



## Weaving Community Resources Together

### Schuylkill County's VISION Annual report (July 2014 through June 2015)

*Welcome to Schuylkill County's VISION's 2014-2015 annual report. VISION weaves community resources together to help create a better place for us to live, work, play and raise our families. We believe that Schuylkill County's greatest asset is her people. We also believe that communities working together can achieve great goals when they have the tools they need. VISION works to supply these tools.*

*This annual report gives a snapshot of some of the projects we are currently facilitating. It also reports on the work of our nine strategic partnerships. Please feel free to contact us at VISION with any comments or questions. We would love to hear from you.*

*Kay Jones, Executive Director  
570-622-6097*

## Our Partner Projects

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**Schuylkill County's VISION helps create effective and focused coalitions of community organizations, governmental agencies, congregations, nonprofits, businesses and individuals that address specific Schuylkill County issues that affect our daily quality of life.**

### [Schuylkill County Youth Summit](#)

At the request of the Schuylkill County Commissioners, VISION has served as the facilitator of the Schuylkill County Youth Summit since its very beginning.

- The goals of the Youth Summit are to engage, equip and support our youth to create a great future for Schuylkill County. Below are some of the ways VISION has facilitated this process in the past year.



- The **third annual Youth Summit** met at **Penn State, Schuylkill** on March 13th. Planning for the summit was done by the Youth Ambassadors with the support of the Community Advisory group.

- **Over 100 students** attended from the 16 county high schools. Due to the **technology** availability students engaged with these tools to complete **interactive** assignments.

- This summit focused on the issue of **drivers' education** for high

school students in the county. **Driving crashes are the number one killer of American high school students.** In the fall of 2014, the students had held three **town hall meetings** in 3 different areas of the county to determine public reaction to this goal. The results of these town meetings were reported to the summit.

- At the summit the students were able to discuss their concerns with a **panel of local leaders** who were able to supply information to the students for their planning. Subsequently the Youth Ambassador group was able to set specific action steps for the project.
- A video **YouTube project** relating to driver safety was created at the summit.
- Schools once again reported on their **community projects**.
- In April, at the students' request, for the second year, local organizations representing quality of life opportunities in the county participated in the **annual MAEA Career Fair**. VISION organized the attending organizations.
- **Youth Ambassadors from every high school met regularly with the Commissioners** to discuss their concerns about county issues. VISION facilitates these sessions.
- The Youth Summit project, facilitated by VISION, was nominated for the **Ted Daniels Community Development Award by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Nonprofit and Community Assistance Center and was a finalist** for the award.
- Schuylkill County Youth Summit is financially supported by the Schuylkill County Commissioners and a number of county organizations.

## Healthy Schuylkill Communities



- At the request of Schuylkill Health, **VISION has formed and facilitated a coalition to address the problem of obesity and lack of exercise** in the county.
- In 2014 a pilot project, **Healthy Haven**, began to engage Schuylkill Haven in a **culture of health**.
  - **Over 100 adults were enrolled in a walking program** for the summer. The tally of miles walked by those who returned their information was **over 8,500 miles**.
  - **Events included a health fair, cooking lessons, grocery store tour and hikes**. A very successful **veterans' benefit program** was well attended.
  - **Over 20 local community organizations** support Healthy Haven.
  - The **Schuylkill Haven Recreation Department** is actively engaged in planning and promoting Healthy Haven in the community.
- **In 2015, Shenandoah** become Schuylkill County's **second Healthy Community**.
  - A **strong coalition** there includes the schools, businesses, downtown organization, health facilities, senior groups, library and others.
  - A **health fair** began the year's activities with **cooking classes, walking challenges and children's activities** following.
  - With the leadership of the superintendent of schools a walking path, **Rotary Way**, was designated on the **school campus** for use by the entire community. The path was dedicated by the community on May 30<sup>th</sup>.
- In 2014 Schuylkill County's VISION had begun working with a coach from the **County Health Rankings and Roadmaps organization (a joint partnership between the**

**University of Wisconsin and the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation.)** Subsequently a team from Healthy Schuylkill was formed.

- Through this program Healthy Schuylkill was asked to submit an application for a new grant. **Healthy Shenandoah was awarded one of 20 national grants in the first round of Action Award grants ever given.** The grant included working with a coach for a year and a stipend for a project.
- Healthy Schuylkill Communities is facilitated by Schuylkill County's VISION and is supported in part by the Community Services line item of the Schuylkill County Block Grant Allocation, Capital Blue Cross, Susquehanna Bank, Thompson VIST Bank, and the Schuylkill Haven Lions.

### Motor Vehicle Safety Coalition



At the **request of Schuylkill Health**, VISION took on one of the high priority county health issues identified in their 2011 survey of county health needs.

- Schuylkill County has a **very high rate of motor vehicle deaths** as compared to the state. **The greatest killer of American teens is motor vehicle accidents.**
  - The Coalition created a **texting and driving program for every high school varsity football game in the fall of 2014.** Through VISION's facilitation of this

coalition we have the cooperation of every high school in the county. The results are:

- **All Schuylkill County High Schools with varsity football teams participated**
- The one, **clear message** was that for **an average text (4.8 seconds) at 55 mph the driver has driven the length of a football field without seeing the road.**
- This message was delivered at **every home football game in the county** in a number of mediums. On some game weekends we estimate we will reach over **15,000 people.**
- There was a **community media campaign** to reinforce the message
- This program of the Motor Vehicle Coalition was supported by Schuylkill Health.

### Healthy Schuylkill Summer



The fourth year of the Healthy Schuylkill Summer is featuring a **Healthy Habits program for 13 libraries.**

- This **summer program** is used by the libraries with their **summer reading programs.**
- **VISION** designs the curriculum for these programs, **engages** the libraries, and **provides materials and prizes.**

- In the summer of 2014, nine libraries participated with **almost 500 children** receiving an engaging set of activities to lead the basics to a healthier future.
- This year parent handouts on all the topics were included.
- Maternal and Family Health Services partnered this year by donating books on healthy eating to the libraries for the program.
- In summer 2015 the program was supported by M & T Bank.

## Strategic Partnerships

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Schuylkill County's VISION also serves as the fiscal sponsor for 9 Strategic Partnerships that are grassroots organizations serving a variety of needs in the county. These groups are doing essential work in the county that impacts many of our residents. VISION provides administrative, fiscal and other support as needed. *VISION works closely with our strategic partnerships so that they effectively reach their goals.*

The Strategic Partnerships welcome new members. Call 570-622-6097 to learn more.

Here is a summary of their impact in 2015

### IMPACT: Health and Wellness

- **Mental Health Committee** – The mission of the Mental Health committee is to raise awareness and address mental health issues in Schuylkill County.  
This year's project is:
  - A 5 Facts campaign will provide needed information to parents so that they can identify mental health needs early and get intervention for their children.
- **Suicide Prevention Task Force** – The mission of the Suicide Prevention Task Force is to prevent suicide through public education and awareness, community action and grassroots advocacy.  
The taskforce provides:
  - QPR training (Question, Persuade and Refer) to hundreds of residents
  - A Survivors Support Group
  - A Suicide Remembrance Vigil in November
  - Continued implementation of the Lee Garrett Grant that provides suicide screening and referral services for adolescents through their primary care physicians in the county
  - An Annual Suicide Prevention Walk in Mahanoy City
- **Schuylkill on the Move** – The mission of Schuylkill on the Move is to bring together those with an interest in promoting health and fitness through walking.  
Schuylkill on the Move provides:
  - A schedule of walks and hikes throughout the county in partnership with the Conservation District and Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

- A walking program in Schuylkill Haven as part of Healthy Schuylkill Communities
- **Interfaith Health Network** – The mission of the Interfaith Health Network is to work with congregations to make a significant difference in the health of Schuylkill County residents.
- Some of this year’s activities include:
- Partnering in the Immunization Coalition of Schuylkill County
  - Continued health information network for member congregations
  - Flu immunization information for the public
  - Cosponsoring the new “Circle of Understanding” programs with the Diversity Council including a new relationship with Alvernia University
- **Diabetes Task Force** – The mission of the Diabetes Task Force is to promote healthy lifestyles in those living with diabetes and to prevent diabetes in those at risk.
- The Taskforce provides:
- Diabetes education outreach
  - Connection to a new program for pre-diabetics
- **Immunization Coalition of Schuylkill County**- The mission of the Immunization Coalition is that no one in Schuylkill County should suffer from a vaccine preventable illness.
- This year the coalition will be:
- Working with the PA Division of Immunization to reach as many as possible with immunization information.
  - Coordinating of the “U don’t get it” campaign in several of the local county schools
  - Participating in health fairs and senior expo
  - Working with Walgreens to supply free flu vaccines



## IMPACT: Arts and Culture



- **Block of Art** – The mission of Block of Art is to create a premier arts event in downtown Pottsville that cultivates artists, makes the arts accessible for all and nurtures economic growth in Schuylkill County.

This year Block of Art:

- Produced the 9<sup>th</sup> annual BOA held in downtown Pottsville on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. Eight hundred people enjoyed the festival.
- Received a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Program Stream
- Invited the children at Avenues and Gillingham Charter School to paint “Blocks of Art” that decorated downtown Pottsville.
- Has established a number of partnerships with Pottsville downtown businesses and organizations including the Historical Society, Library, the Greystone, Diakon Senior Center, Sovereign Majestic Theatre and others.
- Conducted an Art Auction in collaboration with the Sovereign Majestic Theatre as fund raiser for Theatre and BOA
- Featured a “Brunch with the Artists” at the Greystone
- Included ten concurrent events by partners during the weekend
- Has established a gallery in Pottsville City Hall that will feature Block of Art artists throughout the year.
- For more information please visit: <http://www.block-of-art.org/>





## **IMPACT: Communities**

- **Diversity Council** – The mission of the Diversity Council is to foster a community of respect, harmony, and justice for all its diverse peoples.

The Diversity Council:

- Supports the Schuylkill County Youth Conference Awards
- Directs the Circle of Understanding project with the Interfaith Health Network.
- Offered a program for youth to visit the Islamic Center

- **Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD)** – the mission of the VOAD is to an association of member organizations that will foster more effective service to those impacted by disaster through cooperation in the mitigation and response to disasters.

The VOAD:

- Sponsors a long term recovery committee that has worked with other community organizations to assist those in need after a disaster
- Is presently working with the Schuylkill Emergency Management Agency to establish community warming stations in case of disaster.

## **Additional VISION Projects**

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### **IMPACT: Health**

- **Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)**

Federally Qualified Health Centers are all non-profit healthcare providers that provide comprehensive primary health care. They comprise the largest national network of primary care providers, serving more than 20 million people in more than 8,000 locations in the United States.

- In Pennsylvania, there are more than 200 FQHC sites in rural and urban areas of Pennsylvania, with locations in 44 of the commonwealth's 67 counties
- In 2011 VISION convened a coalition that has supported the work to establish a Federally Qualified Health Center in Schuylkill County for the past 4 years.
- A formal board for the local group was established in 2013.
- In 2014 this board made contact with Primary Health Network (PHN) at the suggestion of Cheri Reinhart, CEO and President of the Pennsylvania Association of Community Health Centers.
- A Memorandum of Understanding was made between the two groups.
- In May of 2014 the Primary Health Network was awarded a grant to establish an FQHC in Schuylkill County.
- By August of 2015 the FQHC will open its doors in Minersville.
- This health center will offer quality, affordable primary care for the county.

- For more information please visit: <http://www.schuylkillvision.com/SHIP-Projects/federally-qualified-health-centers.html>
- **Emory University Interfaith Health Program-** 2014-2015 was the fifth year that VISION has been part of a program lead by Emory University of Atlanta, working with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and ASTHO (Association of State and Territorial Health Officers), to research the ability of faith-based networks to reach vulnerable, needy populations with influenza immunizations.
  - Through VISION, the Immunization Coalition and the Interfaith Health Network of Schuylkill County, Schuylkill County is one of 10 national sites in this program. All other sites are all urban. Schuylkill is the only rural site. As a result of this collaboration:
    - Educational and other resources are provided for flu awareness and immunization work
    - There is national recognition for the work being done in Schuylkill County
- **VISION Website**
  - Schuylkill County's VISION's website continues to offer information and impressive visual impressions of the county.
  - The work of Schuylkill County's VISION and our Strategic Partners is available to the public
  - Visit us at [www.schuylkillvision.com](http://www.schuylkillvision.com)
- **VISION Blog**
  - Several blogs a week report on all things Schuylkill. They are available on VISION website. [www.schuylkillvision.com/blog](http://www.schuylkillvision.com/blog)

***Schuylkill County's VISION also participates in the following organizations that are also working to build a bright future for Schuylkill County:***

- Clinical Outcomes, Inc., Board of Directors
- Walk-In Art Center, Board of Directors
- Schuylkill Heritage River Greenway Association, Board of Directors
- Luzerne-Schuylkill Workforce Development Board, Youth Committee
- HIPP (Health Improvement Plan Partners), state regional representative
- Penn State Clinical and Translational Science Institute, Community Advisory Board
- The Commonwealth Medical College Public Health External Advisory Committee