



## **Weaving Community Resources Together**

### **Annual report (July 2015 through June 2016)**

Welcome to Schuylkill County's VISION's 2015-2016 annual report. VISION weaves community resources together to help create a better place for us all 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.

This year we are proud to announce the addition of a new staff member. Jeanne Elberfeld, MD, LSW has joined VISION's staff as the Director of Community Programs. Jeanne brings a great wealth of professional experience that will make her an effective and valuable addition to our staff. Jeanne has experience as a family practitioner as well as a college professor and social worker. She has given numerous professional presentations. Jeanne is also very involved in the community and her religious congregation.

Jeanne has already been active in a number of VISION's programs including Healthy Schuylkill Communities in Mahanoy City, Healthy Schuylkill Summer in the county libraries, the fall Motor Vehicle Safety Coalition's Arrive Alive program and others. We look forward to Jeanne's work with VISION as VISION continues to serve the people of Schuylkill County with programs and partnerships that make a significant difference in people's lives.

This annual report gives a snapshot of some of the projects VISION is 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

**Schuylkill County's VISION** serves as **the facilitator** of the Schuylkill County Youth Summit since its inception. 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.



***Governor Wolf presenting Commissioner Hess, Youth ambassador Roofina Ali and Kay Jones with the 2016 Governor's award for Local Government Excellence in Building Community Partnerships.***

- **Youth Ambassadors from every high school met regularly with the Commissioners** to plan the Youth Summit and to discuss their concerns about county issues.
- An **executive group from the Youth Ambassadors** met with the Commissioners as an advisory group for the Youth Summit process.
- The **fourth annual Youth Summit met at Penn State, Schuylkill** on March 10th. Planning for the summit was done by the Youth Ambassadors with the support of the Youth Summit Community Advisory group.
- **Over 100 students** attended from the 16 county high schools.
- This summit focused on the issue of **blight in the county**, an issue selected by the students in the survey of schools done in 2012.

- The main speaker for the summit was Micah Gursky who presented the rejuvenation of Tamaqua as an example of what committed citizens can accomplish over time.
- Students were able to address questions to a **panel of local leaders** and then the students were asked to **design a project** for the next school year that would engage them in some community blight activity.
- Projects chosen included **park clean-up and improvements, community gardens, helping elderly maintain their properties and murals.**
- In April the Youth Summit invited local organizations representing quality of life opportunities in the county to participate in the **annual MAEA Career Fair.**
- A group of over 50 local leaders is meeting in a **Jobs Awareness** committee to advance students' knowledge about and preparations for jobs in the region.
- Schuylkill County Youth Summit is financially supported by the Schuylkill County Commissioners and a number of county organizations and businesses.

## Healthy Schuylkill Communities



*Penny Shade, Chef at Penn State Schuylkill, presents a healthy eating program for Health Haven to an audience at the Walk In Art Center.*

- **VISION facilitates several county coalitions that address the problem of obesity and lack of exercise in the county.**

- **Healthy Haven** is a coalition of community residents and organizations that works to make the healthy choice the easy choice. They do this by:
  - **Enrolling the town residents in a walking program** for the summer
  - **Holding events addressing health: health fairs, cooking lessons and hikes.**
  - Being present at **community events** with healthy information
  - Helping veterans and their families through a **veterans' benefit awareness program**
  - Joining with the **Schuylkill Haven Recreation Department** and **Penn State Schuylkill** to actively engage in planning and promoting Healthy Haven in the community.



*The Shenandoah Valley high school football team helping with Bicentennial park renovation*

- **Healthy Shenandoah** also has formed a community coalition that:
  - Includes the schools, businesses, downtown organization, health facilities, senior groups, library and others.
  - Holds a well-attended town annual **health fair**
  - Presents events such as **cooking classes, walking challenges** and **children's activities.**
  - Received a Robert Woods Johnson **Action Award (one of only 20 in the country)** through VISION to work on a project to **benefit community health.** The Action Award Team, working with a **University of Wisconsin coach**, held a town meeting and other interviews that determined that **rejuvenation the town's parks would benefit both children and adults throughout the community.** Many community groups and individuals are involved with the project.
  - **Also received a Walk Works grant from the University of Pittsburg,** through **VISION's position as a regional representative** to the State Health Improvement Partners, to establish walking routes and groups in Shenandoah to help promote wellness and improve health.



*Jeanne Elberfeld, VISION Director of Community Program addressing hundreds of Mahanoy Area high school students on wellness and walking.*

- **Healthy Mahanoy**, the newest Schuylkill Healthy Community has been involved in these projects in the last year:
  - Healthy Mahanoy has also received a University of Pittsburgh **Walk Works grant through VISION** to establish walking routes and groups.
  - **300 high school students** took an historic walk through Mahanoy City to learn about **historic sites** in a cooperative program with the **Mahanoy Area Historical Society**.
  - **Wellness events** are taking place at the **Mahanoy Area Senior Center** in partnership with **Diakon Senior Services** and **Rite Aid**.
  - **St. Luke's Health System** provided a cooking class at the Senior Center.
  - A **community garden project** is being planned.
  - Both Mahanoy Area and Shenandoah Valley area are participating in a **Great Walking Challenge** to see which area can walk the most miles for the summer.
- 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 and private donations.

### Motor Vehicle Safety Coalition

**'Get An App: Arrive Alive'**  
**Don't let your last text**  
**Be your last words.**

- **VISION's Motor Vehicle Safety Coalition** is made up of a number of agencies and organizations that emphasize safe driving behaviors in the county.
- Schuylkill County has **significantly higher mortality rate** for auto accidents than the state.
- For the third year VISION will facilitate a **Teen Distracted Driving** message at all varsity football games in the county, reaching up to 15,000 people every weekend.
- The theme this year is **"Get An App."**

- **Public service announcements** will be read throughout the games. **Booster Clubs** will print the message inside their programs. **Public billboards** will use the same theme. **Radio service announcements** will be done throughout the fall.
- During **Teen Safe Driving Week** posters, school announcements, and information cards will be distributed in the schools encouraging students to put an app on their phone that would inform callers that they are driving and that the driver will call once they stop.
- This year's program is sponsored by **Clinical Outcomes Group, Inc.** and facilitated by **VISION**.

### [Healthy Schuylkill Summer](#)



The fifth year of the Healthy Schuylkill Summer is featuring a **Get Ready, Get Set, Get Healthy** program.

- The 13 public county libraries are incorporating Healthy Schuylkill Summer into their **summer reading programs**.
- **VISION designed** the curriculum for these programs, **engaged** the libraries, and **provided materials and prizes**.
- In the summer of 2016 **almost 500 children** are receiving an engaging set of activities that teach them the basics for a healthier future.
- In summer 2016 the program was supported by M & T Bank, Aetna and members of the VISION board.

### [Walk In Art Center Folk Art Project](#)





*Ukrainian embroidery by Georgine Borchick of McAdoo*

- Responding to a call by a recent folk art survey of this area of Pennsylvania that noted the **incredibly rich folk art heritage of the region**, the Walk In Art Center applied to become a Pennsylvania Regional Folk and Traditional Art Center for Schuylkill, Berks and Carbon counties.
- The **responsibilities of a regional Folk Art Center** are to promote the creation and documentation of folk art; engage the public; conduct fieldwork and to provide technical assistance to artists.
- The first annual **Folk Art Festival at the Walk In Art Center** was held on June 4<sup>th</sup>. A number of local artists participated and ethnic foods were served. This will become an annual event with increasing number of artists as they are identified.
- **Organizing committee** members include: the Walk In Art Center, Penn State Schuylkill, Schuylkill Haven School District, Schuylkill County Historical Society, Schuylkill County Visitors' Bureau, folk artists, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and VISION as facilitator.
- The Folk Art program is supported by Evans Network of Companies, M & T bank and Wilmington Trust.

## VISION's 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 2015-2016

### 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 the **5 Facts campaign**. Each wallet sized card provides 5 facts about the topic then gives information on where to get help on the back. The project was recognized by the **County Commissioners in a Proclamation**. The initial 2 cards are:
  - How can I tell if my kid is getting high
  - What to know about sexual violence



- **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
  - A **“Get Caught Doing Something Good”** campaign in Pottsville that worked with the police to catch teens doing good deeds and rewarding them with gift cards to local businesses.



- **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 , the Schuylkill County Conservancy, the Schuylkill**



**County Historical Society, the Schuylkill County Visitors' Bureau and Schuylkill County's VISION**

- A walking program in Schuylkill Haven as part of Healthy Schuylkill Communities
- An award to the town that wins the **Great Shenandoah/Mahanoy Summer Walking Challenge of 2016.**



- **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 the 2015-2016 activities include:

- **Partnering in the Immunization Coalition** of Schuylkill County
- Continued the **health information network for member congregations**
- Cosponsoring the new **“Circle of Understanding”** programs with the Diversity Council and 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
- **Diabetes support group** at Schuylkill Health
- Connection to a **new program for pre-diabetics**



*The members of the Schuylkill County Immunization Coalition*

- **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.

In 2015-2016 the coalition:

- Worked with the **PA Division of Immunizations** to reach as many as possible with immunization information.

- Coordinated the “**U don’t get it**” campaign in several of the local county schools
- Participated in **health fairs** and **senior expo**
- Worked with **Rite Aid** to supply flu vaccines

## IMPACT: Arts and Culture



*Chelsea Smarr at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Block of Art*

- **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.

In 2016 the Block of Art:

- Produced the **10<sup>th</sup> annual BOA** held in downtown **Pottsville** on April 22<sup>nd</sup> , 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Eight hundred people enjoyed the festival.
- Received a **Certificate of Appreciation from the City of Pottsville** for 10 years of celebrating the talents of local artists
- Received a **grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Program Stream** to support Block of Art
- Received support from **the Pottsville Business Association**
- Has established a number of **partnerships with Pottsville downtown businesses and organizations** including the Historical Society, Library, the Greystone, Diakon Senior Center, Majestic Theatre, Momma Millie’s, All American Café, Sage Coffee House and Tea Garden, Anthracite Philharmonic and others.
- Created a **children’s gallery at the rotunda** at Pottsville City Hall
- Conducted an **Art Auction** to raise funds
- Featured a “**Brunch with the Artists**” at the Greystone
- Included ten concurrent events by partners during the weekend
- For more information please visit: <http://www.block-of-art.org/>

## IMPACT: Communities



*Doors of Diversity*

- **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 the community** to visit the Islamic Center



- **Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD)** – The mission of the VOAD is to be 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 as a member of the Local Emergency Planning Committee to include community congregations in the response to 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 September of 2015 the Schuylkill Community Health Center opened its doors in Minersville.
- The Center is administered by Primary Health Network.
- A community advisory board called the **Commonwealth Community Health and Education Board continues to provide community input**.
- This health center will offer **quality, affordable primary care** for the county.

#### ➤ **Emory University Interfaith Health Program**- 2015-2016 was the sixth 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 in the county** through the work of many VISION's partners including the PA Department of Health, Diakon Lutheran Services, Emergency Management Services, a number of congregations and many other community partners.
- **VISION and Schuylkill County are recognized** by participating in **national webinars**, on the **Emory University Rollins School of Public Health** website and in **published reports**.

#### ➤ **VISION Website**

- 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)

➤ **VISION Facebook Page**

- The VISION blog is posted regularly on the VISION Facebook page. Like us at Schuylkill County's VISION.

➤ **VISION Presentations**

- Staff from VISION has made presentations on various topics relating to our work at the local, county, state and national levels through the years.

***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
- Commonwealth Community Health and Education Board
- Luzerne-Schuylkill Workforce Development Board, Youth Committee
- HIPP (Health Improvement Plan Partners), state regional representative for PA DOH SEPA region
- Nurse/Family Partnership advisory board
- Chamber of Commerce non-profit committee
- Local Emergency Planning Committee
- The Commonwealth Medical College Public Health External Advisory Committee
- As well as numerous advisory groups in the county



***Please support Schuylkill County's VISION work in our communities. VISION relies on grants and private donations to continue this work. Please address donations to Schuylkill County's VISION at 1464B Route 61 South, Pottsville, PA 17961 or call the VISION office at 570-622-6097 to discuss donations for specific programs.***