

OUR TOWN FOUNDATION

★ Shaping Hamburg's Future ★

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

February 19, 2012



Blueprint
COMMUNITIES



Taste of
Hamburg-er Festival



Our Town Foundation is a charitable non-profit 501(c) 3 organization funded in part by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Dept. of Community and Economic Development with support from the Borough of Hamburg, local businesses, and private property owners.

2012 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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HERITAGE TOWN & TOURS

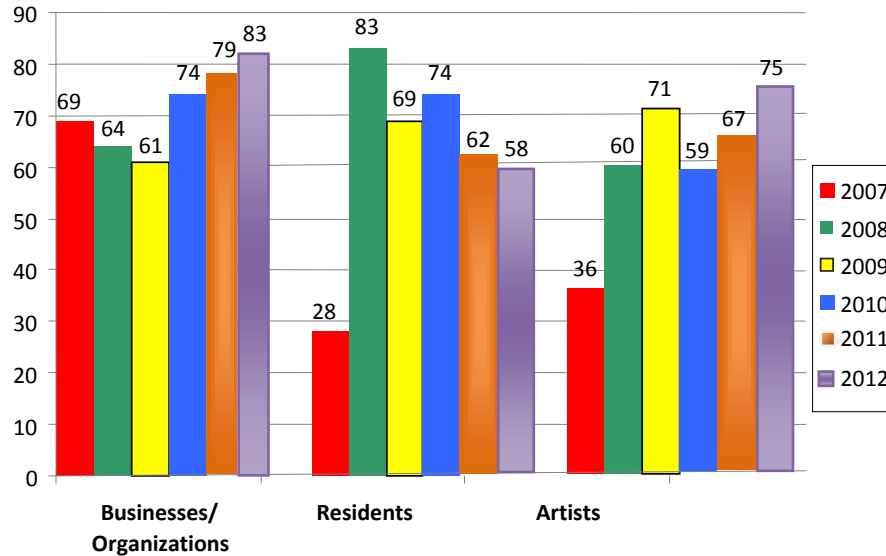
Kay Greenawalt
Brian Warfel
Pat Adams
Carol Adam
Steve Kiefer
Ron Leh
Harold Luther

Special thanks to all the volunteers who donated 2804.5 hours of their time in 2012!

Membership

Through the generosity of donors that have faith in our program, the Foundation is able to carry out its mission. 216 residents, artists, and businesses were members of Our Town Foundation in 2012.

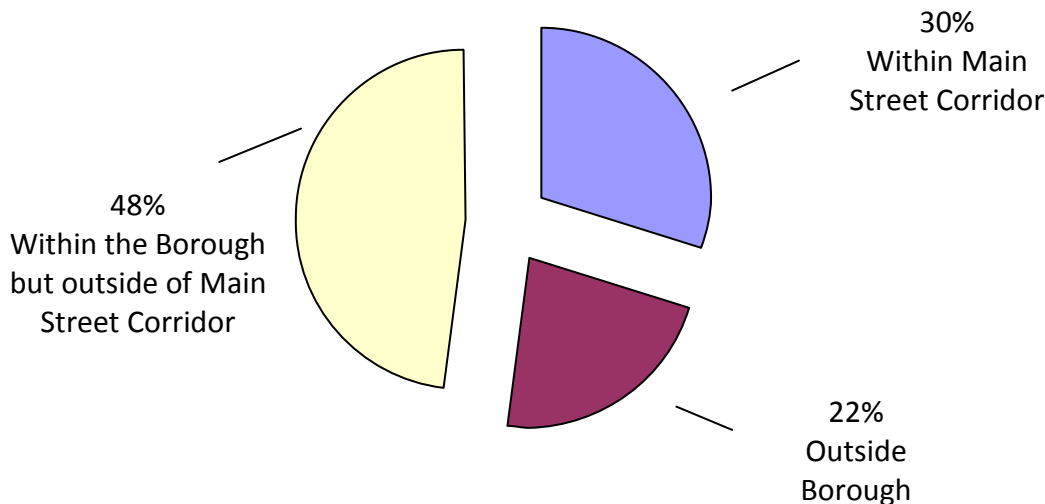
Membership Growth / Loss (6 Years)



Business/Organization Membership (83 members)

Business membership remains strong with the Foundation despite the economic hard times we have faced over the last several years. The Foundation continues to attract business members in downtown and in the surrounding area. Witnessing the growth of the neighboring communities in the business sector, it is vital for the Foundation to reach out and support these businesses as well, since they play a role in attracting visitors, residents, and entrepreneurs into the area.

2012 BUSINESS MEMBER LOCATIONS



Resident Membership (58 members)

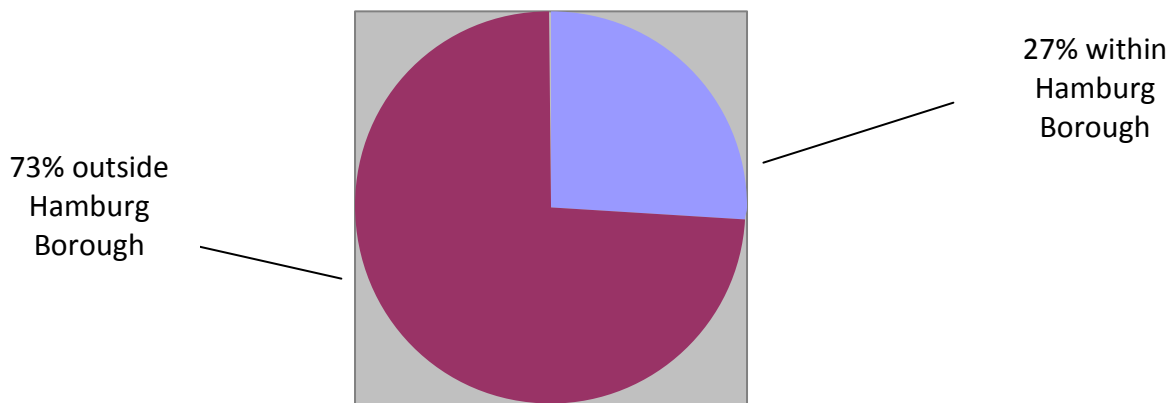
The residential sector also benefits from the Foundation's revitalization efforts. As community improvements are made, the quality of life improves and the values of homes increase. Resident memberships from within the Borough as well as the neighboring townships confirm that the community supports our endeavors.

Residential membership has declined slightly over the past several years due to lack of solicitation for additional residential members. This year, OTF aims to reach out to the residential community to advance the awareness of the Foundation and what it has accomplished over the past 10 years, as well as ask for their support.

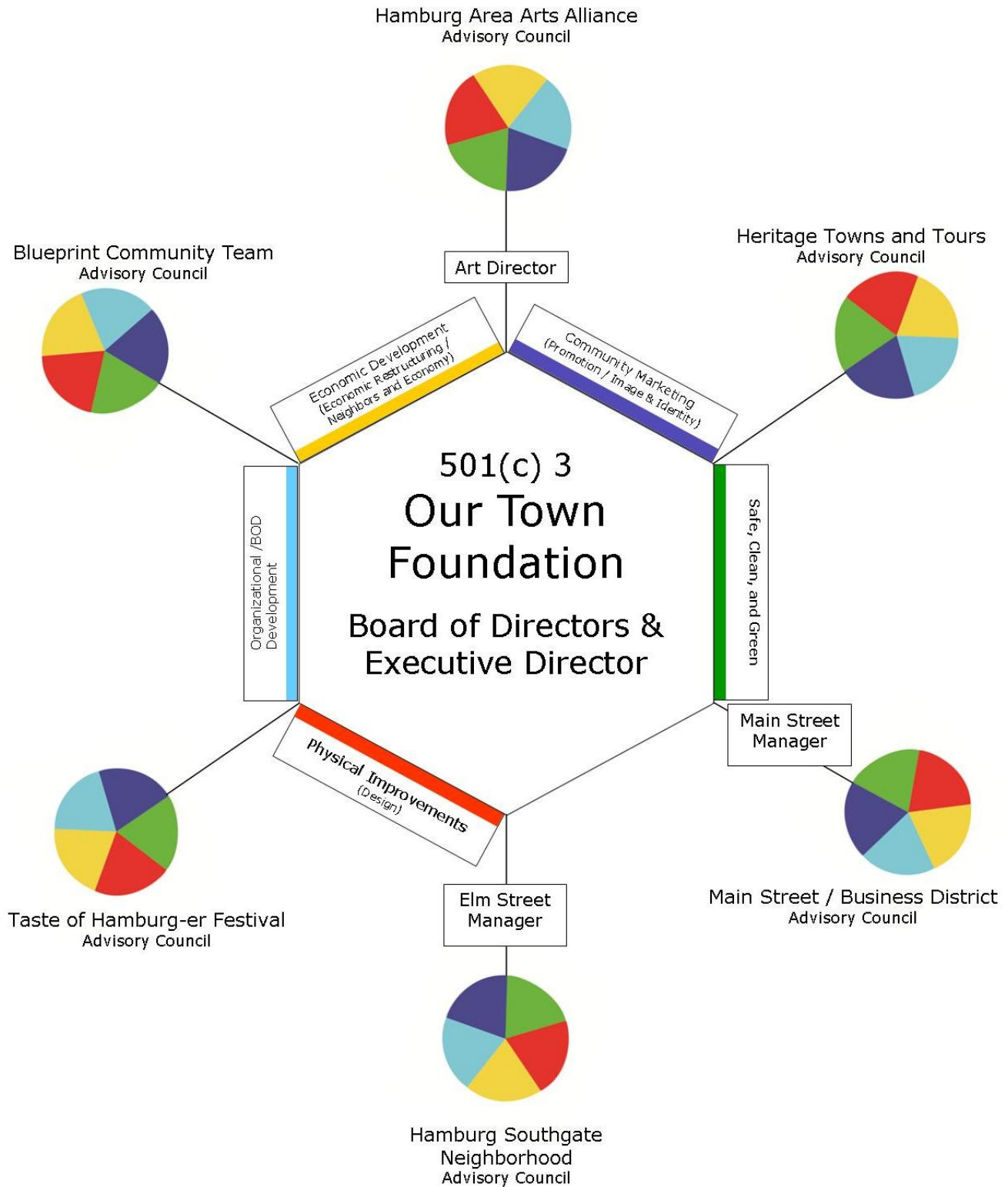
Artist Membership (75 members)

Upon initiation in 2006, the Hamburg Area Arts Alliance (HAAA) consisted of a handful of local artists – both visual and performing - who felt the arts were underserved in the area. The Alliance now boasts 75 members, showing an increase of approximately 10% in each of the past three years. The Gallery of Hamburg, a co-op managed by the HAAA has also witnessed tremendous growth in 2012 with a 40% increase in artists displaying and selling their work from the previous year. Of the 75 HAAA members, 52 of them display in the Gallery, providing residents and tourists a sampling of our local arts and culture. Sales within the Gallery increased 45% percent in 2012 over 2011.

LOCATION OF ART ALLIANCE MEMBERS 2012



Our Town Foundation Organizational Structure



Main Street – Where it all Began

The Main Street Mission: To revitalize and preserve downtown Historic Hamburg for future generations to enjoy.

The Main Street Vision: Our vision of downtown Hamburg is one of vibrant streets lined with restored historic buildings filled with shops, restaurants, and professional services. Visitors and residents will walk on new sidewalks adorned with flowers and ornamentation. Monthly events will be held. Hamburg will once again be the premier location in Northern Berks to shop, dine, and be entertained.

Downtowns are the heart of a community; they are symbolic of a district's economy, quality of life, and public pride. A downtown is a long-term community asset that must be nurtured, maintained, and promoted. Having a well developed, well-educated, financially stable revitalization organization is the best way to ensure that our downtown will be successful for the long term.

Commercial districts are prominent employment centers. Even the smallest commercial districts employ hundreds of people and are often collectively the community's largest employer. Thus, successful downtowns provide incentive for all current residents to remain. Main street property owners pay a significant portion of the community's tax base. If the district declines, property values drop, placing more of a tax burden on other parts of town. Likewise, a healthy commercial core protects property values in surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Besides the financial advantages, a strong business district provides convenience for the residents. Downtown Hamburg is within walking distance of the residential base, providing easy accessibility for the community and reducing the reliance on auto-dependent shopping. The local government offices are located within walking distance as well.

Lastly, a thriving downtown provides an important civic forum, where members of the community can congregate. The King Frost Parade, Taste of Hamburg-er Festival, Beach Night, and other events all reinforce sense of community. When viewing a movie at the Hamburg Strand Theatre, or getting a bite to eat at our many restaurants - surely you will see friends or neighbors. Where would we congregate without our community centers?

Downtown Hamburg possesses a great deal of historic character – the town still contains significant architectural styles and historical properties. Preservation of these assets increases property values and attracts interested investors and tourists into the town. Older boroughs which are preserving their historical assets are the ones succeeding in today's competitive market. We must use the past to inspire the present.

Cultural and heritage tourism is on the rise as well; therefore, we must continue to preserve and enhance our numerous heritage resources that are available for our residents and visitors to enjoy.

Hamburg Southgate Neighborhood

Maple Street to Walnut Street Neighborhood Revitalization Program

Hamburg Southgate Neighborhood Mission: The program aims to sustain an enticing neighborhood that offers a higher quality of life through community ownership, to encourage and stimulate growth and prosperity while maintaining the historical integrity and beauty of the neighborhood setting, and to instill a sense of rebirth and pride amongst those residing in the neighborhood.

Hamburg Southgate Neighborhood Vision: The program will offer a safe and friendly atmosphere for community integration to occur, thus inspiring homeownership and neighborhood empowerment. Its convenient accessibility to several major roadways and an abundance of available resources in the downtown will encourage new homebuyers to raise their families in the neighborhood.

The Hamburg Southgate Neighborhood will enhance the usability of its recreational assets by creating a pedestrian-friendly environment that is both accessible and inviting to multiple generations. Parks, green space, and community gatherings will abound.

The neighborhood will embrace its sense of place – preserving its historical appeal and deep-rooted values while integrating its recent diversity of character.

In 2011, Our Town Foundation received word that we were finally designated by DCED as an Elm Street community – one of 28 communities in PA to have this designation. Being designated as an Elm Street Community increases the opportunity to receive up to hundreds of thousands of dollars in residential reinvestment grants, if funding remains available from DCED.

The Elm Street neighborhood in Hamburg, named Hamburg Southgate Neighborhood (HSN), consists of 15 blocks at the southern end of town – between Walnut and Maple Streets, including 3rd and 4th streets, and Peach and Primrose Alleys.

This coming year marks the second year of implementation of the 5 year plan with a variety of neighborhood events, programs, and resident involvement.

Southgate has had a good amount of success gaining community support for events and initiatives over the past year. 25 resident and community organization volunteers have been actively assisting with event coordination, general planning at neighborhood steering committee meetings, or acting as block captains, delivering newsletters and flyers to their block. Six businesses in the neighborhood footprint and four businesses located in the near vicinity have sponsored HSN events and initiatives. HSN hopes to continue to gain resident involvement and partner with local businesses and organizations to meet the objectives of the 5-year plan.

2012 Hamburg Southgate Neighborhood Accomplishments

- Hosted a number of neighborhood events
 - 2 Mixers held at the Reading Railroad Heritage Museum, approximately 50 residents in attendance at both events
 - Neighborhood Block Party, with approximately 100 residents in attendance
 - Great American Cleanup Event & Cookout, approximately 60 volunteers participated
 - Community Bazaar & Auction
 - Build & Fly Youth Event
 - Glow Guide Initiative during the borough's trick or treat night
- Initiated a façade improvement program
- Gathered input from 25 residents who completed a neighborhood survey, which provided a list of interested volunteers, and a number of resident email address wishing to receive regular updates
- Informational magnets were distributed to each household that gave information about trash and recycling pickup, street sweeping, and local resource contacts
- Staff graduated from the Pennsylvania Downtown Center's Community Revitalization Academy, Elm Street track
- Unveiled the design of the neighborhood logo
- Established a Facebook account with 86 "friends" and continue to update the existing Nextdoor.com social networking site
- 3 Neighborhood Newsletters were distributed to residents by 5 volunteer block captains
- Created design plans and price list for a complete tot lot renovation
- Partnered with OTF to create welcome packets for new residents



2013 Hamburg Southgate Neighborhood Committee Goals

- Complete tot lot renovation, and spread awareness about its place in the community
- Work with the Hamburg borough to "green up" the 3rd & Grand Streets parking lot
- Establish an outreach program for widows and the elderly, partnering with Blue Mountain Academy
- Initiate streetscape project to improve sidewalk and street conditions, and improve lighting
- Establish a political action group and a crime watch
- Coordinate the placement of 4 additional public trash receptacles in the neighborhood, painted with nature designs by local artists
- Continue to seek volunteer involvement from within the community
- Encourage a bond between existing town businesses and neighborhood residents
- Participate in OTF's fundraising events and create new opportunities to raise funds
- Tie in the neighborhood with other local community events/activities
- Increase tax base and property values by encouraging renovations of blighted and underused properties
- Partner with Hamburg National Wildlife Habitat Committee on a future garden party mixer to educate residents on the importance of native plants
- Host a Zumbathon Fundraiser

The Blueprint Community Team: Let's Work Together!

The Team's mission: To provide knowledge, education, and opportunities for social, economical and recreational growth in the Borough of Hamburg.

As a Blueprint Community, our vision is for the Borough of Hamburg to become a premier location to live, work and play.

Formed in 2005, Hamburg's Blueprint Community team consists of representatives from numerous local organizations and businesses who collaboratively seek improvement for the whole borough. The committee members should be considered a strategy board - they are not necessarily the volunteers that complete the projects. The group mainly provides expertise, oversight, and coordination of community projects.

Successful communities are ones that offer a thriving business district, natural recreational opportunities, arts & culture, and a strong educational program. The key to attracting employers to the area is not offering the best incentives, but rather offering a superior quality of life to the employees.

The Blueprint Team's "Action Plan for the Future" details desired projects in 8 categories: Recreation, Traffic/Transportation, Arts/Culture/Heritage, Hamburg Pride, Hospitality/Visitor needs, Services and Education, Property Values, and Housing.

Funding for implementation of specific projects is sought from public and private sources such as the PA Department of Community & Economic Development, the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the USDA, and the Schuylkill River Heritage Association, as well as County programs such as Community Development Block Grants and the Greater Berks Development Fund.

Local partnering organizations include:

- Borough of Hamburg
- Reading Railroad Heritage Museum
- Hamburg Area Historical Society
- North Berks Recreational Assoc.
- Blue Mountain Wildlife
- Hamburg Area School District
- Hamburg Rotary Club

Major Projects initiated by the Blueprint Team & Partners since 2005

- Native Wildlife Habitat Program
- Affordable Housing Program (Provide housing rehab funding for 15 low to moderate income families)
- Schuylkill River Enhancements – trails, canoe launch, parking areas, picnic tables
- Field house façade improvement
- Received designation from the National Trust for Historic Preservation as a Downtown Historic District
- Initiated the Heritage Towns and Tours Program
- Resurrected a Downtown Farmer’s Market
- Installed soccer fields at Kaercher Creek Park
- Hamburg Community Park improvements – pool, concession stands, ball fields, etc.
- Various improvements at the Kernsville Dam including a butterfly garden and additional trails
- Expansion of the Reading Railroad Heritage Museum
- New holiday decorations in town
- Redevelopment of the blighted industrial area off of Route 61
- Rehab of the blighted Wright’s Knitwear building into senior housing
- Formed the Hamburg Area Arts Alliance and the Gallery of Hamburg

Heritage Towns and Tours Program

HT&T Mission: Hamburg's Heritage Town and Tours Committee was created to preserve, enhance, and promote the heritage resources within the Hamburg Area School District.

HT&T Vision: A vibrant and revitalized downtown and community that promotes, utilizes, and preserves local heritage resources. Natural recreational opportunities will be abundant and supported by regularly occurring events held to celebrate and promote the Schuylkill River Trail Region. Promotional materials, site resources, and outdoor leisure initiatives will improve the quality of life for local residents and attract visitors to navigate trails and visit shops and attractions in the community. This will increase heritage tourism and business opportunities. The Schuylkill River Trail will become a popular destination for travelers, outdoor enthusiasts, and vacationers.

Hamburg was one of five communities chosen to take part in a "Heritage Towns and Tours Program" initiated by the Schuylkill River Greenway Association in 2011. The Program's aim is to assist communities within the Schuylkill River Heritage Area (SRHA) in developing heritage and cultural tourism offerings and attractions, enhance the character of our historic district, link visitors to the Schuylkill River walking trails and water trails, and to increase visitation and visitor spending, thereby improving the local economy.

Heritage resources are defined as the historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological, scenic, and natural resources that are present within a community. They are the unique places, attractions, and stories that make up a community's identity. Examples are historic buildings and remnants, parks, waterways, scenic mountains, and local trail systems. These resources are valuable commodities of the past and present that need to be promoted, preserved, and utilized.

What does heritage preservation mean for our community? Implementing a heritage tourism and preservation program will make our community a better place to live as well as a better place to visit. There are impressive benefits, which are both social and economic. Preservation increases municipal revenue by creating higher property values. Heritage resources are capable of bringing additional dollars into our local community and region by enhancing cultural heritage tourism. But more importantly, celebrating a community's heritage also instills pride in residents. Preservation equates to an improved quality of life through safer, healthier neighborhoods that are more pleasing to both residents and tourists. We must ensure that our heritage resources are preserved for our future generations to enjoy.



2012 Heritage Towns & Tours Accomplishments

- Designed and printed 10,000 copies of the *Hamburg Area Visitor's Guide*
- Installed narrative historic markers at the Kernsville Dam Recreation Area
- Designed and placed a bicycle rack in the shape of a train at the RR Heritage Museum
- Hosted a Geocaching Clinic at the Hamburg park
- Designed wayfinding signs and chose placement locations within the Borough and Tilden Township
- Completed feasibility studies on the Balthaser Market house
- Added all local heritage resources to the hamburgpa.org website
- Promoted weekend get-a-ways through the state tourism website – visitpa.com
- Placed advertisements promoting Hamburg and our resources in the Schuylkill County and Berks County Visitor Bureau's annual publications
- Ordered historical property markers for 18 contributing homes in the National Historic District area of the town

2013 Heritage Towns and Tours Goals

- Save the Hamburg Strand Theatre from closing – start a capital campaign to raise sufficient funds to purchase the building; offer performing arts as well as movies
- Improve the on-ground connections between the water and land trails to our downtown by providing literature at trailheads
- Erect way finding signs in town directing people to local heritage resources
- Erect information kiosks or additional brochure racks at cultural points of interest
- Place additional signage on the highways directing people to the cultural resources
- Strengthen the existing bike loaner program that is managed by the Schuylkill River Heritage Association
- Map out all the heritage resources in the area
- Expand marketing efforts
- Continue to work with potential developers of the Balthaser market house
- Encourage local government to enact local historic preservation policies to preserve our resources



Natural recreational opportunities abound in the area.

The Hamburg Area Arts Alliance: The Cultural Movement

The Alliance's Mission: To support and showcase local artists and to advance the awareness of arts in the community.

Results of a 2005 market assessment of Hamburg's business district and the surrounding area clearly concluded that the town's future and growth would depend on whether it shunned or embraced the arts and culture of the area.

Our Town Foundation acted by forming the Hamburg Area Arts Alliance (HAAA) in 2006. As the Alliance celebrates its 7th year anniversary, the future of the organization looks strong as dedicated volunteers and members continue to carry on the mission of supporting the arts movement in the community. The Alliance boasts 75 members, of which 52 display their work in the Gallery of Hamburg.

The Alliance hosts many arts activities and events throughout the year. Member artists are given first choice to participate, providing an opportunity to sell their work or perform. Event fees are always kept at a minimum and many times are offered at reduced rates to members allowing more artists to partake in the festivities.

Visual arts members are invited to display their work in the Gallery of Hamburg, a co-op art gallery managed by the Alliance. Located in the heart of the downtown, the co-op provides an affordable means for artists to display and sell their work. The Gallery first opened in 2006 and quickly outgrew its original space. Its present location has over 1,800 square feet of display space allowing all mediums of art to be showcased.

The arts support economic development by strengthening communities, stimulating demand for local products and supporting the economic activities of other local businesses.

The Alliance's growth to date can be contributed to our dedicated members – a team of creative and imaginative people who share a common vision of a society rich with culture.



Kathy Miller with Chippy the Chipmunk at a book signing in the Gallery



Artwork displayed in the Gallery of Hamburg

2012 Arts Alliance Accomplishments

- Hosted the Second Annual Hamburg Arts Fest, adding a “rolling art exhibition” car show and an artist contest
- Provided a variety of art classes for the public
- Hosted two membership art shows at Cabela’s Retail store
- Conducted a silent art auction during the Hamburg Arts Fest
- The Gallery participated in the Best Kept Secrets Tour, which fostered 375 new Gallery visitors
- Experienced the best year for sales in the Gallery of Hamburg since it opened
- Hosted a “Meet the Artist Night” in conjunction with a networking mixer with local business owners and residents
- Increased artist participation in the Gallery of Hamburg by 40%
- Received a \$2,000 Program Stream Grant from the PA Council of the Arts
- Designed and printed a new brochure to promote the Gallery
- Networked with other arts organizations
- Coordinated a raffle fundraiser

2013 Arts Alliance Goals

- Continue to plan and host the annual Arts Fest, Cabela’s art shows, a silent auction, and an art raffle
- Offer once a month workshops to the general public in different mediums in lieu of weekly art classes
- Host meet the artist nights and artist’s receptions
- Augment the ways we utilize the www.hamburgpa.org website to promote the arts by providing e-commerce opportunities for our member artists
- Partner with the Walk-in Art Center in Schuylkill Haven to offer additional workshops and activities geared to the arts
- Resurrect Halloween window painting contest in the downtown business district
- Partner with the Hamburg Strand Theatre Advisory Council to display visual art in the theatre and to initiate performing arts in the theatre



Artists in the Gallery display a wide variety of art

Taste of Hamburg-er Festival

Approximately 35,000 people attended the 9th annual Taste of Hamburg-er Festival in 2012! According to our estimates, the festival continues to grow in attendance approximately 40% each year. The first year brought approximately 3,000 and it has grown by leaps and bounds ever since.



The event is one that supports a broad range of stakeholders within the community, while serving as a fund raiser for the Our Town Foundation. The downtown businesses see an increase in their revenue that day due to the volume of people that are strolling right outside of their stores. Many businesses located within the festival corridor display their wares on the streets to entice people into their shops. It is reported that the day of the festival is now the best day of the year for the merchants, even surpassing their annual sidewalk sale profits. Numerous local nonprofits and churches also participate, either by selling food or providing an activity. This also serves as a fund raiser for them and provides an excellent opportunity to network within the community. Regional artists and crafters are encouraged to set up displays providing a means to display and sell their artwork. Benefiting the most, however, are the local restaurants and caterers who sell a variety of burgers and other side dishes to the festival attendees. The festival provides an opportunity for the chefs to become creative with their burgers, possibly trying a new recipe for visitors to sample. Over 15,000 burgers were consumed during the 9th annual festival!

In 2010 the festival expanded from three blocks to five, providing additional vendor space on Pine and South 3rd Streets. In 2011, it expanded again to include ½ block of State Street, and in 2012, the last expansion took the festival down to 2nd Street on State. The 7 block area is completely filled with burger stands, artisans and crafters, entertainment, children’s activities, and more.

The festival has become an anticipated event that grows with every year. It has become a homecoming day for families and friends. While the majority of visitors come from Berks County, we have seen an increase in people attending from the surrounding counties due to increased advertising outside of our immediate area. In addition, because of an increased web presence and marketing, visitors from out of state continue to increase as well. According to the results of a zip code survey done in conjunction with the People’s Choice Award for Best Burger, the results show that people are attending the festival from:

Hamburg	29%
Other Berks Communities	37%
Lehigh County	5%
Schuylkill County	12%
Other PA Counties	13%
Outside the State	2%

Be sure to mark August 31, 2013 on the calendar. You’re guaranteed to have a great time!

2012 Festival Additions

- Expansion of the festival area to 7 blocks
- The 2012 festival hosted the National Hamburger Eating Competition, sponsored by Red Robin restaurant. Nine professional eaters from across the states chowed down as many Red Robin burgers as possible in 8 minutes.
- A Dine and Dash race organized by Blue Mountain Wildlife, this race challenged contestants to eat a burger, run a mile, eat a burger, and run another mile to reach the finish line.
- A themed stand competition
- 2012 was the first year for the festival's Facebook page, which gathered a quick 1,300 likes
- Billboard advertising

2012 Statistics

- Approximately 35,000 attended
- Approximately 15,000 burgers sold
- 29 kegs of beer consumed
- 109 volunteers
- 1600 Volunteer hours
- 39 monetary sponsors
- 11 sponsors of product or services
- 31 burger stands
- 40 artists/crafter stands
- 24 home based business stands
- 19 miscellaneous literature/non-profit stands
- 19 miscellaneous food vendor stands
- 11 activity stands
- 17 performing acts
- 55 wooden cows sold to children to decorate



Crowds enjoying the 9th Annual Taste of Hamburg-er Festival

Organization – The Board of Directors

Collectively, the Board of Directors (Organization Committee) assumes legal and philosophical responsibilities for all program activities. The Board is solely responsible for establishing program policy, hiring staff, and determining the goals for the organization. They make recommendations to - and oversee the work of - the numerous committees, and they approve the annual program budget and committee action plans. The Board of Directors strives to get everyone working towards common goals.

In 2012 there was substantial progress for Our Town Foundation and with the continued hard work and dedication of our volunteers, committees, and staff, 2013 will prove to be the same.

As this year's Annual Report demonstrates, the Foundation has become an extremely diverse organization that is reaching out to all facets of the Hamburg Community in an effort to maintain and further enhance this already very special place. With the continued expansion of our revitalization efforts over the past years, the Foundation evolved into a full- fledged Community Revitalization Corporation (CRC) currently directing several community programs. This requires partnerships with other organizations ensuring that our revitalization efforts stretch throughout the entire Borough and nearby areas.

- Downtown Main Street, organized in 2002 – manager hired in 2003
- Taste of Hamburg-er Festival, organized in 2004
- Blueprint Community Program, organized in 2005
- Hamburg Area Arts Alliance, organized in 2006
- Gallery of Hamburg co-op opened in 2007
- Native Wildlife Habitat Program, organized in 2007
- Hamburg Southgate Neighborhood Revitalization Program designation granted in 2010, Implementation began in 2011
- Heritage Towns & Tours organized in 2011
- Affordable Housing Program, initiated in 2011
- Farmer's Market, initiated in 2011

In addition to the above programs, the Foundation serves as a Visitor/Information Center for the area.

A Community Revitalization Corporation organizational structure provides many benefits as listed below:

- Elimination of duplicative administrative costs, such as insurance and office space
- Shared staff – reduced labor costs
- Less competitive fund raising
- Increased chance of receiving sales tax exemption status
- Increased opportunities for additional grant funds
- Simplicity of adding additional advisory councils as needed
- Leadership development and progression framework
- Stronger ties to the community – more of a community-wide organization assisting additional stakeholders
- Effective volunteer coordination between Elm Street, Main Street and other programs
- Shared membership funds and activities
- Reduction in the creation of new non-profits

Organizations go through three distinct organizational phases:

1. The Catalyst phase: During this phase the revitalization program is created, the organization builds collaborative partnerships, develops basic revitalization skills, and establishes a credible presence in the community.
2. Growth phase: Most of the major reinvestment needed to implement projects takes place during this period.
3. Management phase: In this stage, the organization constantly monitors the community and helps the business district make necessary economic adjustments; ensures that the district is well maintained; and continues to stimulate physical improvements and quality of life innovations.

The catalyst phase typically lasts from 2 – 4 years, the growth phase, about 8 – 12 years; and the management phase is ongoing. Some programs cycle back and repeat certain aspects of earlier organization phases as they mature, as the marketplace changes, and as the program's staff and leadership change over time.

Our Town Foundation is currently in the stage 2 and 3 phases. The Southgate Neighborhood Program, the Heritage Towns and Tours Program, and the Taste of Hamburg-er Festival are in the growth stage. The Hamburg Area Arts Alliance and the Downtown Main Street Program are in the management phase - the programs have been in existence for quite a number of years and are past the growth stage; however, adjustments and improvements are made as needed.

Communities that are most successful are those that have grasped the concept that revitalization is not a project with a beginning and an end. It never ends. Just as sound management of any business remains imperative after its start up, the ongoing management of community revitalization projects is essential to economic stability and quality of life as well.



Brian Warfel (in the middle) won the Pennsylvania Downtown Center's 2012 Volunteer of the Year Award. Here he is pictured with OTF Board president, Steve Macbeth (on the right) and OTF Supporter, Ernie Sutton (on the left)

The Board of Directors (Organization Committee) is responsible for the following:

- Assuring sustainability of the organization
- Forming additional advisory councils as applicable
- Assuring all proper policies and procedures are followed according to bi-laws and government regulations
- Capital campaigns, membership drives
- Researching additional funding sources
- Networking with other organizations, public representatives, business owners and community leaders
- Assessing the borough's assets, liabilities, and current trends and weaknesses
- Determining priorities and approving the committee's annual work plans based on community needs and desires
- All financial aspects including the annual budget
- Seeking community involvement and media support
- Recruiting volunteers including school students
- Overseeing the staff and the daily operations of the office
- Attend training sessions to stay educated on all aspects of implementing a Community Revitalization Program
- Membership gatherings; holiday dinner, summer picnic, annual meetings



Executive Director, Deena Kershner,
making a presentation at the 2012
Annual Meeting



Two Hamburg Area High School
student volunteers paint winter scenes
on an empty storefront window to help
beautify the downtown

Community Marketing (Formerly Promotions): It's All About Image

Committee Goal: To promote the town as a social, cultural, and economic center by marketing the charm and unique characteristics that Hamburg offers. The PA Downtown Center states that "promotion means selling the image and promise of Main Street to all prospects, including residents, visitors, shoppers, and entrepreneurs."

Downtown Hamburg serves as a hub for commerce, culture and community life. We are fortunate to have numerous natural recreational assets surround us, as well as many local historical attractions. A positive image of a town is the most important factor in revitalizing any town. Image will determine a community's potential for vitality and prosperity. The Community Marketing Committee strives to promote a positive image of Hamburg – one that offers plentiful goods and services, a variety of activities, a positive attitude, a beautiful environment, and a quality of life that people seek when choosing a location to live.

There are several types of marketing that must be done for the town to be successful:

1. Market to the local residents – we must educate the locals on what Hamburg has to offer and on the importance of supporting their local economy.
2. Market to tourists – we must determine who our potential shoppers are, what they are looking for, who the competition is, and then promote our assets to these visitors.
3. Market to business entrepreneurs – we must identify targeted businesses and persuade them to establish a business or expand in the Hamburg area.

In order to do this, we must constantly develop new strategies in this ever-changing market.

1. Provide events and activities to bring people to town
2. Embrace social media in all forms
3. Promote the town as a whole

The Community Marketing Committee is not all about promoting the businesses – it also needs to promote the Foundation. We are aware that after ten years of existence, there are still many people in the community that are not aware of everything we do and the benefits of supporting the organization. This committee - along with the Board of Directors - continues to spread the word of our accomplishments.

By the Numbers...

- Hamburgpa.org, which we maintain, received 201,523 page views
- 117,534 people have seen our Facebook page posts
- 1,011 people receive our bi-weekly E-newsletter
- About 35 local business professionals have attended EACH of our 3 business mixers
- COUNTLESS people pick up our brochures in local businesses to learn about local businesses & services, upcoming events, and other community resources
- Facebook Likes: 820, up from 417 in 2011
- Twitter Followers: 250, up from 11 in 2011



2012 Community Marketing Committee Accomplishments

- Increased social media presence by posting on Facebook and Twitter approximately four times per week
- Email blasts were updated from simple text emails to MailChimp which is sent to over 1,000 people on a bi-weekly basis
- Organized co-op advertising opportunities for the Reading Eagle and Berks County Living Magazine
- Ran a series of “Cash Mobs” to gather groups of people to visit local businesses for the purpose of giving them a burst of customers
- Designed and printed the Hamburg Area Visitors Guide
- Designed and printed 15,000 copies of the yearly event schedules
- Professional printed the “101 Fun Things to Do” Brochure
- Participated in the 1st Berk’s County Best Kept Secret Tour
- Organized holiday coupon sheets
- Ran Business Spotlight in the Hamburg Area Item listing business and artist members, an ad and a write up
- Distributed “Welcome Wagon” packets to new residents

2013 Community Marketing Goals

- Provide an opportunity for businesses to place website ads on hamburgpa.org
- Provide an opportunity for e-commerce on hamburgpa.org
- Create a mobile version of the hamburgpa.org website
- Coordinate one day or multi-day mini vacation packages
- Place additional signage along the highways
- Erect way-finding signage in the downtown
- Update, design and print an “Our Town Foundation” brochure
- Create an Our Town Foundation website, focusing on organizational information
- Continue to educate the public on the significance of having a community revitalization corporation and marketing the town as a whole



Events & Fundraising: Providing Community Activities for all to Enjoy!

Community events are a way for us to join together and support one another, while having fun and reconnecting with our neighbors. Our Town Foundation hosts several downtown events that keep people engaged in the shopping district. Events also serve as a reason for family to return to their roots and visit with their siblings.

Although misinformed – many residents believe that OTF’s primary job is to plan events. You can’t blame them for thinking that with all the exciting activity in town. While OTF can not take credit for all the events and activities (other local organizations / churches actively engage the town), they can for many of Hamburg’s happenings.

Fundraising endeavors are important to sustaining OTF – a hundred dollars here, a thousand dollars there, really adds up. These funds are often used for promoting the town or for designated projects. Pork/Chicken BBQ dinner sales and Murder Mystery Dinners continue to be opportune fundraisers. Residents have also embraced the Hometown Collectibles – watch for series # 14 of the old Fryer’s 5 & 10 Store to be available soon!

2012 Events & Fundraising Activities

- Fundraisers
 - Kauffman’s Chicken BBQ fundraiser
 - Smokey Bear Pork BBQ dinner fundraiser
 - Murder Mystery Dinners – 2 per year
 - Cabela’s hot dog stand
 - Rubber duck race down Mill Creek
 - Raffles
 - Food Sales during events
 - Wine & Wager Tour
 - Maven Travel Fundraiser
 - Hometown Collectible sales

- Events
 - Hamburg Arts Fest
 - Beach Night – with the help of Hamburg’s MaluLani Dancers
 - Hamburg Night at the Reading Phillies
 - Taste of Hamburg-er Festival
 - Catch the Spirit holiday event



Physical Improvements (Formerly Design): Receiving a Face Lift

Committee Goal: To make the downtown more visually aesthetic, easily navigable, and well identified, while preserving its historical integrity and our heritage. The PA Downtown Center said, “Good design conveys a visual message about what Main Street is and what it has to offer.”

Design is about getting our Borough into top physical shape. Capitalizing on Hamburg’s best assets, such as our historic buildings and traditional downtown layout is just part of the story. An inviting atmosphere created through window displays, landscaped parking areas, proper signs, clean sidewalks, and historical street lights conveys a visual message about what Hamburg is and what it has to offer.

2012 Physical Improvements Accomplishments

- Received \$75,000 in Façade Grant dollars to be spent over the next 3 years. \$30,000 to be spent in Elm Street, \$45,000 to be spent in Main Street
- 8 façade applications were approved for exterior work
- Sanctioned a Safe, Clean & Green Ambassador and provided her with supplies to continue her volunteer work of cleaning the downtown
- Offered design assistance to residents who requested it
- Ordered 18 historic property markers for residents’ homes who live in the historic district
- Southgate Neighborhood homes were photographed and conditions documented for each individual property
- Southgate residents were polled, and a tot lot final sketch was created including all potential improvements

2013 Physical Improvements Committee Goals

- Rehab the tot lot playground on Primrose Alley. Seek additional DCED grants for the Façade Improvement Program for properties within the Main St. corridor
- Possible extension of streetscape improvements in the 100 block of South 4th Street and on the 500 block of South 3rd Street
- Encourage enforcement of borough ordinances, i.e. weeds, trash, blighted buildings
- Assist Borough with projects in the Hamburg Community Park
- Promote use of the Berks County Rehab program for property owners
- Green up the town by creating pocket parks (if funding is available)
- Continue to seek donations for additional holiday decorations
- Erect a fish feeder on South 3rd Street by Mill Creek.



Economic Development Committee: Building a Better Tomorrow

Committee Goal: To assist in the growth of downtown businesses while recruiting new and diverse ones, the whole time encouraging the use of vacant properties. The PA Downtown Center says that “economic restructuring means finding new or better purposes for Main Street enterprises.”

At a time when malls and independent stores across America are dying because of the economic crises and competition with big-box stores, architects are designing “faux” main street shopping centers to recreate the quaint charm and graciousness of places just like Hamburg. Residents and visitors can enjoy a variety of shops and services, some that offer your basic needs, and others that sell the unique items you can’t find in the malls and big box stores. Dining options range from fast food, sandwich shops, diners, and fine dining. Art & Culture now proliferates throughout the town via the Gallery of Hamburg, the Hamburg Strand Theatre, two dance studios, and numerous other businesses that embrace the opportunity of growth through art and culture. Natural recreational opportunities are abundant as well. We should appreciate the “real thing” we already have in place and do all we can to preserve it.

2012 Economic Development Accomplishments

- Hosted Hamburg’s first Economic Summit with presentations by local business organizations on the future of the Hamburg business district
- Administered a snow removal program for downtown property owners
- Hosted a Microsoft Publisher class
- Hosted a Real Estate 101 and an Estate Planning workshop
- Hosted 3 networking meetings to improve communications amongst business members
- Maintained accurate list of commercial properties for sale or lease in the borough
- Made personal visits to new businesses in town, welcoming them to the community
- Assembled “Welcome Wagon” packets for distribution to new homeowners
- Provided assistance to business owners and entrepreneurs as requested

2013 Economic Development Goals

- Complete a market analysis and marketing plan
- Update Business Recruitment and Business Retention plans
- Identify roadblocks to business entrepreneurs within the Borough and work towards eliminating the roadblocks
- Provide e-commerce opportunities on Hamburgpa.org
- Provide business evaluation service
- Host a 2nd Economic Development Summit
- Work closely with the Borough Manager, the Borough Code Enforcement Officer and the Chair of the Borough’s Planning Commission to ensure everyone has the same vision and goals for the community

