



Hamburg's Community Revitalization Corporation

Our Town News



hamburgpa.org

Fall 2021

610.562.3106

OTF Receives \$15,000 Grant

Our Town Foundation was recently awarded a \$15,000 grant through the Healing the Planet Grant Program, funded by the GIANT company and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. More than \$500,000 in funding was awarded in support of projects that aim to build environmental stewardship by connecting people and families to community green spaces, support environmental restoration efforts, and build community gardens. The grant program was offered in the states of PA, Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland and projects were required to be on public land or be for public use and benefit. There was a total of 230 applications submitted and Our Town Foundation was one of the 42 communities that received funding. Grants ranged from \$2,500 up to \$25,000.



KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE

“Small steps really add up when it comes to healing our planet and that includes the support from our customers in rounding up their purchases at checkout to benefit these environmentally friendly initiatives,” said Jessica Groves, Community Impact Manager from the GIANT Company. “Thanks to their generosity, we were able to double the amount of funding available and provide a greater number of grants than initially expected. We are excited to see the impact these projects will have on our local communities and green spaces as we continue our work to heal our planet and connect families to the outdoors.”

Our Town Foundation will be applying the grant funds to its State St. Square Development project which will commence in spring of 2022. The Foundation's plans are to erect a 40' x 60' facility with a kitchenette with serving windows, restrooms, and storage areas. A large bandstand will be constructed in the front of the facility providing a stage area for live performances. A small seating area will be placed on the side of the facility and a parking lot will be constructed in the rear of the property to accommodate visitors. Electric has already been run to the lot; however, water and sewer

lines must be placed and connected to the Borough's system, and gas lines must also be connected. The storm water management plans have already been approved by the Borough and the County and we are now in the process of having architectural drawings completed for the structure. Once those are completed, the project can be advertised for bidding.

The Foundation has also received a \$200,000 grant for the project from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development office and a \$5,000 grant from the Hawley and Myrtle Quier Fund of Berks County Community Foundation to assist with the engineering and permitting expenses.

A press conference was held on August 26th at the State St. Square lot to announce that the grants were received and the project was proceeding. Approximately 40 people attended. Speakers included Senator David Argall, Representative Gerry Knowles, County Commissioner Michael Rivera, Heidi Williamson from the Berks County Community Foundation, Mayor George Holmes, Executive Director Deena Kershner, and Taste of Hamburg-er Festival Committee member Sandra Christman.

Immediately after the press conference, there was a surprise visit from Frank Siller, CEO of the Tunnel to Towers Foundation, who was passing through the town on his walk from Arlington, VA to Manhattan in honor of the heroic first responders who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks of Sept 11, 2001.

Visit this link <https://pasen.wistia.com/medias/089ixub2ve> to see a video of the press conference.



Press Conference attendees at State Street Square on August 26, 2021

Time for thanks

This time of year is a time to give thanks. As Director of Our Town Foundation, I feel there is a lot in which to be thankful. The Foundation has seen twenty years of solid growth, both in membership and in accomplishments. We currently have a strong Board of Directors and numerous volunteers who are all committed to improving the community. The dedicated staff works day and night for one purpose – to improve the community. The Borough has financially supported our revitalization efforts through the years, and has collaborated with us on many issues. We have formed numerous partnerships with other organizations, both local and beyond. The reasons to give thanks could go on and on, but I truly believe the biggest reason to give thanks is that Hamburg is fortunate to have an organization such as Our Town Foundation, that focuses on community revitalization.

Twenty years ago, the downtown needed help. Many properties needed a facelift and sidewalks were crumbling. There was no appreciation for the historic architecture that abounds in the town. Through OTF's efforts, a streetscape enhancement was completed, many facades were improved, and a section of Hamburg was designated as a National Historic District by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Twenty years ago, there was no local organization to support the arts. Established in 2006, the Hamburg Area Arts Alliance now boasts over 50 members and provides opportunities for all ages to be involved with the arts. Twenty years ago, there were few recreational opportunities in the area, and the natural resources that were here were not being promoted. Partnerships between OTF, Blue Mountain Wildlife, The Schuylkill River Greenway Association and North Berks Recreation Commission created numerous walking and biking trails in the area. Twenty years ago, there were no brochures to promote the area and no www.hamburgpa.org, or any other resource for people to get information relative to the area. Lastly, twenty years ago there was no Taste of Hamburg-er Festival, a yearly homecoming for numerous folks.

I would like to personally thank all of the past and current Board of Directors, committee members, staff, and volunteers for their perseverance and continued support of the Foundation, allowing our progress to continue.

With thanks,

Deena Kershner, Executive Director



Current Board of Directors

Gerald Schappell, Chris Yost, Stephanie Adam, Stephanie Menapace, Cynthia Blefgen, Joshua Youpa, Jeff Pettit, Allen Madeira, Linda Wood, Vreeland Wood, Jeremy Hoagland, Doc Smith

Revitalization professionals visit Hamburg

Pennsylvania Downtown Center's (PDC) 2021 Annual Statewide Conference was held September 12th through September 15th in downtown Reading, PA.

"DESIGN: Beyond the Structures" was this year's conference theme. Attendees explored the many facets of DESIGN: How we use buildings, streets, sidewalks, public and private spaces of our cities, towns and neighborhoods. These places help to create social interactions for greater interconnected communities.

The conference was held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Reading; however daily excursions were made to visit the Berks County boroughs that have designated Main Street Revitalization Programs including Boyertown, West Reading and Hamburg.

Deena Kershner, Executive Director of Our Town Foundation, led the tour in Hamburg which visited several sites within our downtown historic district. The first stop was at Bill Rhodes' property where he provided a tour of his artistic yard and home. Participants were amazed at the eccentric hand-crafted sculptures in the yard and the alternative décor in his home. A short walk away was the community garden. The growing season was coming to an end, but participants saw how an unused vacant lot could be turned into a community asset and gathering place. The next stop was the Art & Craft Gallery of Hamburg where the visitors learned how the Hamburg Area Arts Alliance came to fruition and how art and culture play an important role in any successful community revitalization. The next stop was a tour of the beautiful Bismarck B & B where Charlotte Golden, the owner, gave a brief history of the property and spoke of how travelers have been flocking to the area to enjoy the abundant natural recreational opportunities and our festive events. Popcorn awaited everyone at the Strand Theater, and the trip ended with a stop at the 1787 Brewing Co. where Jim Gerner, the owner, spoke to the group about the transformation of the former Miller's 5 & 10 to what it is today. And what better way to end the tour than to enjoy samplings of his brews!

About Pennsylvania Downtown Center

Founded in 1987, the mission of Pennsylvania Downtown Center is to build and support the capacity of local nonprofit organizations, municipalities, and individuals to enhance the overall well-being and sustainability of Pennsylvania's core communities. PDC accomplishes this mission by engaging and educating local community leaders and volunteers, to advance the sense of place, quality of life and economic vitality of the Commonwealth's downtowns, traditional neighborhood business districts and nearby residential areas.



Tour with Bill Rhodes

Annual Polar Express pajama party

The Hamburg Strand Theater will be hosting its annual *Polar Express* Pajama Party at 10:00 am and 1:00 pm on Saturday, November 27th. Tickets are \$10 for all ages and include hot chocolate and cookies.

What could be better than hot chocolate and cookies? A special appearance by Santa, of course! Kids, don't forget your letters to Santa so that he knows what you want for the holidays. Parents, you will want to bring your cameras to capture the memory of your little ones meeting Santa.

Due to the popularity of the event, it is encouraged to purchase tickets in advance. Tickets can be purchased online at hamburgstrand.org or at Our Town Foundation located at 320 State Street in Hamburg. If available, tickets may be purchased at the door.

THE HAMBURG STRAND PRESENTS:

Polar Express Pajama Party

Wear your pjs, watch the movie and then meet Santa after the show! Bring your camera!


SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27
10:00AM AND 1:00PM.
 (DOORS OPEN 30 MIN BEFORE THE SHOW)

TICKETS ARE \$10 PER PERSON AND INCLUDE A COOKIE AND HOT CHOCOLATE!
 TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE THEATER OR ON OUR WEBSITE, HAMBURGSTRAND.ORG.
 TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT THE DOOR ONLY IF AVAILABLE.

10:00 SPONSORED BY NEW LIFE THRIFT STORE
 1:00 SPONSORED BY THRIVENT & HAMBURG GRANGE



THE POLAR EXPRESS

 The Hawley and Myrtle Older Fund of Berks County Community Foundation
 6 South Fourth Street
 Hamburg, PA 610-562-3106 

The Strand is a great place to have a birthday party, get together or corporate meeting. With our digital projector you can show a movie or present Power Point slide shows.

Email hamburgstrand@outlook.com or message us on Facebook to reserve The Strand for your next event.



THE HAMBURG STRAND PRESENTS:

CHRISTMAS MOVIE SERIES

11/27: POLAR EXPRESS, 10AM & 1PM. (DOORS OPEN 30 MIN PRIOR)
 \$10 TICKET INCLUDES A COOKIE, HOT CHOCOLATE & A VISIT FROM SANTA. TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR PRESALE ON OUR WEBSITE AND AT THE THEATER.
 10:00 Sponsored by New Life Thrift Store
 1:00 Sponsored by Thrivent & Hamburg Grange

12/5: Christmas Vacation at 1 pm
 Sponsored by Burnish Construction

12/12: White Christmas at 1 pm
 Sponsored by R & J Tours and Transportation

12/19: Elf at 1 pm
 Sponsored by Leibensperger Funeral Homes

12/28: It's a Wonderful Life at 7pm.
 Sponsored by Thrivent & Hamburg Grange

ALL MOVIES ARE \$8 AND INCLUDE A POPCORN & SODA. Tickets sold at the door only.

6 SOUTH 4TH STREET HAMBURG. 610-562-4750




The Hawley and Myrtle Older Fund of Berks County Community Foundation

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Yearly and individual movie passes are available at the Hamburg Strand Theater or the Our Town Foundation office, 320 State Street, Hamburg, PA 19526

Gift certificates only available at the Hamburg Strand Theater
 Call 610-562-4750 or 610-562-3106 for additional information

Arts program receives grant

The Hamburg Area Arts Alliance recently received a \$3,000 grant from the PA Council on the Arts. The grant will support several Alliance initiatives that are being planned for 2022 including partnering with Hawk Mountain to participate in their spring art show, the Artdrenaline youth art/sports camp, and the Hamburg Hoopla music festival.

These yearly events could not be held in 2020 or 2021 due to COVID, so we are looking forward to once again hosting these activities after a two-year hiatus.



The Alliance has been receiving yearly grants from the PA Council on the Arts since 2006, the year the Alliance was formed. The funding amounts varied from between \$1,500 TO \$3,000.

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER FEATURED ARTISTS

in
THE ART & CRAFT GALLERY OF HAMBURG:

Gerry Cole — Jewelry

David Fisher — Blacksmithing and Metal Sculptures

Petra Martin — Fabric Art

Bee Silky Soaps — Soaps and Lotions

Debra Zvanut — Glassware and Basketry



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Hours:

Mon.-Fri 9am to 4pm
Sat. 10am to 3pm

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610-562-3106

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Ceramics, and more!

