation, Denaro didn't hesitate. "I wish other professional advisors knew how the Community Foundation respects and protects advisors' relationships with their clients, and that the team will do what they say they'll do—accountability is baked into their process. Clients' contributions will go to the organizations they wish to support, and the team will hold nonprofit organizations accountable to use the funds for the purposes intended by the donor."

"Over the years, the feedback I've received from clients has been entirely positive," Denaro recalls. "Every client I've referred to the Community Foundation who has established a fund during their lifetime has been very pleased with the experience, and the families who have watched the testamentary bequests in action after their loved ones passed have been equally pleased."

Berks County Community Foundation's mission is to promote philanthropy and improve the quality of life for the residents of Berks County. Professional advisors who continue to refer clients to the Community Foundation do so because they have seen firsthand the lasting impact of the funds their clients create—a powerful testament to Berks County Community Foundation's work.

We create giving strategies as unique as our shared community.

Berks County Community Foundation helps people achieve their charitable goals by providing a robust collection of fund types and giving strategies.



Designated Funds
Grants from designated funds support a specific organization year after year, forever.

Donor-Advised Funds
While the fundholder is alive, decisions about grants from the fund are determined by the fundholder each year. Successor advisors can be named.

Field of Interest Funds
Our team of program experts will do the legwork to ensure grants from field of interest funds make a difference for the cause(s) our donor loves.

Undesignated Funds
Undesignated funds provide the flexibility needed to address ever-changing community needs. Grants from undesignated funds are determined by our team of program officers who have expertise in their fields.

Scholarship Funds
Scholarship funds help students pay for their education.

Other Funds
Other funds may be classified as awards, memorial funds, or other fund types.

STORIES BEHIND THE FUNDS

John and Lisa Gallen Fund



"Lisa and I were inspired to establish our donor-advised fund by Lisa's parents, Sidney D. Kline Jr. and Barbara Kline, whose generosity and commitment to giving back set a wonderful example for our family. We wanted to honor that example by creating a family legacy of giving that could continue well beyond our own lifetimes.

Our fund allows us to support the local nonprofits and organizations that make our community a better place to live. We have been fortunate in our lives, and we believe that with that good fortune comes a responsibility to give back to the community that has given so much to us.

Just as Lisa's parents inspired us, we hope to pass that spirit of giving to the next generation. We have structured the fund so that our sons, Sam and Nat will continue to guide it in the future, allowing our family to support the community and make a difference for generations to come. For us, it all comes down to a simple belief: 'We give where we live.'"

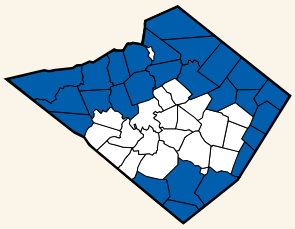
– John Gallen

Reading Science Center Offers STEM Summer Programming for Children of Pennsylvania's Seasonal Farm Workers



—
Reading Science Center offers a hands-on experience for program participants.

LIFELONG LEARNING



The program removes cost barriers to hands-on science field trips and educational opportunities for children of Pennsylvania farm workers who travel to work seasonally.

Berks County's farm workers play a necessary role in the economic development and agricultural health of our region. Pennsylvania's migratory workers, who work seasonally on various farms across the state and therefore "migrate" from one community to another, are essential to farm operations.

According to the 2022 Berks County Census of Agriculture by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Berks farmers generated more than $701 million in market value of products across all farm types that year. The 2022 census further reveals that the nearly 2,000 active farms in Berks County made up a little more than 20% of the county's total land area at the time.

"To say that agriculture is important to the cultural and economic vitality of Berks County would be an understatement," says Emily Smedley, Environment and Energy Program Officer. "When we support our farmers and their families, we are supporting our Berks community."

While the migratory farmers of Pennsylvania travel across counties and regions in our state, they often do not travel alone: families travel together to maintain a sense of consistency and support. For the children of migratory farmers, any lack of community is most often felt in the classroom and among their peers.

The purpose of the "Opening Doors to STEM for Migrant Students" program by Reading Science Center is to help bridge the educational and social gaps many children of migrant farmers experience while living temporarily in Berks County.

Ralia Vardaxis, Executive Director of Reading Science Center, believes this program fulfills the mission of the center, which is to "foster a love of science through exciting and experiential education for youth in the Great Reading community."

"The students really enjoyed themselves; it was a wonderful educational experience where they could work with all the experiments offered and feel like real scientists."

–Marianela Macebo, PA Migrant Education Program Coordiator

"Reaching this population is particularly imperative because of the financial barriers they face," said Vardaxis. "Engagement with science overcomes barriers...this is the beauty of experiential learning."

The program offers free, curriculum-aligned STEM field trips for qualified kindergarten through sixth grade students. Reading Science Center prepared this programming with the ability to serve approximately 140 students throughout the summer months.

According to Vardaxis, "Opening Doors to STEM for Migrant Students" encourages learning through observation and interaction with the STEM materials.

Marianela Macebo, a local PA Migrant Education Program coordinator, was pleased with Reading Science Center's programming. "The students really enjoyed themselves; it was a wonderful, educational experience where they could work with all the experiments offered and feel like real scientists," said Macebo.

Funding for the "Opening Doors to STEM for Migrant Students" program of Reading Science Center was made possible by the First United Church of Christ Mission Fund of Berks County Community Foundation.

STORIES BEHIND THE FUNDS

Power of the Purse in Berks County Fund

"After moving back to Berks County in the early 2000s, I was looking for a meaningful way to connect with other women, learn more about the needs within our community, and make a difference despite a busy schedule and limited volunteer time.

Through conversations with a client and my own research, I discovered the concept of women's giving circles and was inspired by the power of collective philanthropy. I realized that by coming together, women could accomplish far more than any of us could individually.

At the same time, I became increasingly aware that many women and children in Berks County face challenges that often go unseen. While there are incredible nonprofit organizations working to address those needs, funding is frequently limited. That realization inspired the creation of Power of the Purse of Berks County.

Our vision was simple: bring women together to learn, connect, and pool our charitable giving to create a greater impact. By combining our resources, we can support programs that help women and girls overcome barriers to education, employment, and work towards economic independence. In doing so, we strengthen not only individual lives, but also families and the broader Berks County community."

– Chiara Sockel Renninger,
founder of Power of the Purse in Berks County

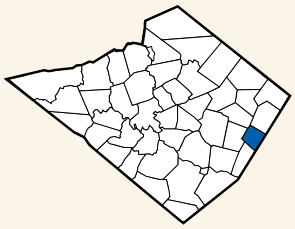


United in Service and Art: How Studio B Brought Boyertown Together



Studio B Art Gallery's "In Service" exhibit featured artwork of various mediums, all reflecting what service meant to the artist.

ARTS AND CULTURE



Studio B Art Gallery, located in Boyertown, Pennsylvania, invited visual artists, military veterans, teachers, writers and community members to share what service—and gratitude—meant to them.

"The best portion of a good man's life is his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love." According to Jane Stahl, Director of Community Relations at Studio B Art Gallery in Boyertown, this quote from William Wordsworth's 1798 poem "Tinturn Abbey" perfectly describes the intent of the gallery's latest exhibit, "In Service".

After all, "In Service" was much more than an art installation.

The foundation of "In Service" began with dozens of artists creating pieces in response to what service means to them. Military veterans were depicted in watercolor, a Revolutionary soldier was stitched into a quilt, and a man carrying flowers was immortalized in film. The artwork encouraged patrons to consider what service looks like for different people—and share what they believe.

Stahl created thank you cards for the project that "invited folks to thank someone for their help or assistance... exhibiting the cards among the artwork added a 'personal touch' reminding us how important we are to one another," said Stahl.

The exhibit engaged students from Boyertown Area Senior High School to write notes to their teachers, thanking them for their support in learning new ideas and accepting different perspectives.

"Studio B had more engagement from young people in our community than ever," said Stahl.

But Studio B did not stop there.

By collaborating with local institutions such as the Spaatz Museum, The Boyertown Library's Storywalk® at the Boyertown Park, the news site Boyertown Area Expression, and the Boyertown school district, "In Service" brought community members together.

A pair of videos was recorded at the Spaatz Museum: one video featured students in Boyertown Area Senior High School's NJROTC program, and a second video focused on local veterans who wanted to share their experiences serving in the military. This video ran continuously at the gallery, sparking conversation and interest in the museum.

Writers were encouraged to use poetry or prose to respond to the theme of service. These submissions were installed in Boyertown Library's Storywalk®, so residents could reflect while they walked. Writing workshops were also offered to explore how literature can teach us lessons on service, community building, and interpersonal relationships.

Over several "B Inspired" podcast episodes on the digital news site, the Boyertown Area Expression, guests shared stories about acts of service with an audience expanding beyond Boyertown.

It was fitting, then, when Studio B closed "In Service" to the public so one of their most loyal volunteers could experience the exhibit alone. Gallery staff was inspired by the gratitude shown by community members throughout the exhibition, and wanted to show thanks to the volunteer, who had dedicated many years to the vitality of the gallery.

According to Stahl, involving so many people from the area in the exhibit is just Studio B's way of doing "our part in building a better Boyertown through the arts."

"The Community Foundation is pleased to support projects that encourage civic engagement and creative expression," said Emily Smedley, Environment and Energy Program Officer. "The theme also speaks to the generosity I witness as a grant steward. To work in benefit of another person—that is what service is all about."

Artists were asked to create something that answers the question, "What does service mean to you?"



STORIES BEHIND THE FUNDS

Connections Work helps women re-enter the workforce

"In 2025, 321 women received services through one of our workforce development programs. 11 women transitioned from our other workforce development programs and were enrolled in our Rebuilding Reentrants and Reading (R3) program in 2025. Graduates of the R3 program are positioned to obtain well-paying jobs and use their experience to follow a career pathway.

Assisting justice-involved women with workforce development programs prevents recidivism, promotes economic independence, and strengthens the overall well-being of the Berks community.

Moreso than the men in our programs, women tend to be caregivers for their children. When we assist these women in achieving stability and success, their children are positively impacted as well."

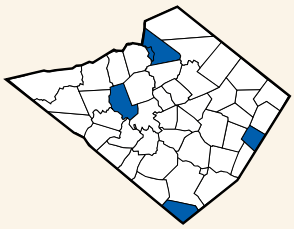


–Peggy Kershner, Co-Executive Director of Connections Work

Power of the Purse granted $12,500 to Connections Work in Fiscal Year 2026, for the support of the Urgent and Basic Need Funding for Women with Justice Involvement Program.

New Community Foundation Initiative Brings Social Service Workers to Rural Libraries

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES



The initiative brings social or health workers into libraries in Bernville, Boyertown, Hamburg, and Morgantown twice a month.

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In rural pockets of Berks County, libraries are among the few or only community spaces that are free to the public.

Public libraries play a vital role in the health of our communities; beyond their purpose of connecting patrons with information resources, they function as spaces for educational programming and socialization. The assistance Berks County libraries provided to their community members has evolved and grown in recent years—a fact Berks County Community Foundation discussed with library directors in March of 2026, on its podcast, Sparking Change.

On the podcast, community leaders and librarians discussed the growing need for social or health workers in rural libraries. These pockets of Berks County—where financial hardship grows and access to services and care dwindles—have become dependent on community spaces like libraries to aid with necessities such as housing access, food, and healthcare.

"We probably hear about these types of needs on a weekly basis," said Chelsea Williams, Director of Hamburg Public Library. "When people have questions or need help finding resources, they turn to the library even if they are not regular library users. I think there is a built-in level of trust that people have with the library, and we often serve as a first point of contact when someone is unsure where else to go."



The leaders of Berks County libraries such as Williams know that they have neither the funding nor the resources to provide the level of human services their patrons require; they also know that libraries cannot be the sole institution which supports its housing and food insecure or uninsured community members.

> ***"When people have questions or need help finding resources, they turn to the library even if they are not regular library users."***
>
> **–Chelsea Williams, Director of Hamburg Public Library**

Many libraries in Berks County operate as a municipal library, which means a majority of their budget comes from local government. According to Williams, 43% of Hamburg Public Library's $190,200 budget for 2025 came from municipalities and the county; 33% of the library's funding came from the state, and 23% came from grants, local fundraising, and investment income. "Like most public libraries, we rely on public funding but have to supplement a large part by fundraising," said Williams.

While Pennsylvania's 2026-2027 state budget—which just passed this July—provides no increase to library funding, it was the 2025-2026 Pennsylvania state budget impasse which continues to impact Berks libraries. While financial support is crucial for the survival of a library, limited capacity impedes its daily operations and programming. Together—with need increasing, shrinking budgets, and library staff capacity running thin—our libraries face complex challenges that ultimately lead to our communities suffering.

It was December 2025—almost six months after Pennsylvania's 2025-2026 state budget was due—when Health and Human Services Program Officer, Cindy Milian, developed a unique funding opportunity to support Berks nonprofits and libraries. The Community Foundation pondered, in internal meetings and community leader conversations, on this question: if philanthropy cannot not replace the level of support state and local government provides its libraries, what services or programs can it support?

The answer to that question became "Social Services in Rural Libraries", an initiative of Berks County Community Foundation.

When the first story about this initiative was written for the foundation's *237 Court* annual magazine in June 2026, applications for the initiative had just opened. Local organizations, schools, and nonprofits were invited to submit letters of intent for the provision of staff to work in identified rural libraries in Berks County. The staff would support community members in accessing needed social services and resources in ways that are accessible, engaging, and culturally sensitive.

"Processes like applying for SNAP benefits, Medicaid, and affordable housing have become increasingly



Chelsea Williams, Director of the Hamburg Public Library, notes that many community members utilize the library's free access to the internet.

more complex," says Milian. Hamburg Public Library knows very well how such bureaucratic obstacles impact Berks County residents. "I would say the biggest issue we encounter is confusion about the process of applying for benefits or the lack of understanding about what is available," said Williams.

For this pilot initiative, four local libraries were identified to receive staff support: Bernville Area Community Library, Hamburg Public Library, Morgantown Public Library, and Boyertown Community Library.

By June of 2026, Co-County Wellness Services (CCWS), a non-profit, 501(c)(3), community-based organization serving Berks and Schuylkill Counties, had been granted $52,443 to provide a licensed health or social worker twice a month at the four identified libraries.

When asked how the "Social Services in Rural Libraries" initiative fit into



—
Hamburg Public Library recently completed renovations to help expand staff areas and house its collection and patrons more comfortably.

CCWS's mission, Carolyn Bazik, CFO and Director, said the organization's mission is to "improve public health through service, education, and advocacy...it fits with goal one of our strategic plan, which is to respond to the emerging public health needs of our community."

Leading up to the program, Williams was hopeful that a dedicated social worker would help patrons feel more comfortable asking for assistance. "As trained librarians, our job is to give people the information they need. To be able to say, 'There's someone here who can help you, they know what they're doing, and they're nice,' would be my dream scenario."

In summer 2026, a spark of that dream scenario became a reality for the Bernville and Hamburg libraries. "We've already seen the difference that connection can make. For example, one older adult who came to the library was connected with resources that could help them remain in their home," said Williams.

While the Social Services in Rural Libraries funding opportunity is in its first year, Milian is already looking to the future of the program. "If this program proves successful, my intention is to work with the local colleges and universities who have social work programs. If students from those programs got involved, we could extend this program to more Berks County libraries."

The success of the program, which will be evaluated throughout the remainder of the current fiscal year, will determine what happens next. While libraries have become more of a catch-all community center for areas like Bethel and Tulpehocken, the Community Foundation will observe how the need for social services grows, and if Berks residents continue to seek out libraries as their trusted space.

Co-County Wellness Services is optimistic that the pilot program will prove essential and in need of expansion.

> *"We are aiming to show the very real need and that this is a model that needs to grow and be replicated."*
>
> **–Caroyln Bazik, CFO and Director, Co-County Wellness Services**

"Currently we utilize one staff person who spends half of a workday in Bernville and the same in Hamburg. Later this fall, we'll add Morgantown and Boyertown libraries to our service areas," said Bazik. "We are aiming to show the very real need and that this is a model that needs to grow and be replicated."

Areas where people can receive help without an appointment or fee are becoming rare, and adequate funding for these spaces is becoming rarer still. As the importance of public spaces grows, so too should the community's support.

Support for Social Services in Rural Libraries came from the Community General Hospital Healthcare Fund of Berks County Community Foundation. This fund provides grants to support not-for-profit hospitals in the City of Reading, scientific research, educational activities, and the general health of the Berks County community.

To learn more about how the Social Service in Rural Libraries initiative developed, scan the QR code and find the story on page 9.

Dr. Eve Kimball Is All About Children

Many of us remember leaving a childhood doctor or dentist visit with a small toy from a treasure chest. Patients at Penn State Health Medical Group – All About Children leave with something more lasting: a brand-new book.

That simple gift is the heart of a literacy program championed by Dr. Eve Kimball, whose commitment to children's health has always reached beyond the exam room.

Dr. Kimball founded All About Children Pediatric Partners (AACPP) in Reading in 1991. As the practice grew, it moved several times before settling in 2008 at 655 Walnut Street in West Reading, where colorful murals depicting the life of a child reflect its child-centered mission. Over the decades, the practice, its staff, and its patient community have grown together.

Dr. Kimball first learned about Reach Out and Read through the American Academy of Pediatrics. Founded in Boston in 1989, the program uses well-child visits to promote early literacy and strengthen nurturing relationships between caregivers and children. Today, it reaches 4.8 million children annually in every U.S. state.

Inspired by the program's impact, Dr. Kimball was determined to bring it into her own practice. With guidance from colleagues at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, All About Children became the first private pediatric practice in the nation to implement Reach Out and Read in 1996. Early support came through CHOP, federal funding, local donations, deeply discounted books, Scholastic credits, and major in-kind gifts from Borders Books and the Taylor Swift Foundation.

AACPP was acquired by Penn State Health in 2019. Today, Penn State Health Medical Group – All About Children serves approximately 14,000 patients each year. At every well visit, infants and children are invited to take home a new, age-appropriate book selected to reinforce positive messages such as kindness, healthy habits, or curiosity.

Rachel Wenger, practice manager, has seen the impact firsthand. "The kids look forward to it—they light up," she said. "Going to the doctor can be intimidating, and not always fun, but this program truly makes a difference."

When Dr. Kimball retired in 2019, she ensured the work would continue by establishing the All About Children – Reach Out and Read Fund of Berks County Community Foundation. Each year, the fund provides dependable support for book purchases, helping keep the joy of reading part of every child's visit.

Dr. Kimball, who owns the West Reading building, still visits occasionally to reconnect with staff and patients and to check on the program. After a 2025 flood forced the books to be temporarily packed away during renovations, Reach Out and Read is once again thriving.



Dr. Eve Kimball founded All About Children Pediatric Partners in Reading in 1991.

Dr. Kimball's passion for reading and devotion to children and families inspired an endowed fund that will benefit generations to come.

To learn more about supporting the All About Children – Reach Out and Read Fund, or to inquire about establishing your own fund at Berks County Community Foundation, please contact Molly McCullough Robbins, Vice President for Philanthropic Services, at mollyr@bccf.org.

Board, Committees and Team

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East Penn Manufacturing

Steven Fritz
Retired President
VF Outlet

Hon. Carissa Johnson, MBA
Magisterial District Judge
District Court 23-1-02

For more information about the Board of Directors, please scan the QR code.

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Independent Board Director/ Advisor/Investor

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Certified Financial Planner
Sovereign Financial Group

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Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

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Mid Penn Bank

Carl Sottosanti
Former Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary
Penn National

Richard L. Stoudt, Jr.
Retired President
High Construction Company

For more information about the team, please scan the QR code.

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Kevin K. Murphy
Gabriela Raful
Michael Rowley
Doug Smith
Jay Wagner

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Chief Financial Officer

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Vivi Anthony
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Sally Cox
Finance and Operations Administrator

Alyssa Ganzelli
Accounting and Finance Manager

Jen Heydt
Communication Manager

Cindy Milian
Health and Human Services Program Officer

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Vice President for Philanthropic Services

William R. Sheeler
Senior Fellow

Emily A. Smedley
Environment and Energy Program Officer

Adam Void
Scholarship and Education Program Associate

Emma Wright
Grants and Scholarship Administrator

Team as of August, 2026.

* Officers and Directors as of July 1, 2026. ** Serves as an officer, not a board member. † Committees as of July 1, 2026.

Fiscal Year 2026 in Review

Investment Policy

The investment policy of Berks County Community Foundation is similar to that of most community foundations. The foundation has a diversified and balanced portfolio. The objective of the investment policy is to provide a return that will preserve and grow the Community Foundation's assets, while providing a consistent stream of revenue to issue grants and scholarships. Annual distributions by the Community Foundation are generally calculated at 4.5 percent of the fair market value of each grant and scholarship fund. When annual earnings exceed a year's distribution from a fund, the excess is retained in endowment principal.

This strategy is intended to grow fund assets, thereby ensuring that the funds will fulfill their purpose in perpetuity.

For a copy of the Community Foundation's investment policy, audited financial statements, and our tax return, please visit www.bccf.org or call 610-685-2223.

Financial Position

Berks County Community Foundation, Inc. and Supporting Organizations
Combined Statements of Financial Positions and Combined Statements of Activities
Years Ended June 30, 2026 and 2025

Assets	2026	2025
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 3,913,570	$ 4,880,895
Prepaid Expenses	58,450	55,682
Contributions receivable, net	102,560	23,520
Loans and interest receivable, net	55,772	77,904
Property and equipment, net	52,248	72,315
Building, net	3,750,680	3,914,792
Land	243,754	243,754
Beneficial interest in trusts	1,229,796	1,093,390
Investments, at fair value	173,538,080	144,496,952
Total assets	$ 182,944,910	$ 154,859,204
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accounts payable	$ 30,379	$ 51,952
Grants payable, net	824,972	1,069,696
Accrued expenses	146,253	122,461
Annuity payment liabilities	21,792	23,223
Notes payable	1,445,551	1,511,009
Funds held as agency endowments	7,103,155	5,674,116
Total liabilities	9,572,102	8,452,457
Net assets without donor restriction	172,143,012	145,313,357
Net assets with donor restriction	1,229,796	1,093,390
Total net assets	173,372,808	146,406,747
Total liabilities and net assets	$ 182,944,910	$ 154,859,204
Revenue and Other Support		
Contributions	$ 15,559,239	$ 12,066,131
Investment income	3,085,990	2,079,400
Net realized gain on investments	6,522,075	5,429,530
Net unrealized gain on investments	11,604,592	7,960,006
Net unrealized gain from beneficial interest in trusts	136,406	74,895
Other income	202,986	265,379
Total revenue and other support	37,111,288	27,875,341
Expenses		
Program services	8,689,162	7,418,261
General and administrative	856,171	772,788
Fundraising	599,894	580,009
Total expenses	10,145,227	8,771,058
Increase in net assets	26,966,061	19,104,283
Net assets at beginning of year	146,406,747	127,302,464
Net assets at end of year	$ 173,372,808	$ 146,406,747

Change starts with a spark. *Your spark.*

We'll turn it into a shining light across Berks County.

Our mission is to promote philanthropy and improve the quality of life for the residents of Berks County. We do this by helping people create charitable funds, managing the money in those funds, and distributing grants and scholarships to benefit the community.

To learn more, please call us or email give@bccf.org.

BERKS COUNTY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The official registration and financial information of Berks County Community Foundation may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Contact Us Or Visit Us Online

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