

A 2023 STORYBOOK OF  
**COMMUNITY**  
*Giving*



25

*Years* ♥



**CELEBRATING**  
**25** *Years* ♥  
**OF IMPACT**



## LOCAL START MAKES LASTING IMPACT

2024 will mark 25 years of community giving through the Community Giving Foundation. The journey of our Foundation's growth speaks to the connections and impact envisioned by our founders.



- › **From our beginnings as a \$25 million health conversion in 1999,**
- › **to the thoughtful decision by our visionary founders to expand our mission as a regional community foundation in 2003,**
- › **to partnerships with five local affiliate foundations in the Central Susquehanna region,**
- › **to over 350 unique and personalized funds that have distributed over \$50 million back into our community for a lasting impact.**

Through 25 years of evolution and growth, we have seen one constant—*you*. The Community Giving Foundation exists through the collective legacy of everyday people with a heart for the places they live, work, and play. Our work is only possible in a community where philanthropy is part of our culture. The strong relationships we have developed with our donors, nonprofit partners, community leaders, and board members are the connections that make the Foundation thrive.

Over the course of 2024, we are profiling 25 stories, each marking a year of our existence. The stories in this book are the first five examples of people who have partnered with us, turning their passions into a lasting legacy of community giving and impact.







## FORMER STUDENTS BECOME COMMUNITY LEADERS

For 20 years, the Foundation's **Youth in Philanthropy** program has been encouraging high school students across the region to become community philanthropists. Berwick board member Damien Scoblink was one of the first students to participate in the program in 2003. As he reflected on his early involvement, Damien credits the education and hands-on experience for planting the seed for his community and nonprofit work today. "Thinking back, my time in Youth in Philanthropy was my first real experience with community giving. Learning about how philanthropy worked on a local level was the most memorable part of the experience. I have so much appreciation for the many groups who work tirelessly behind the scenes to make our community such a special place."

Emerson Noss may serve as one of Benton High School's faculty advisors for the program, but he, too, has first-hand experience of the program's impact. When reflecting on his time in the program from 2012-2015, Emerson remembers the unique opportunities to engage with community leaders and local organizations. Each year, students experience community giving by learning about philanthropy, researching school-based and community needs, exercising leadership and decision-making skills, and participating in their own grantmaking process. Through the generosity of program sponsors, each school awards up to \$5,000 annually to their community.

Youth in Philanthropy began with just one school in Berwick. Through regional growth and continued success of the program, 15 schools and over 200 students will participate in 2023-2024.

*Left photo: First Youth in Philanthropy class at Berwick High School (2003). Right photo: Emerson and classmates teach elementary students about philanthropy (2013)*

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**No other high school club or curriculum can provide this engaging, rewarding experience where students are given the resources to leave an impact on their community.**

### EMERSON NOSS

Former Youth in Philanthropy Student and Current Program Advisor

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## PLANNED GIVING PROVIDES FUTURE IMPACT

For Columbia County resident Mark Gardner, community giving means more than just making a difference today—it also means fostering programs and organizations in the community for generations to come. Moved to create a personal and permanent legacy in his community to set an example for others, Mark established two testamentary funds at the Foundation for future community impact.

The **Gardner Family Designated Fund** will support nonprofit organizations in Columbia and Montour counties that promote arts education and leadership training. As a graduate of Leadership Central Penn, Mark is a proponent of the valuable experiences for leadership development and networking offered in our community. His second fund will award scholarships at Danville High School—Mark’s alma mater—for students who excel in academics, participate in school sports, and hold leadership positions in clubs or activities.

Motivation for philanthropy can come from any number of emotions, experiences, or aspirations. By considering his passion for the arts, leadership training, and education, Mark has created a legacy that reflects his values and thoughtful commitment to local giving. His planned gift will provide meaningful impact in his community beyond his lifetime.



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**I want my efforts to help maintain the organizations that have made a positive impact on my life and encourage students to excel in their educational and leadership experiences. I hope the impact of my testamentary funds will show future generations the importance of planned giving and how to continue to strengthen our community.**

**MARK GARDNER**

Fundholder



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## LOCAL ROOTS DEVELOP FAMILY LEGACY

Sunbury Motor Company has operated in the greater Sunbury community for over one hundred years. As the business continued to grow and succeed, the Mertz Family developed deep, local roots and a care for their employees and the customers they serve. This dedication was clear in the life of Bob Mertz, who served as president of Sunbury Motors for over forty years.

Well known and respected, Bob Mertz had a heart for the people who called Sunbury home. Through his involvement on the then Sunbury Area Community Foundation board of directors, Bob realized the major impact the Foundation was facilitating in the Sunbury community. Through his company's success, Bob created a charitable fund to support nonprofit organizations meeting needs in the Sunbury area.

After his passing in 2015, a second fund was established in the Mertz Family name thanks to Bob's thoughtful planned estate gift. The **Mertz Family Memorial Fund**—now advised by his son, Tom—remembers the generous heart and legacy of Bob and honors his family's continued commitment to support the Sunbury community in perpetuity.

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**Bob had a heart for the Foundation and the impact it was facilitating in the Sunbury community. Building the future and helping others can continue after your death—your legacy of giving back can live forever.**

### **CORY FASOLD**

Fund Advisor and Mertz Family Friend

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## FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP OFFERS LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

In 1951, Charles and Doris Rechsteiner moved to the Danville community. He was a scientist at Merck, while she taught kindergarten in Danville schools for 20 years, and their three children also followed in these career paths. After Charles's passing in 2003, the Rechsteiner family established a scholarship fund, creating a family legacy built on their commitment to giving back. The **Rechsteiner Family Scholarship** supports Danville students studying science or education through a full-time undergraduate program.

Kiera Chillis graduated from Danville High School in June 2021, and is a third-year music education major at the Penn State School of Music. As a multi-year scholarship recipient, Kiera has had the unique opportunity to step outside of the classroom to teach music in new cultural settings. She recently participated in the Jamaica Field Service Project, traveling with seven other music education students for learning opportunities through immersion and training sessions. The program included teaching elementary students basic drum patterns on traditional West African drums and leading traditional Jamaican folk songs like "Mango Time".

Kiera is just one of the many education and science students who have benefited from the Rechsteiner family's legacy. Without the generosity and kindness of donors like Charles and Doris, the road to a degree and opportunities for unique learning experiences become much more difficult.



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**I am grateful for the opportunities this scholarship has given me, especially the ability to continue my education in becoming a music educator. Music is one of my passions and this generous scholarship continues to support my desire to learn all I can in my years at Penn State.**

**KIERA CHILLIS**

Multi-Year Scholarship  
Recipient



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## DENTAL SERVICES CREATE THRIVING COMMUNITY

After the establishment of the new Berwick Health and Wellness Foundation in 1999, local dentists and community members came together with an idea—a new clinic to meet the dental service needs in the community. Through guidance from the Foundation, local needs assessments, and meetings with community leaders, the Dental Health Clinic in Berwick opened its doors in January 2002. As one of its earliest grant recipients, the Clinic has remained close partners with the Foundation. The **Berwick Dental Clinic Agency Endowment Fund** was created to provide a permanent way for the community to support the Clinic’s services.

Over the last 21 years, the Clinic has served thousands of patients with no other “dental home” to call their own. With a mission to improve the dental health of the community and a commitment to provide oral health care for uninsured and low-income families, the impact and scope of the Clinic’s services is staggering. Success is measured in the stories of individuals that walk through the Clinic’s doors—from a relieved toothache to a smile with new dentures; from guidance on a young child’s oral care and nutrition to a consult that led to early detection of oral cancer. Individually, these small moments make up the daily work of the Clinic. Collectively, they create an overwhelming story of the vital role the Clinic has played in creating a healthy and thriving community.

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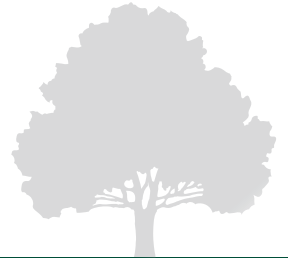
**Through good and tough times, the Foundation has been an indispensable connection. They not only provided our Clinic with the financial backing needed to get our start, but have since stayed by our side and guided us through decisions and needs related to location, personnel, equipment, and expanding our services. We know our impact would not have been possible without the Foundation.**

**DR. WILLIAM PADNER**

Clinic Board President

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Community Giving Foundation  
is a regional philanthropic  
organization investing  
endowment funds, large and  
small, to benefit the communities  
and residents of Pennsylvania's  
Central Susquehanna region.  
Partner with us at *csgiving.org*.



## THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE GIVING

Each of the stories in this book are examples of people just like you committed to improving their communities. Some of these gifts meet immediate needs today, while others are planned for future sustainability. It is because of the trust and connections the Foundation has built that these gifts last and grow forever.

We want you to be part of our next 25 years and beyond. When we all come together, combining our unique passions and strengths, we can achieve bigger and better things—giving more to organizations that are doing important work to help our communities thrive.

There is a place for you in our Foundation story. Donating to the **Fund for the Community Giving Foundation** will help us carry on a local legacy of generosity—both now and for years to come. Join us on this philanthropic journey. ♥





Community Giving  

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FOUNDATION™

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FOR GOOD. **FOR EVER.** ♥