

# OUR TOWN FOUNDATION

★ Shaping Hamburg's Future ★

# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

FEBRUARY 8, 2023



Taste of  
Hamburg-er Festival



Our Town Foundation is a charitable non-profit 501(c) 3 organization

# STAFF

Deena Kershner, Executive Director  
Gabiella “Gabby” Wilson, Administrative Assistant  
Kaley Schlenker, Art Alliance Coordinator (resigned in August)  
Bethany Sholl, Theater Manager  
Stephanie Adam, Theater Coordinator

## 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 budgets and committee action plans. The Board of Directors strives to get everyone working towards common goals.

Jeff Pettit, *President*  
Chris Yost, *V.P.*  
Cindy Bleggen, *Treasurer*  
Linda Wood, *Recording Secretary*  
Stephanie Adam  
Jeremy Hoagland  
Allen Madeira  
Stephanie Menapace  
Gerry Schappell  
Dr. John Smith  
Ann Steffel  
Vreeland Wood  
Joshua Youpa



2022 Board of Directors

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

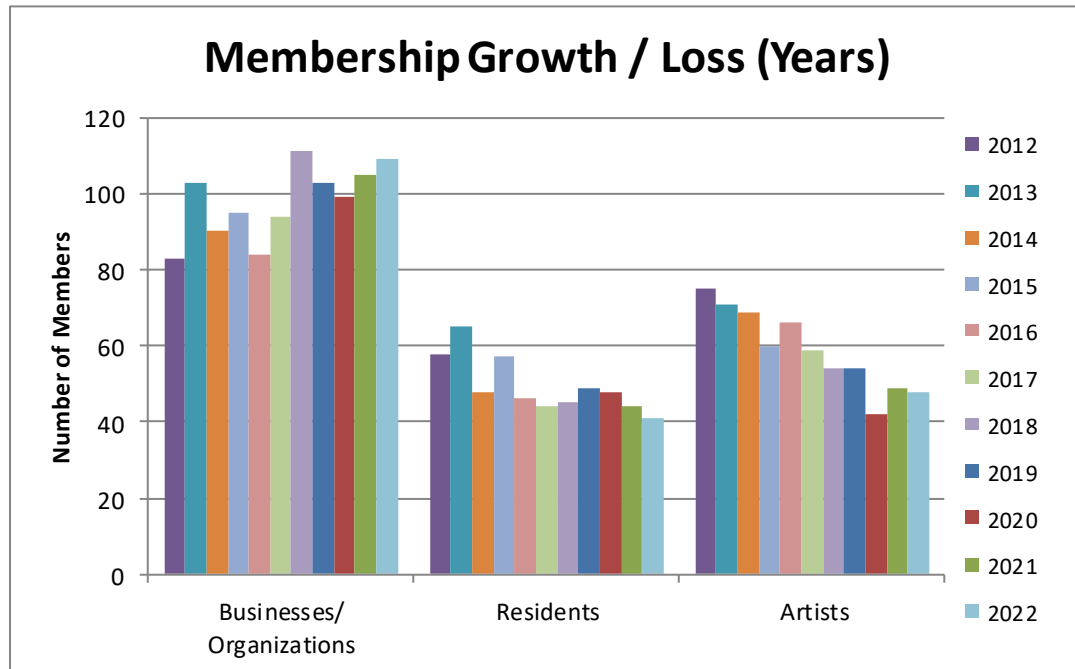
- Assuring sustainability of the organization
- Reviewing all financial aspects of the organization and approving the annual budget
- Assuring all policies and procedures are followed according to by-laws and government regulations
- Coordinates capital campaigns, membership drives
- Researching additional 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
- Seeking community involvement and media support
- Recruiting and managing the volunteer pool
- Overseeing the staff and the daily operations of the office
- Attending training sessions to stay educated on all aspects of implementing a Community Revitalization Program

# Our Town Foundation Organizational Structure



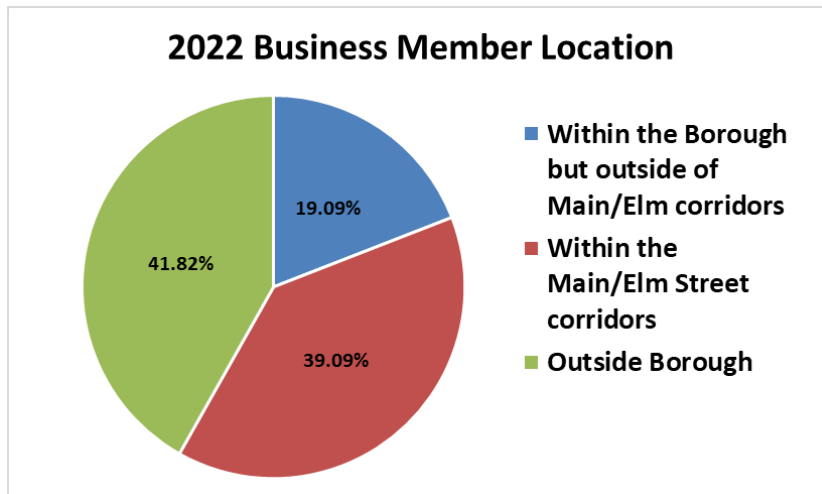
# Membership

Through the generosity of donors who have faith in its program, the Foundation is able to carry out its mission. 201 residents, artists, and businesses were members of OTF in 2022. This was an increase of three members from the previous year.



## Business/Organization Membership (110 members)

Business memberships increased by a total of five members during 2022. While the organization did lose a few of its business members from 2021, there were quite a few new members welcomed into the organization. Membership includes businesses located within the Hamburg Borough as well as surrounding townships and beyond. It is vital for the Foundation to support all businesses within the area, since they all play a role in attracting visitors, residents, and additional entrepreneurs into the community.

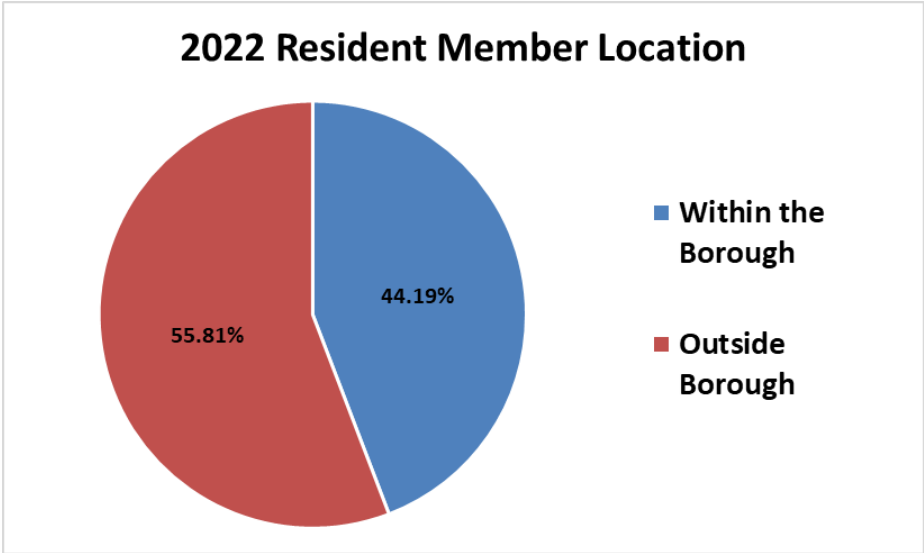


### New Business Members – 2022

- Adams & Bright
- Blue Mountain Herbals
- Candy’s Homemade Ice Cream
- Copperz Brewing Co.
- Corey’s Flooring
- Manmiller Electric
- Northeast Berks Chamber of Commerce
- Pigeon Creek Designs, LLC
- Radiological Imaging Services, LLC
- Riggins Hearing Aid Centers, LLC
- Rita’s Italian Ice
- Salem Berne United Methodist Church
- Sonlight Services, LLC
- Snorkel River Tubing Adventures
- Styles by Maureen
- The Vibe: Connect & Thrive

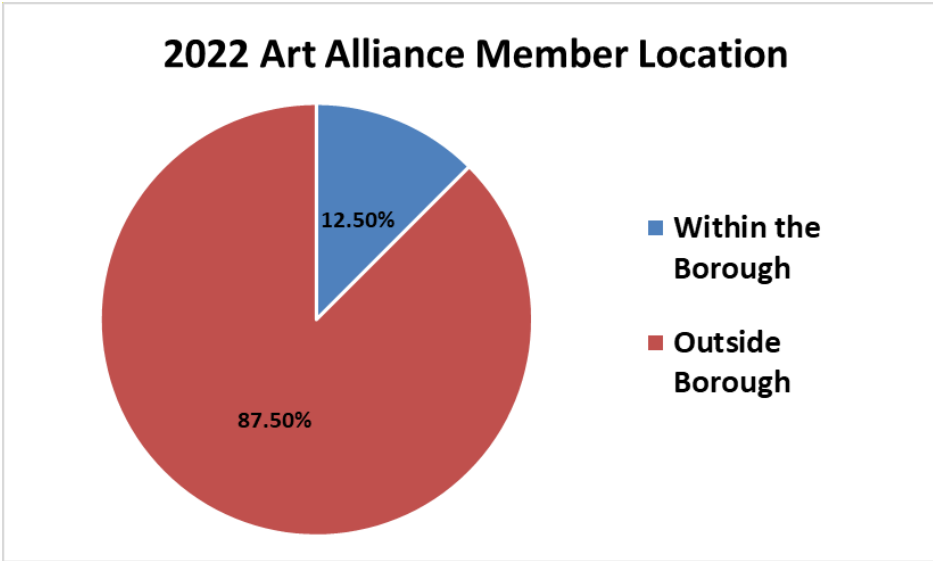
**Resident/Family Memberships (43 members)**

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. Residents enjoy the many events and activities hosted by the Foundation. Resident memberships from within the Borough as well as the neighboring townships confirm that the greater Hamburg community supports the Foundation’s endeavors.



**Artist Membership (48 members)**

The Hamburg Area Arts Alliance (HAAA) is a group of regional artists who carry out its mission to support and showcase local artists and to advance the awareness of arts in the community. The Alliance consists of 48 current members. Of those members, 37 artists display and sell their work in the Art & Craft Gallery of Hamburg, providing residents and tourists a sampling of regional arts and culture.



## Our Programs

Over the past twenty years, 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. The organization evolved from its early beginnings of being a downtown Main Street Revitalization Organization into a full-fledged Community Revitalization Corporation (CRC), expanding its efforts into several areas of the community.

Our Town Foundation has administered six different programs under the umbrella organization: Downtown Main Street Program, Taste of Hamburg-*er* Festival, Hamburg Area Arts Alliance, Hamburg Strand Theater, The Blueprint Community Program/Heritage Towns and Tours, and the Southgate Neighborhood Revitalization. This requires partnerships with other organizations and numerous community volunteers to ensure that revitalization efforts stretch throughout the entire borough and nearby areas.

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.

### Main Street – Where it all Began in 2002

*The Main Street Mission: To revitalize, promote, and preserve downtown historic Hamburg for our families and future generations to enjoy.*

*The Main Street Vision of Hamburg is one of vibrant streets adorned with restored historic buildings filled with shops, restaurants and professional services. The town will prosper from the abundant natural, cultural, and historic resources within the community. 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. A thriving downtown provides an important civic forum where members of the community can congregate. The Taste of Hamburg-*er* Festival and other downtown events all reinforce sense of community. When viewing a movie at the Hamburg Strand Theater, or getting a bite to eat at our local eateries - surely you will see friends or neighbors.

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.



4<sup>th</sup> & State  
Streets  
Then and Now



## 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.*

*The Alliance's Vision: We envision a community that engages the arts, both visual and performing. There will be public art on display; street festivals and gatherings for artists, performers and the general public; galleries and other spaces for group and solo exhibitions and sales of artwork; and educational opportunities in the form of art classes and workshops, lectures and presentations. People of all ages and races will embrace the cultural and artistic movement transpiring in the area.*

Since inception, the Alliance has faithfully adhered to its mission by offering many arts related programs and activities for the community including the opening of the Art & Craft Gallery of Hamburg where local artists can display and sell their artwork, the creation of a public arts initiative with the addition of four large painted murals and several smaller ones in the downtown, hosting "Artdrenaline" day camp for kids which combines arts with physical activities, presenting the "Hamburg Hoopla" which is a one-day music festival recognizing Hamburg's musicians, Arts Fest, First Friday Art Strolls, studio tours, art shows and competitions, Featured Artist of the Month receptions, public art classes, and silent art auctions.

During 2022, the Alliance hosted eight featured artists receptions for the public, offered blacksmithing classes in partnership with David Fisher plus nine other art classes and workshops including its first Plein Aire event, participated in the Hawk Mountain Arts Tour, hosted a marketing workshop for artists, organized and held its first Arts Alliance membership picnic, and planned and hosted its first Bingo, Beer, and BBQ event which raised \$12,000 to support the Alliance's arts programming. Due to the generous donations of its artist members, the Alliance was also able to hold its annual Silent Art Auction during the Taste of Hamburg-er Festival. In addition, the Gallery participated in several downtown Wine Walks. The Alliance is also pleased to have received a \$3,000 grant from the PA Council on the Arts in support of its arts programming.

The Alliance's continued success can be contributed to its devoted artist members – a team of creative and imaginative people who share a common vision of a community rich with culture. The future of the Arts Alliance looks strong as dedicated volunteers and members continue to carry on its mission of supporting the arts movement in the community.



**Hamburg Area Arts Alliance members enjoying their first membership picnic**

## **Taste of Hamburg-er Festival**

The annual Taste of Hamburg-er Festival is Our Town Foundation's signature event. Held every year on Labor Day Saturday, the event attracts thousands of people to the downtown. Starting as a three-block festival in 2004, it now encompasses eight blocks, three parking lots, and the grass lot on State Street. It was recently named one of the top twelve unique festivals in PA!

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, the town has seen an increase in people attending from the surrounding counties due to increased advertising outside of the immediate area. In addition, because of an increased web presence and marketing, visitors from out of state continue to increase as well.

The festival supports a broad range of stakeholders within the community, while serving as a major fundraiser for Our Town Foundation. Downtown businesses report an increase in sales due to the volume of people that are strolling right outside 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 this annual event is now the best day of the year for the merchants. Numerous nonprofits and churches also participate, either by selling food or offering an activity providing an opportunity to raise money for their organization and 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 restaurants and caterers who sell a variety of burgers and 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.

World renowned professional eater, Molly Schuyler, returned to participate in the professional burger eating competition. However, a new victor, Dan "Killer Kennedy" Kennedy, was crowned for 2022. Kennedy ate 20 full-sized Red Robin burgers in ten minutes!

The Taste of Hamburg-er Festival has its own Facebook page which has 10,200 followers, up from 9,555 at the end of 2021. This represents approximately a 7% increase in followers. Other festival highlights include:

- Approximately 35,000 attended the 2022 event
- 1,850 highest number of burgers sold at one stand
- 15,486 burgers *reported* sold
- 143 people volunteered
- 1,448 *recorded* volunteer hours
- 53 sponsors
- 38 burger stands
- 78 artists/crafter stands
- 30 home-based business stands
- 36 miscellaneous literature/non-profit stands
- 35 miscellaneous food vendor stands
- 21 downtown participating businesses
- 19 activity stands
- 4 stages hosting 11 bands and 10 individual performing artists



**Winner of the 2022 Professional  
Burger Eating Competition,  
Dan "Killer" Kennedy**



## **The Hamburg Strand Theater**

Our Town Foundation feels that Downtown Hamburg's main attraction should be owned and preserved, not by any individual or company, but by the people of the Hamburg community. With that in mind, Our Town Foundation purchased The Hamburg Strand Theater in 2013 in an effort to preserve and protect this complex as a major asset and attraction in the community. With the Foundation's investment of over \$260,000 for improvements and renovations, both interior and exterior, the Strand is once again a thriving community hub.

A special thanks is due to the great management team of the theater (Bethany Sholl - Manager, Stephanie Adam – Coordinator, and Jake Sholl – Projection System Technician). Without the dedication of this team, the theater would not be as successful as it has been over the past ten years.

### **Highlights of 2022**

- Screened 25 featured first run movies, 11 Faith Nights and 10 Classic Nights
- Hosted three special movies – *Knox Mine Disaster*, *Hop*, and *Rocky Horror Picture Show*
- Screened a holiday series of movies including two sold out shows of the popular *Polar Express* Pajama Party
- Sold a total of 13,346 tickets
- Presented live performances by Jeff Krick Sr. and Jeremiah Jones and the Revival
- Organized and sold out its first Hamburg's Got Talent Show
- Introduced its first Drama Club Showcase in partnership with the Hamburg Area School District
- Rented out the theater and/or party room on 66 occasions
- Designed and printed a tri-fold theater brochure

### **Improvements made to the theater in 2022**

- Laid new carpeting in the lobby and auditorium
- Refurbished the neon marquee lights
- Installed six disinfecting/sanitizing lights in the auditorium to ensure the health and safety of patrons
- Purchased a new portable sound board with wireless microphones
- Purchased a new server and storage unit for downloading movies
- Installed a rooftop digital satellite receiver
- Erected a new film screen
- Converted a small storage space into a changing area for performers
- Added aluminum soffit along entire roofline of the property
- Repaired and repointed damaged brickwork in the basement



**Above: Picture of new carpeting in the lobby and auditorium**



**Right: Characters from the Polar Express Pajama Party**

## **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. The 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 it was designated by DCED as an Elm Street community – one of 28 communities in PA to have this designation. 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 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> streets, and Peach and Primrose Alleys. Receiving the designation allowed the organization to receive administrative funds to hire a program manager who could focus on neighborhood revitalization.

Unfortunately, 2014 was the last year OTF received funding from DCED for administrative support; however, the Foundation continues to seek grants and search for additional sources of revenue to implement projects within the Southgate Neighborhood.

The organization continues to manage a community garden located in Apple Alley. The garden was originally created in 2018 on a plot of land owned by Vreeland and Linda Wood. Ten garden boxes were available to rent during the first growing season of 2019. By 2022 the garden had grown to 15 beds, and they were all rented for a small fee of \$30 each. In 2022, Josh Butz, the coordinator of the program installed trellises in each of the beds to allow for upward growth.



**Community garden boxes located within the Hamburg Southgate Neighborhood corridor**

## **State Street Square Development Project**

In July of 2015, Our Town Foundation purchased a vacant lot located at 222 – 228 State Street, Hamburg, which is within the downtown Main Street/business corridor. The lot, which is approximately one acre in size, was put on the market in 2012 after the previous owner passed away. The last structure on the lot was demolished over 30 years ago due to severe deterioration of the property. Being privately owned, the lot was not available for public use until the Foundation purchased it. The Foundation has renamed the property “State Street Square” to better reflect their intent to provide a centrally located community hub.

The Foundation’s goal is to develop the lot so it can offer special events and activities on a regular basis throughout the year. Proposed improvements include erecting a 3,000 sq. ft building with a covered stage and constructing a parking lot in the rear of the property. The structure will have a storage area to store equipment and furnishings (tables, chairs, canopies, etc.) needed to host events. If funding allows, the Foundation would also like to install a kitchen area with an access window for serving food and public restrooms. The lot is large enough to accommodate the building, a parking area, vendor space and the attendees.

The proposed improvements will stimulate economic growth, assist with neighborhood stability, beautify the area, and create a sense of place for the residents. Business owners will benefit by the increased pedestrian traffic flow in the area and by having an opportunity to partake in many of the events and activities, either through sponsorship of the event, participating as a vendor, having a display area promoting their business on site, or employee/business owner volunteer participation. Residents will have additional day and nighttime entertainment options and activities in an outdoor environment.

The Foundation is currently seeking funding to develop the property. In 2021 it received a \$200,000 grant from the PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development office to kick-off the project but unfortunately when the construction bids were received they were more than double that amount. In 2022 we received a \$125,000 grant from Berks County from the County’s American Rescue Plan funding to assist with the project. The funding from the County paid for the parking lot in the rear, storm water management, and new sidewalk and curbing along Washington Street. The Foundation also received \$15,000 from GIANT Foods which paid for the installation of the water and sewer lines. It will continue to seek additional sources of funding so the project can hopefully move forward in 2023.



**Construction at the State Street Square lot**

## **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 consisted of representatives from numerous local organizations and businesses who collaboratively sought improvement for the whole borough.

The Blueprint Team's "Action Plan for the Future" details desired projects in eight 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 including the PA Department of Community & Economic Development, the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, PA Council on the Arts, USDA, the Schuylkill River Heritage Association, and the Berks County Community Foundation.

During 2022, the executive director of Our Town Foundation served on several Berks County and regional committees and task forces, providing a voice for Hamburg in regional planning.

- **The Northern Berks Joint Comprehensive Plan task force**

This task force consists of individuals representing regions served by the Hamburg Area School District. Its intent is to establish overall policies for the development and conservation of the Northern Berks region over the next 15 years. After meeting monthly for over a year, a final regional plan was approved by all municipalities in 2022. Link to the comprehensive plan: <https://www.co.berks.pa.us/Dept/Planning/Pages/NorthernBerksJointComprehensivePlan.aspx>

- **Berks County Parks and Greenway's Planning task force**

This task force updated the previous plan which was created in 2007, identifying what has already been implemented and identifying new priorities that are needed to sustain Berks County's greenway, park and recreation system. The county expects the final plan to be released by the end of February, 2022

- **The Board of Directors of the Americana (Berks County) Visitor's Bureau**

The Visitors Bureau plans, supports and promotes programs designed to develop and enhance tourism throughout Berks County. In 2022 the Visitor's Bureau completed a visioning process and rebranded as "Get Curious!"

- **Schuylkill River Trail Steering Committee**

This group is forging ahead with a feasibility study for completion of the Schuylkill River Trail between Reading and Hamburg. Several meetings were held during 2022 and a draft plan was presented in October. The final plan is scheduled to be released by the end of February, 2022.

- **America 250 PA-Berks Committee**

This committee meets virtually to plan, encourage, develop and coordinate the commemoration of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States and Pennsylvania's integral role in that event. A website is currently underway and you can see updates at <https://www.america250paberks.com>

## Community Marketing: It's All About Image

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

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

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

In order to do this, the Foundation 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. Market the existing assets of the town and the surrounding areas – don't try to be something it is not
4. Promote heritage and cultural resources

The following outlines Our Town Foundation's 2022 marketing strategies for promoting Hamburg to showcase its attractions and resources to residents and visitors.

**A one-minute commercial** was created to promote the Borough and its downtown businesses, recreational opportunities, and charm. The commercial was created by Joseph Alexander Media, LLC and paid for in its entirety by Our Town Foundation. The commercial is posted on the home page of the hamburgpa.org website.

The **Hamburgpa.org website** is one stop shop for all local Hamburg businesses and attractions, serving as an online directory of local resources. The site is maintained and updated by the Our Town Foundation staff.

**E-mail "Hamburg Happenings" newsletters** These attractive email blasts have allowed us to get information to its members and other subscribers faster! In 2022, a total of 29 newsletters was sent to 2,776 "Hamburg Happenings" subscribers. The newsletters included information on major Hamburg events and promotions.

**Commerce Quarterly** write ups are submitted quarterly to the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance. Each edition of this magazine features Berks County's four Main Streets. The magazine is distributed to Chamber members and throughout the county.

**Our Town News Newsletter** is an in-house multiple page newsletter that announces Our Town Foundation news including upcoming events, new initiatives, grant funding, etc. It is mailed to all Our Town Foundation members, distributed to downtown businesses, and available to download from the web. The newsletter is done entirely in-house by the staff and is distributed four times per year.

**A half-hour BCTV show** promoting the town, the Alliance's arts programing, and local artists was presented by members of the Hamburg Area Arts Alliance.

**Online Calendars** are another way to reach audiences within certain interest groups or a geographic region. Our Town Foundation uploads its events and other main Hamburg events to numerous online event calendars.

**Social Media** has been in full swing over the past year! Our Town Foundation officially manages several Facebook pages including Hamburg PA, Taste of Hamburg-er Festival, The Hamburg Strand Theater, and the Hamburg Area Arts Alliance. “Hamburg, PA” is OTF’s primary Facebook page. 428 posts were made in 2022 to 2,805 followers. The Strand Theater has 6,944 followers and 434 posts were created. The Arts Alliance page has 732 followers and 447 posts were made. The Taste of Hamburger Festival has the highest number of followers at 10,200!



Find us on  
**Facebook**



**Brochures** are a key way the Foundation connects with visitors to the area. Brochure distribution is performed by staff and volunteers to hit a wide range of locations including nearby attractions, restaurants, offices, banks, and shops. In addition, larger brochure kiosks that hold information regarding nearby attractions, as well as hospitality type business member and organizational member brochures are located at the OTF office, Cabela’s retail store and the Microtel Hotel. Thousands of the Foundation’s Historic Hamburg Visitor’s Guide and other OTF brochures are given to the PA Welcome Centers for distribution along major highways. During 2022, a new Strand Theater brochure was designed and printed, and several rack cards were updated and reprinted including the Art & Craft Gallery and the Taste of Hamburg-er Festival rack cards.

**Press releases and media alerts** are sent to print, online, and radio media sources, so they can post the information on their website, write an article in their publication, announce it on the radio, or be present at one of OTF’s upcoming events.

**Advertising in local and regional publications** is done throughout the year. In 2022 the Foundation paid for several ads promoting the town including ads in the Schuylkill County Visitor’s Bureau’s Travel Guide, the PA Americana (Berks County Visitor’s Bureau) Travel Guide the *Reading Eagle* and *Berks County Living Magazine*.

## **2022 Promotions and Events organized by OTF**

**The Hamburg Community Clean-up** returned after a two-year hiatus due to COVID. 33 volunteers met at the Journey Café and amongst them they collected 31 bags of trash and 13 bags of recyclables.

**The Hawk Mountain Arts Tour and Sale** – The Hamburg Area Arts Alliance set up a satellite location to this popular event at the Etchberger Community Park. Eleven artists set up their displays along the scenic Schuylkill River to sell their artwork

**Bingo, Beer and BBQ** was organized by members of the Hamburg Area Arts Alliance. Approximately 300 people attended and over \$12,000 was raised to support the arts.

**Hamburg’s Got Talent** held at the Hamburg Strand exceeded expectations for this first-time event. Eleven contestants competed. Two shows were open to the public and both were sell-outs!

**Monthly Car Cruise-in Nights** were held from April to October on the State Street Square lot. They were organized by Our Town Foundation's board members, Linda and Vreeland Wood. The event attracted car enthusiasts to downtown to mingle with their cohorts while being entertained by a local DJ.

**The annual Garden Tour**, organized by Kay Greenawalt and members of the Native Wildlife Habitat Committee, featured gardens of several residents in the Hamburg area. Participants picked up their information packet with a list of tour stops at the Art & Craft Gallery of Hamburg, prompting tour-goers to visit local businesses as they made their way to tour stops.

**The Taste of Hamburg-er Festival** was held on September 3<sup>rd</sup>. There was a good turnout with approximately 35,000 people in attendance. Several downtown businesses report that they have their best sales day of the year during this annual event. The festival also supports numerous non-profits, local restaurants and food truck owners, and artists.

**Shop Small Saturday** is a nationwide promotional event held the Saturday after Thanksgiving. This year, nineteen small businesses in downtown Hamburg participated bringing hundreds of shoppers into town. Shoppers were given a "passport" to get stamped at participating establishments. Once the passport was completed, they were eligible to be entered into a raffle to win merchandise and gift cards valued at over \$500 from the business.

**Networking Mixers** were held at four businesses in 2022: Copperz Brew Pub, Crossroads Engineering, The Art Suite at Blue Mountain and What Matters Barbershop

**Ribbon Cuttings** for new businesses were held at Body By Yei, Duran's Express, Rita's Italian Ice and Anytime Fitness

**Holiday promotions** were organized to assist local businesses with advertising any specials or promotions they may have had planned for the holidays (Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and Easter). The Foundation designed a flyer for each holiday listing the participating businesses and what they were offering. Marketing was done through social media, print media, and local distribution of flyers.

Eight **Featured artist receptions** were held in the Gallery.

Nine **art classes and workshops** were offered to the public.

**Movies at the Strand** – 25 first run, 11 Faith Night, 10 Classic night, and 7 special event movies were screened during 2022

**Hamburg Night at the Phillies** was a fun time for all that attended. Our Town Foundation was one of the sponsors of the ballgame.



**Gabby Wilson presents Ruth Wilhelm with her prizes. She was the winner of the 2022 Shop Small Saturday give-a-way**



**Ribbon Cutting at the new Rita's Italian Ice**

## Grants received in 2022

\$125,000 from Berks County in support of the State Street Square development project. These funds were used to construct the storm water management, a gravel parking lot and new sidewalks and curbing on the State Street Square lot.

\$3,000 from PA Council on the Arts for administrative support of the Hamburg Area Arts Alliance and its activities

\$500 from State Farm Insurance Neighborhood Grant program in support of the Native Wildlife Habitat Program

## Volunteer appreciation

Special thanks to all the volunteers who donated 3012 hours of their time in 2022. Their volunteer hours equal \$85,984 in labor costs, as per government statistics on the value of volunteers. Please note, these are only the hours that have been recorded by the volunteers and there are many more that volunteers fail to report.

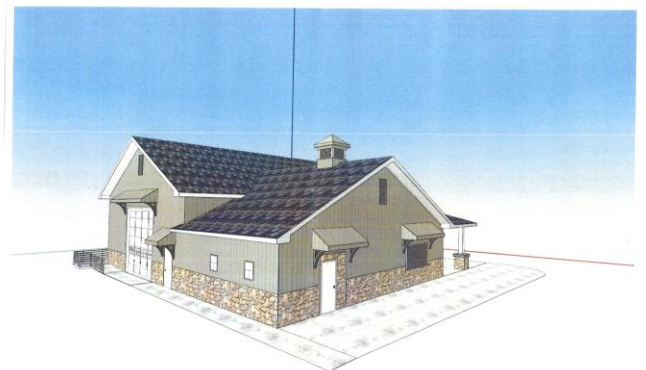
## In 2023 we will be celebrating the.....

20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Our Town Foundation being designated as a Main Street Community, establishing an office presence in the downtown, and hiring a Main Street Manager

20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Taste of Hamburg-er Festival

10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the purchase of the Hamburg Strand Theater

**Future goal** – Conceptual drawings of the State Street Square development project





# Our Town Foundation 2022 Volunteer of the Year

## Sandra Christman



Sandy Christman has been an active member of Our Town Foundation since it was founded in 2002. She has been an integral member of the Taste of Hamburg-er Festival Committee since 2004, the year the festival was initiated. In fact, Sandy was the person originally contacted by the PA Beef Council to ask if Hamburg was interested in hosting a festival to honor the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the hamburger.

She spends timeless hours planning the yearly event with the committee and she is tasked with overseeing the burger judging for the best burger competitions. She assists with organizing other contests and is the “go-to” person for activities and performances held at the North 3<sup>rd</sup> St. stage area. In addition to the day-of activities, she assists the staff with preparing and mailing out vendor packets and other office work as needed. She recently took on the treasurer’s duties for the event and she ensures deposits are made on a timely basis. Sandy is always willing to lend a hand with **anything** you ask her to do.

Many people got to know Sandy while she was the tax collector for the Borough or while she was a legislative assistant for many years working with Representatives Paul Semmel and Jerry Knowles and Senators Chip Brightbill and Jim Rhoades in their Hamburg offices. She most recently worked with David Argall during his tenure as a state representative, and then when he became Senator after the death of Senator Rhoades.

Retirement has not stopped Sandy from being involved in the community. In addition to volunteering many hours of time to the Taste of Hamburg-er Festival and Our Town Foundation, she is very involved with the Rotary Club of Hamburg and is currently assisting the Hamburg Area Historical Society in their efforts to build a new museum. She also volunteers at the Hamburg Food Pantry, for which she is a founding member, and delivers meals on wheels. She is a member of St. Michael’s Church where she served on church council and enjoys being part of the choir and bell choir. In her younger years she was active in the Jr. Woman’s Club and Jaycee Wives in Hamburg.

Sandy’s pleasant personality, energetic spirit, and her willingness to serve her community attests she is a true leader and one of Hamburg’s greatest assets.

## **WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY**

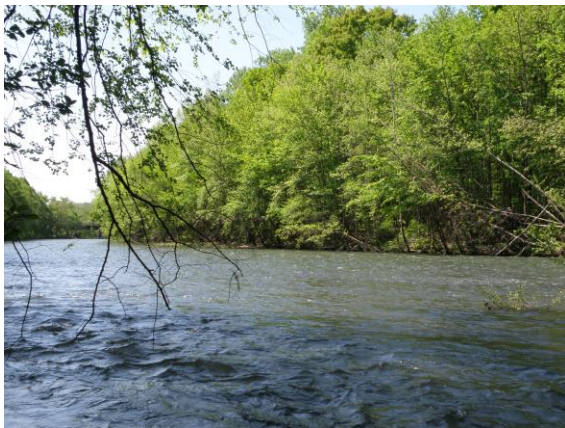
- **Shop locally**
- **Volunteer for events and other activities**
- **Serve on a committee**
- **Support the program financially**
- **Make suggestions for improvements**
- **Inform borough representatives and neighboring representatives of the importance of their continued support**
- **Share your knowledge of the program with others**

**Your energy, funding, and commitment will help leave a vibrant and tangible legacy for our community and all who pass through it for generations to come.**

For questions in regards to this report, or to discuss any revitalization issues please contact:

**Our Town Foundation Office  
320 State Street  
Hamburg, PA 19526  
610-562-3106  
otfmanager@aol.com**

**Additional information on the community can be found on the web at [www.hamburgpa.org](http://www.hamburgpa.org)**



**Natural recreational opportunities abound in the area.**