

March 2022



BERKS COUNTY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Giving MATTERS

Grants enhance classroom experiences

Despite the chilly, gray weather on a recent day, five students with bright smiles cheerily paraded around the grounds of Mifflin Park Elementary School.

They were participating in the new “Stories & Steps” initiative, a walking audiobook program that combines technology with physical activity to improve learning outcomes.



More than 70 students with specific learning needs are participating in the program in the Governor Mifflin School District. The district said studies have shown that adding movement to educational activities improves student learning, retention, and comprehension.

Students are thrilled to be part of the new program, Corinne H. Brumbach, the librarian at Mifflin Park, wrote in an email she sent recently to Berks County Community Foundation with photos of students participating in the program.

“I wish you could feel the excitement and happiness from these kids,” Brumbach added.

The program is one of three in Berks County that received a total of \$1,578 in grants this year from the Community Foundation’s annual classroom mini-grants. Mifflin Park received a grant of \$500 this year. The classroom mini-grants have provided more than \$60,000 in grants to classrooms across Berks County in recent years.

The Community Foundation’s classroom mini-grants are supported by the Berks County Association of School Retirees Scholarship and Grant Fund, the Public Education Foundation Fund for Instructional Innovation, and the Ben Franklin Trust Fund. The Community Foundation administers all three funds.

You can [donate to the classroom mini-grant program here](#).

The classroom mini-grant program will next accept applications starting November 1, 2022, with a deadline of December 15. Apply at bccf.org at that time.

Learn more about [this year's classroom mini-grants on our website](#), or in news coverage from [WFMZ](#), the [Reading Eagle](#), and [Berks Weekly](#).



Apply for scholarships now!

We will accept applications for most of our scholarships until March 15 at <http://bccf.link/scholarships>.

Since the Community Foundation's founding in 1994, we have awarded more than \$10 million in scholarships to local students.

By completing one online application, students can be matched to any of nearly 100 scholarship funds for which they may qualify.

Questions? Email Kim Sheffer, Lifelong Learning Program Associate, at kims@bccf.org or scholarships@bccf.org.



The online application for K-12 tax credit scholarships in Berks County will be available on our website in May for the 2022-2023 school year.



INSIDE INFORMATION

Free tool provides content to engage students in afterschool programs

A new free tool is available to providers of afterschool programs to give them more engaging material from content creators such as NASA, the California Academy of Sciences, and PBS NewsHour Student Reporting Labs.

Mizzen by Mott inspires and sparks learning in young people. With

activities from premier organizations like Jazz at Lincoln Center and powerful management tools, this new app can help strengthen afterschool programs. Supported by the Mott Foundation, Mizzen is available at no cost to afterschool professionals.



In 2018, Berks County Community Foundation released a study that found a need for a greater number of engaging and easy-to-access afterschool and summer programs. [You can read that report here.](#)

Bill Moeller left a legacy

Bill Moeller - a master brewer and a former board member for the Community Foundation - passed away on January 26.

Lew Bryson at Billy Penn reminisced about Bill's extraordinary life in a fascinating tribute: "Bill was the last unbroken link to the great German-American brewing history of Pennsylvania, with a legacy that



loomed large in both the old days of brewing and the modern beer renaissance. He was truly a fourth-generation brewmaster: his great-grandfather, grandfather, and father (and even two uncles) were all brewmasters, in Germany and America. His grandfather brewed during Prohibition for the notorious Reading, Pa., bootlegger Max Hassel."

Bill created a charitable fund at Berks County Community Foundation: [The Margaret B. Moeller Memorial Fund for Alzheimer's Home Care Companions](#).

[You can learn how to start a charitable fund and other ways to give here.](#)

Read [Lew Bryson's piece here](#), [Bill's obituary here](#), and a [blog post about Bill's passing here](#).

Building Green on BCTV

The importance of sustainability, prioritizing green projects, and advancing environmental initiatives were the topics on a recent episode of *Building Green* on BCTV. Hosted by architect Bill Vitale, the guest was Kevin Lugo, Program Officer for



Energy and the Environment at Berks County Community Foundation. Kevin is the Community Foundation's primary staff contact for the [Met-Ed / Penelec Sustainable Energy Fund](#).

The Met-Ed / Penelec Sustainable Energy Fund is [accepting applications for grants](#) until March 15.

You can watch Kevin's appearance at [bctv.org](#).

10 years of helping women and girls in Berks County

For the past decade, a dedicated group of women has gathered several times a year to learn about the barriers women and girls face in Berks County. They've visited local organizations that work to break down those barriers, listened to expert speakers, and made thoughtful decisions about how best to help using their own resources.

This spring, in honor of the 10th anniversary of the Power of the Purse in Berks County, we're telling the story of this group of women on their [Facebook page](#).



The first official meeting of the Power of the Purse in Berks County Fund was held on November 8, 2012, at Berks County Community Foundation, following a summer of planning and information gathering to gauge interest in starting what would become the community's first Women's Giving Circle. The idea came from Chiara Sockel Renninger, a financial advisor who'd participated in a similar circle in the Lehigh Valley.

"I wanted to start a group that would give local women a place to pool their charitable resources to improve the lives of women and girls in our community," Chiara said.

So she called Franki Aitken (now the COO at the Community Foundation), whom she'd met at an introductory meeting about the Community Foundation a few years before, and pitched the idea. Soon, a list of potential members was developed and two information sessions were held.

"At the time, I hoped ten women would join me," Chiara said. "We ended up with 20 women that first year, each of whom donated \$1,000 and went through the process of reviewing grant applications, going on site visits to learn more about the organizations that applied for grants, and voting on which organizations should receive grants. We weren't just giving. We were learning about our community and the organizations that help those in need. It was exhilarating."

The women were hooked. They elected a steering committee, drafted bylaws, and agreed to meet four times per year to learn, review, give, and celebrate.

Since then, more than 100 women have contributed to the Power of the Purse in Berks County Fund, with their pooled donations totaling more than \$330,000. That money has been distributed as grants to 20 local organizations that work to break the cycle of poverty by helping women and girls navigate their way to the education and training essential to their livelihood, gainful employment, and ultimately, self-sufficiency.

The Power of the Purse in Berks County Fund is administered by Berks County Community Foundation. You can learn more – including how to apply for a grant, how to donate to the group, and what grants have previously been awarded – at bccf.org/pop/.

Literacy care packages delight 100 seniors

One hundred Berks County residents living in residential facilities for seniors were delighted to receive literacy care packages from the Reading Public Library Senior Outreach Program.

The care packages were purchased with a grant of \$2,525 from the First United Church of Christ Mission Fund of Berks County Community Foundation.

The program's goal was to provide stimulating activities for seniors who have been confined and isolated by pandemic restrictions and also to strengthen the connection between these longtime library patrons and the library.

When the Community Foundation awards a grant, we require the recipient to report back to us with details about how the money was used. The Reading Public Library recently submitted a report to us that said: "This grant gave us an opportunity to provide a thoughtful gift to our senior outreach patrons, and to contribute to the lifelong learning and wellness of a vulnerable population during a challenging time."

The report included quotes from grateful library patrons:

- "Thank you for the goody bag. I enjoyed the word search." -- Joan at Wyomissing Club
- "The crossword puzzle was great. My grandson likes to help me with crosswords and was excited to see the book full of them." -- John at Wyomissing Club
- "When I am not reading, I like doing crosswords. It is a fun way to occupy the time." -- Roslyn at Reading Elderly Housing Apartments
- "Those goody bags were so much fun." -- Dellray at St. Catharine Senior Apartments

Since the First United Church of Christ Mission Fund began awarding grants in 2018, it has given \$165,502 in grants to local organizations. Learn more about this fund, including how to donate to it, at <https://bccf.org/funds/first-united-church-christ-fund/>.

This fund is also currently [accepting applications for grants](#) until 3/15/2022.



We're now accepting cryptocurrency donations

Donating a gift of cryptocurrency to Berks County Community Foundation is an easy way to make a difference in your community, impacting today and transforming tomorrow.

Donating cryptocurrency is a non-taxable event, meaning you do not owe capital gains tax on the appreciated amount and can deduct it from your taxes. This makes Bitcoin and other cryptocurrency donations one of the most tax-efficient ways to support your favorite cause.

Learn more at <https://bccf.org/crypto/>





FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

To apply for a grant, use our online application system, which you can [access here](#). You must create an account to access the system.

The following opportunities are available at this time (with deadlines listed if applicable):

Albany Township Tomorrow Fund (apply now until 3/15/2022)

This fund provides grants to support community-minded organizations and initiatives that benefit the general population of Albany Township, Berks County. You can learn [more about the fund here](#).

Berks County Tennis Fund (apply now until 3/15/2022)

This fund provides grants to programs that further the appreciation and play of tennis in Berks County. [Learn more here](#).

Building Industries Exchange of Reading and Berks County Fund (apply now until 3/15/2022)

This fund provides grants to a nonprofit organization in Berks County to support the construction or renovation of a facility it owns or which is owned on its behalf. Preference will be given to renovation projects that take environmental stewardship into account. [Learn more here](#).

Conservation Equity Fund (apply now until 3/15/2022)

This fund provides grants to support the preservation and/or conservation of open space, environmentally sensitive land, and historic properties in Berks County, including, but not limited to farmland. [Learn more here](#).

First United Church of Christ Mission Fund (apply now until 3/15/2022)

This fund provides grants to support organizations and causes that were important to the mission of the church, such as activities for children and senior citizens in need and programs that address hunger. [Learn more here](#).

Gilmore | Henne Community Fund (apply now until 3/15/2022)

This fund provides grants to support recreational park programs and/or recreational park improvements and maintenance in Berks County. Pools are not eligible. [Learn more here.](#)

Home Health Care Foundation Fund (apply now until 3/15/2022)

This fund provides grants to organizations and programs that help residents in Berks County and contiguous counties recover from illness or disability at home; support preventative healthcare for residents and overall community health; and/or provide health-related charity care to residents. Preference is given to Berks County organizations. [Learn more here.](#)

Met-Ed / Penelec Sustainable Energy Fund (apply now until 3/15/2022)

This fund provides grants and program-related investments to organizations in the territories served by the Met-Ed and Penelec electric companies in Pennsylvania for projects that meet the mission of the fund. The mission of the fund is to support the development and use of renewable energy and clean energy technologies; energy conservation and efficiency; sustainable energy businesses; and projects that improve the environment in the companies' service territories, as defined by their relationship to the companies' transmission and distribution facilities. [Learn more here.](#)

St. John's UCC Reading Fund (apply now until 3/15/2022)

This fund provides grants to organizations and causes that were important to the mission of the church. Grants support programs and initiatives that reduce hunger, offer shelter or improve housing, meet a pressing need for youth, or create or maintain open space. Grants are awarded with preference for recipients geographically closer to the former location of the church at 149 S. 9th Street, Reading, Pa. [Learn more here.](#)

Arthur O. & Clara M. Schlegel Memorial Fund

This fund provides grants that support the medical costs of physical differences in Berks County children whose guardians are unable to meet such expenses. Expenses that may be covered include direct and indirect medical expenses, such as travel costs associated with treatment. [Learn more here.](#)

Berks County Angel Funds

These funds provide grants for specific needs of children and young adults in Berks County:

- The Emmanuel 'Manny' Dimitriou Memorial Fund provides grants for children with critical medical, social, or educational needs that will enhance their ability to achieve their full potential.
- The Camella Maggs Client Memorial Fund provides grants for children who have learning and physical disabilities.

- The Kraus Gill Fund provides grants for recently discharged adults who were once in foster care who either lived in a Berks County foster home and/or were Berks County residents at the time of their placement in foster care. These grants are to assist them with transitional housing costs in general and/or educational expenses.
- The Berks County Parrot Head Club Fund provides grants for individuals who are in an extraordinary situation where a nominal amount of intervention is likely to yield life-changing outcomes. Grants are limited to individuals who are under the age of 18 and who reside in Berks County. Preference is given to Berks County children who have a physical or medical need that the family is unable to afford. A parent, guardian, teacher, social worker, caseworker, or court official may complete the application on a child's behalf to be considered for a grant.

[Learn more here.](#)

Bridge Fund

This fund provides grants of less than \$1,000 to address critical needs that place juveniles at increased risk of entering the foster care system or the juvenile detention center. [Learn more here.](#)

Cystic Fibrosis Fund of Berks County

This fund supports the needs of individuals with cystic fibrosis, including both direct and indirect medical expenses and necessary, but ancillary, expenses related to treatment. [Learn more here.](#)

Friends of the Berks County Public Libraries Fund

This fund distributes grants for special projects and emergency needs at Berks County's public libraries. [Learn more here.](#)

Ira M. Becker Fund

This fund provides grants to educate young men (up to age 30) in Berks County, one at a time. These funds can be used for educational purposes but not for tuition. An individual may apply for a grant, or a caseworker or court official may also apply on behalf of an individual. [Learn more here.](#)

Margaret B. Moeller Memorial Fund for Alzheimer's Home Care Companions

This fund provides grants for families in the Boyertown Area School District with individuals who suffer from Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia to obtain the services of in-home care companions, aides, or other providers of respite care. [Learn more here.](#)

Jess's Sunshine Fund

This fund provides grants to support families who are residents of the Boyertown Area School District with dependent adult or minor children who have special needs arising from a long-term catastrophic illness or injury. [Learn more here.](#)

Penny Jar Fund

This fund provides grants to support the non-tuition-related needs of Berks County college students who have an unexpected financial crisis. [Learn more here.](#)

Pets in Need Fund and the Darryl and Susanne Shoff Fund

These funds provide grants for veterinary care for animals in life-threatening situations. Applicants must be residents of Berks County and be referred to the funds by their veterinarian. Learn more [here](#) and [here](#).

To apply for a grant, use our online application system, which you can [access here](#). You must create an account to access the system.

211 is here to help

When you need help but don't have a medical, fire or another emergency that requires a call to 911, then you should call 211.

It's a free and confidential service to help any person in our community connect to essential services. Dial 211, text your zip code to 898211, or live chat or search at pa211east.org to find information on a broad range of services including:

- Housing
- Utilities
- Child care
- Food pantries
- Care for people who are older
- After-school programs and more

A trained information and referral specialist will answer your call or text (available 24/7, 365 days/year), and ask you a series of questions in order to understand your unique needs. Help is available in multiple languages.

We thank the United Way of Berks County for supporting this invaluable service to our community.

We can all use help at times.

How can 211 help me?

Contact 211 to find information on:

- childcare
- utility assistance
- food banks
- health programs
- and more



In other news...

Grammy-nominated Palestinian musician and Berklee College of Music Professor Simon Shaheen will play at the WCR Center for the Arts on Saturday, March 26 at 8 p.m. This event is being funded by a [special grant program](#) of Berks County Community Foundation. For more information about the performance, visit bctv.org.



A peer support group will recruit and encourage teens in Reading to discuss violence in the community and formulate non-violent strategies to respond.

This initiative of The Village of Reading is funded by a grant of \$8,390 from the Community General Hospital Healthcare Fund of Berks County Community Foundation. This project is also supported by the Reading School District and [Berks Nature](#).

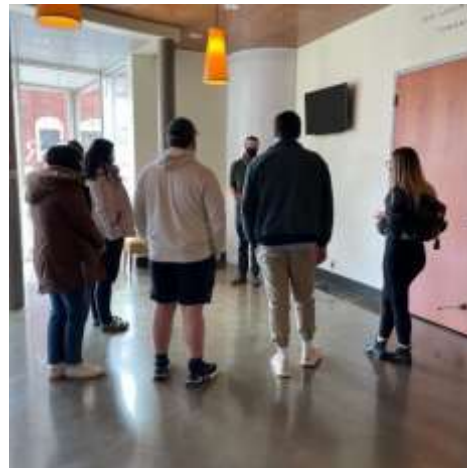


Learn more from [bctv.org](#) or [Berks Weekly](#).



INSTAGRAM MOMENTS

Four of our most popular recent posts...
Click on each to learn more!





Follow our Instagram

[View this email as a web page](#)

The mission of Berks County Community Foundation is to promote philanthropy and improve the quality of life for the residents of Berks County.

Berks County Community Foundation
237 Court St., Reading PA 19601
610.685.2223
info@bccf.org
bccf.org



This e-newsletter is issued monthly and is the only place where we comprehensively compile all current funding opportunities.

Berks County Community Foundation develops, manages and distributes funds for charitable purposes in the community. The official registration and financial information of Berks County Community Foundation may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.