



Weaving Community Resources Together

**Annual report
July 2016 through June 2017**

Welcome to Schuylkill County's VISION's 2016-2017 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.

Schuylkill County's VISION welcomes new Executive Director and relocates

The Board of Directors' of Schuylkill County's VISION is pleased that Jeanne Elberfeld, MD, LSW has been appointed Schuylkill County's VISION's new Executive Director, effective July 1, 2017. Dr. Elberfeld joined VISION's staff in February, 2016 as the Director of Community Programs. Jeanne brings a great wealth of professional experience as well as significant executive skills to her new position.

Jeanne has been manager of a number of VISION's programs including Healthy Schuylkill Communities in Schuylkill Haven, Mahanoy City, and Shenandoah. She was program director for the 2016 Healthy Schuylkill Summer program in the county libraries as well as the Motor Vehicle Safety Coalition's 'Arrive Alive' program in our county schools and communities. She has led several other VISION initiatives and strategic partnerships in the past year and will continue to provide program management for a number of VISION programs and partnerships as well as assume executive duties.

Kay Jones will become a Program Director at VISION. Kay began at VISION as the Director of Community Programs in July, 2008 and became Executive Director in May, 2011. Under Kay's direction VISION has grown and expanded programming to better serve Schuylkill County's residents. Kay will continue to lead the County Youth Summit project, the Walk In Arts Center Folk Art initiative, and several strategic partnerships and programs. VISION is a successful nonprofit in Schuylkill County because of the excellent work that Kay has done over the past decade. VISION thanks her for her incredible contributions to the community and loyalty to Schuylkill County's residents.

In addition to the change in leadership, VISION recently relocated its office to 11 East Main Street in Schuylkill Haven.

Schuylkill County's VISION will continue its mission to create effective and focused coalitions of community organizations, governmental agencies, congregations, nonprofits, businesses, and individuals to improve the daily quality of life in Schuylkill County. 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 VISION is currently facilitating. It also reports on the work of our strategic partnerships. Please feel free to contact us at VISION with any comments or questions. We would love to hear from you.

Jeanne Elberfeld, Executive Director
570-622-6097 or jelberfeld@schuylkillvision.com

Our Partner Projects

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.



Students attending the Youth Summit at Penn State, Schuylkill Campus

- A survey of almost 3,000 high schools students was done at the end of 2016 to determine their views and areas of concern in the county.

- **Youth Ambassadors from every high school met regularly** to learn about county issues from county leaders and to give feedback on their views and ideas.
- An **executive group from the Youth Ambassadors** met with the Commissioners as an advisory group for the Youth Summit process. This group has become a definite driver for the summit.
- The **fifth annual Youth Summit** met at **Penn State, Schuylkill** on May 15th due to a snowstorm in March. Many community leaders shared information with students who then designed responses to these issues.
- **Over 70 students** attended from the 15 county high schools.
- **This summit focused issues developed from the survey of high school students** done at the end of 2016.
- Students were able to participate in one of four **focus groups lead by 15 community leaders** who encouraged them to suggest solutions.
- Students worked in their school groups to **design a project** for the next school year that would engage them in some activity to better their community.
- 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](#)



VISION facilitates 3 Healthy Schuylkill Community coalitions that address the problem of obesity and lack of exercise and safety in the county.



Caroline Kush leads Healthy Haven's Yoga in the Park classes in Bubeck Park, Schuylkill Haven during the summer 2017

- **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.



*Shenandoah's Bicentennial Park rededication
(photo used with permission from the Shenandoah Sentinel)*



Healthy Shenandoah members receiving a trophy for winning the 2016 Walking Challenge

- **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, healthy living programs for senior citizens and school students, and children’s activities.**
- Bicentennial Park, Vine Street Park, and Girard Park all received upgrades through a Robert Wood Johnson **Action Award (one of only 20 in the country)**. Many community groups and individuals are involved with the project. The work included equipment upgrades, painting, and spreading playground mulch for children’s safety.
- Perennial Gardens were planted by **BB&T’s Light House Project** in Bicentennial, Vine Street and Girard Parks.
- **Also received a WalkWorks 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.



Mahanoy City Community Garden, phase 1

- **Healthy Mahanoy** 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.
 - **Monthly Wellness events** are taking place at the **Mahanoy Area Senior Center** in partnership with **Diakon Senior Services** and **Rite Aid**.
 - VISION teamed up with **Mahanoy Area High School’s FCCLA** (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America) club to create an Adopt-a-Grandparent program, attending the monthly educational programs at the Mahanoy Area Senior Center. This project won a gold medal at a statewide competition and a overall 6th place nationally and another gold medal for Pennsylvania (one of 17 awarded) at the national competition in Nashville, TN.
 - Phase 1 of the **Mahanoy City Community Garden** was completed on June 10. The **Herman Yudacufsky Charitable Foundation, FABCON, Home Depot** and private donors made phase 1 of the Community Garden a reality. Residents of Mahanoy City and VISION volunteers installed 14 raised beds. All of the existing

raised beds are reserved and planted. Phase 2, with 16 additional raised beds are planned for the Spring, 2018's planting season.

- **The Schuylkill River Heritage Group's** VIST intern was instrumental in helping to coordinate and plan the Mahanoy City Community Garden.
 - Both Mahanoy Area and Shenandoah Valley area are participating in a **Great Walking Challenge** for a second summer to encourage walking through friendly competition.
- 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, Lehigh Valley Health Network and private donations.



Motor Vehicle Safety Coalition



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

The average text takes your eyes off the road for nearly 5 seconds. At 55 mph this equals driving the length of a football field blind. Don't text and drive. Get an APP!

- **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 fourth year VISION facilitated 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 was “**Get An App.**” All of the leading cellular phone companies have apps available that divert text messages while driving; a message is returned to the sender of the text message that the driver is not able to respond due to driving and will respond once they are parked. This campaign encourage students and their families to “Get an App” to avoid distracted driving.
- Effective methods of communicating the message were; **Public service announcements** read during the high school football games, the message printed inside the football programs, public **billboards** and **radio service announcements** were presented throughout the fall.
- During **Teen Safe Driving Week** (mid-October) posters, school announcements, and small, information cards were 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 park their car.
- The 2016 program was sponsored by **Clinical Outcomes Group, Inc.** and facilitated by **VISION.**

Healthy Schuylkill Summer



The sixth year of the Healthy Schuylkill Summer is featuring a program entitled **Building a Healthy Body.**

- The 13 public county libraries are incorporating Healthy Schuylkill Summer into their **summer reading programs.** This year’s theme was Build a Better World.
- **VISION designed** the curriculum for these programs, **engaged** the libraries, and **provided materials and prizes.**
- In the summer of 2017 **almost 450 children** are receiving an engaging set of activities that teach them the basics for a healthier future.
- In summer 2017 the program was supported by Lehigh Valley Health Network.



Walk In Art Center Folk Art Project



- The first year of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts recognized Walk In Art Center Folk Art Center has been filled with accomplishments. Below is a summary. In the 2016-2017 year the center:
- Hired folklorist Rori Smith to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in Berks, Carbon, and Schuylkill Counties;
- Conducted 15 interviews with traditional artists
- Assembled a contact list of 70 traditional artists, 30 supporting organizations, and 25 events in the three-county area, with at least 15-20 of these flagged to be interviewed at a future date
- Held monthly meetings of community members/artists/stakeholders
- Held bimonthly Folk Art Advisory Committee meetings
- Presented four traditional arts workshops, pysanky classes, and Folk Art Around the World Art Camps
- Included two new traditional artists into the WAIC's resident studio space
- Facilitated two applications to PCA's Apprenticeships in Traditional Arts program
- Developed planning for future activities in the region
- Held the Second Annual Folk Art Festival in early June
- Created a Page on the WIAC Website that is dedicated to Folk Arts
- Created a Facebook page for the Folk Art Alliance
- Added a Folk Art category to the Keystone Fine Art Juried Exhibition
- Planned a 2018 event combining Culinary Heritage with the Folk Art Festival
- Submitted a 2018 NEA Art Works grant application for future programming
- Established connections with regional, allied organizations and planned collaborative projects with four community partners:
 - A pop-up folk art exhibition at Sellers Books and Fine Art in Jim Thorp
 - A folk and traditional arts-themed episode of 40 Story Radio Tower at the Mauch Chunk Opera House in Jim Thorpe
 - A seasonal dinner party co-hosted by The Roughwood Seed Collection/Keystone Center for Regional Foodways

- A dialect calendar published by The Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center at Kutztown University featuring photos and quotes from WIAC's fieldwork

VISION's Strategic Partnerships

Schuylkill County's VISION also serves as the fiscal sponsor for 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 2016-2017:

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 the Mental Health Committee continued 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. This year the card's messages were:
 - Bullying is a serious public health problem
 - Thinking of suicide? Get help!



- **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 and many county schools.
- A **Survivors Support Group- HALOS Group** held a Pizza and Painting event for family members who have survived a loved one's suicide; more programs such as this are being scheduled.
- A **Suicide Remembrance Vigil** in November
- An awareness campaign during the winter holiday season showing a 30 second, locally produced commercial at the Schuylkill (Frackville) Mall Movie Theater identifying signs to look for in loved ones who might be contemplating suicide.
- 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 **Stomp Out Suicide Walk** was held on May 6, 2017 in Schuylkill Haven



- **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
- Awarded the Walking Challenge Winner's cup to **Shenandoah for the 2016 Walking Challenge**
- Will present an award to the town that wins the **Great Shenandoah/Mahanoy Summer Walking Challenge of 2017.**



- **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 2016-2017 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 the Islamic Center of Schuylkill County



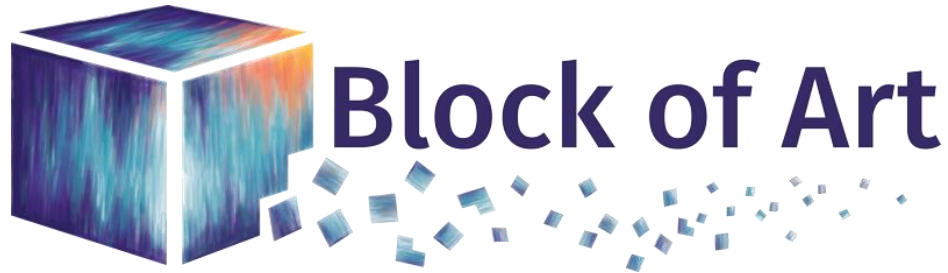
The members of the Schuylkill County Immunization Coalition

- **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 2016-2017 the coalition:

- Worked with the **PA Department of Health** to bring awareness to the new state-wide immunization requirements for school children. The coalition spoke with school nurses and administrators about these requirements and how the Immunization Coalition can support these efforts. A PSA was written and distributed for all of the County school districts “one call” systems that could be recorded by the superintendents and distributed via the phone call service directly to the homes of most students.
- Participated in **health fairs** and **senior expo**
- Worked with **Rite Aid** to supply 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.

In 2016-2017 the Block of Art:

- Produced the **11th annual BOA** held in downtown **Pottsville** on April 28th, 29th and 30th
- Held an **opening evening gala** on Friday that included a swing band and youth performance
- Featured Saturday featured galleries, music, an art auction, a church tour, a comic con, and a very special addition: a children’s art studio that featured local art and youth organizations. The studio was sponsored by M & T Bank.
- Developed a new website
- Developed and extensive Facebook presence
- 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, Bake Shop VI, Momma Millie’s, All American Café, Sage Coffee House and Tea Garden, Anthracite Philharmonic and others.
- **Continued 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:

- 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

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-

- 2016-2017 was the seventh year that VISION has been part of a program lead by Emory University of Atlanta. This year we worked NACCHO (National Association of County and City Health Officials) at a meeting in Washington, D.C. Ten communities with representatives from three sectors - Interfaith Health Program (IHP) members, local health departments (LHDs), and nonprofit hospital representatives - were present. The goal was to strengthen the capacity for addressing the social determinants of health through partnering around community health (needs) assessment and community health improvement/implementation planning (CHA/CHIP) processes. VISION attended with representatives from the PA Department of Health and Lehigh Valley Health Network.

➤ Strong Teen Parenting

- This program seeks to create a Teen Parenting Pilot Classroom in Schuylkill County.
- Initial work, funded by the PA Department of Health- Bureau of Family Medicine, included traditional research and Community Based Participatory research to help identify the needs of pregnant and parenting teens in Schuylkill County and to investigate the feasibility of this program within Schuylkill County.

- This program will support and encourage strong attachments between teen mothers and their babies, allowing them to remain together while doing both school work and learning about parenting, breastfeeding, child care and self-care. Teen fathers will also receive education, support and encouragement through this program.
 - Our hope is to empower young parents and establish health from the very beginning of life for them and their children, building resilience for their futures.
 - Many Schuylkill County agencies are partners in this project including: **Nurse Family Partnership, Schuylkill IU 29's Life Long Learning Center, Maternal family Services, Schuylkill County Mental Health, Children and Youth Services, the Prevention Partnership**, health care providers within the county, and others.
- **VISION Website**
- The work of Schuylkill County's VISION and our Strategic Partners is available to the public. This website includes links to our strategic partners as well as a calendar of events for the 3 Healthy Schuylkill Communities and Schuylkill on the Move.
 - Visit us at www.schuylkillvision.com
- **VISION Blog**
- Several blogs a week report on all things Schuylkill. They are available on VISION website www.schuylkillvision.com/blog and our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Schuylkill-Countys-VISION-122864953242/> .
- **VISION Facebook Page**
- The VISION blog is posted regularly on the VISION Facebook page. Like us at Schuylkill County's VISION.
 - <https://www.facebook.com/Schuylkill-Countys-VISION-122864953242/>
- **VISION Presentations**
- Staff from VISION creates presentations on various topics relating to our work at the local, county, state and national levels through the year.



Images from the 2016 Halloween Hustle: 5 K Zombie Run

➤ **VISION's Halloween Hustle: 5K Zombie Run**

- In 2016 Schuylkill County's VISION re-vamped our annual Halloween Hustle with a twist of Zombies.
- The race participants were given flag-football belts and run the race while avoiding zombies trying to steal their flags. The race participants who crossed the finish line with NO flag still attached to their belt were not eligible for prizes. The race was enjoyed by runners and zombies alike!
- 2017 Halloween Hustle is scheduled for 9:30 am on October 28, 2017. Please consider participating and/or sponsoring this event. See the VISION website for more information.

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
- The Schuylkill Prevention Partnership
- As well as numerous advisory groups in the county

2017 Schuylkill County's VISION's Board of Directors:

- Chairperson- C. Ryan Bates, Esq., National Director of Sales and Staff Counsel, The Evans Network of Companies
- Vice Chairperson- Brock Stein, Vice President of Strategic Development, Koch's Turkey Farms
- Secretary- Mary Anne Woodward, Market Leader/ Small Business Advisor, BB&T Bank
- Treasurer- Tom Badger, CLU, ChFc, MSFS, CFP Penn Wood Financial Group
- Members at Large:
 - Gina Gargano, Executive Director, Schuylkill County Visitors' Bureau
 - Gary Hess, Schuylkill County Commissioner, Owner Hess Catering
 - Mary Lusavage, Executive Director, Downtown Shenandoah Inc.
 - Jennifer Melochick, Director of Programs, Clinical Outcomes Group, Inc.
 - Rebecca Netznick, Regional Manager, The Salvation Army
 - William Reppy, President, Lehigh Valley Health Network- Schuylkill Campuses, Senior Vice President Lehigh Valley Health Network
 - Jennifer Stehman, Director of Human Resources, St Luke's Hospital- Miners Campus
 - Rubina Tareen, Outreach Coordinator for the Islamic Society of Schuylkill County & Owner, Bayaaainc
 - Helen (Wendi) Wheeler, Esq., Vice President of Human Resources, Justi Group, Inc.
 - Tyler Zimerofsky, Student Board Member- Susquehanna University



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 11 East Main Street, Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972 or call the VISION office at 570-622-6097 to discuss donations for specific programs.