



The Circle of Impact





INSPIRING

a Culture of Giving

Circles have long been known as a symbol for unity. They represent an unbroken connection; a line that always happens to find itself again. Communities are a lot like circles.

Whatever challenges we face or triumphs we celebrate, we always come together in the process. It is this idea of connection that fuels the notion of a community foundation – an organization in which we can support our individual passions by coming together as a force for good.

Centre Foundation is proud to play this role in the ecosystem of giving in Centre County. Our goals are the community's goals. We exist to build relationships that will transform what might have been a one-time donation into a gift with larger and longer impact. We dream of the day that every non-profit has a major endowment that supports their annual budget, enabling them to do their most critical work and use less overhead in fundraising each year.

Centre Foundation, since its inception, has offered long term funding solutions for donors and non-profits through endowment funds. Donations go further than a one-time impact – gifts to endowments keep giving for years into the future. These are dollars that non-profits can count on each year. And for donors, endowments offer a way to provide for the needs that are important to them now – and in the long-term. This creates sustainable, connections between donors and non-profits – the most important part of the story – that would not be possible without Centre Foundation.

Investing gifts and managing funds may seem like a lot of what we do. But beyond the strength of our financial acumen, we also establish an expanding circle of impact and culture of giving in our community – which is the sweetest and most fulfilling part of our ongoing work.

Community foundations are critical to the health and well-being of regions because of their ability to get a broad perspective and see trends that help everyone reach their mission. They get to see from every perspective, through the eyes of all organizations, and really understand the intense needs in the region. And from that knowledge, they can create movement and support for all the diverse passions in the community. This inspires us to keep creating new ways to address the complex and interrelated problems throughout our region. And we do this through our relationships.

We build relationships because of our belief in partnerships as the avenue to mutual success. We learn from the non-profits about major needs and develop ways to address those needs, and then non-profits see the value we can offer as a partner to help them reach their goals. That expands everyone's impact in Centre County.

In fact, the impetus behind creating our two-day online giving event, Centre Gives, was partnership and mutual support. Placing non-profits in the public eye in a new way, this event does more than

FEATURED STORIES

raise a lot of money in two days. By participating in Centre Gives, both small and large non-profits raise money, build their networks, and learn new techniques to help them with fundraising and marketing efforts year-round. In 2012 when Centre Gives began, 74 organizations participated and, for many, it was their first foray into online giving. We helped several of the organizations establish websites and a social media presence to succeed during the event.

The power of online giving is now established in Centre County. And, the Foundation continues to improve Centre Gives, with over 145 organizations participating in 2017 – all benefiting from expanded training and donor outreach to significantly increase giving. Giving begets giving – it is a ripple effect that grows our giving culture.

Centre Foundation is also making a significant investment in the future through youth driven philanthropy. Centre PACT (Philanthropic Action Created by Teens) is a program founded in 2015 that helps empower and equip teens to identify the opportunities they care the most about and evaluate which programs best address those areas. Then together, through site visits and interviews with non-profits, they decide which programs they want to support. They are also responsible for making direct appeals to the community to build the funding for the projects they have selected.

As the culture of giving spreads and takes root in our younger neighbors, we all benefit. Research has shown that when we give, we have a deeper sense of belonging with the people around us. We build community in our lives when we give to our neighbors.

There are more stories in this publication to share with you: stories of residents finding a new love of our geography through ClearWater Conservancy; of animals finding forever homes through Centre County PAWS; of an artist and mother finding a way to pursue her craft through the American Association of University Women; of children facing hunger being fed through the YMCA; and of our vulnerable neighbors remaining safely housed through Interfaith Human Services.

These stories are just a few examples of what was possible because of our culture of giving. Centre County is a special place to live – and this is our celebration of the circle of impact, of what we create together. 🌱



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The Dividends of a DIPL



OMA

The art of
balancing
motherhood
& a life of
learning



*Leslie Sotomayor
strides across her
studio, fondly
referred to as her
"sanctuary."*

The life of artist, PhD candidate and mother of four Leslie Sotomayor is hectic.

“I need to fit everything I need to do in my day between 8:30 am and 3 pm,” she says. Because at 3 pm, she picks her kids up from school and daycare and then heads home to Boalsburg so the family can catch up, eat together, and relax. “I am on the go from the moment I wake up,” she says, making it important to have evenings free to decompress with kids and friends.

Ten years ago, Sotomayor was a 29 year-old stay-at-home mom homeschooling her kids. She loved doing that, but wanted something else for herself. She looked into the Arts Program at Pennsylvania State University (PSU) and has not looked back since.

Sotomayor started pursuing bachelor’s degrees in Art Education, Women’s Studies, and African Studies. Her fellow students were younger and many had formal art backgrounds, which left her questioning her abilities at times. A mentor helped her understand that she was meant to be an artist.

During her final undergraduate year, she received a \$5,000 scholarship from the American Association of University Women (AAUW) State College Branch.

“The AAUW award is what enabled me to finish my triple-major bachelor’s degree. I literally had nothing – had come through a divorce, was finishing up [my bachelor’s degrees] and looking on to grad school,” Sotomayor remembers. “I am grateful for the opportunities that the award gave me to finish my degrees and pursue graduate school with less debt than I would have had otherwise.”

The purpose of AAUW is to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research. The State College Branch celebrated 100 years of doing just that in 2016.

After finishing her undergraduate degrees, Sotomayor completed her Master’s degree at PSU and is currently pursuing a dual-doctorate program in Art Education and Women’s Gender & Sexuality Studies. As she continues her formal education, she has found “sanctuary” in her on-campus art studio.

Sotomayor’s studies and research have taken

her to Cuba, where she has traced her maternal family’s footsteps. Her children (Christina, 19, Sterling, 15, Miles, 12, and Sophia, 1) were even able to accompany her once, meeting their extended family members.

Her children are very supportive of her and sometime help her set-up for art shows. She talks to her kids about pursuing their dreams. She thinks it is very important that they see the pride



AAUW Fund at
Centre Foundation

\$174,000
in scholarships to
35 women
since 2004



With the support of AAUW's scholarship, Sotomayor followed her artistic passion, pursued her education, and set an example for her children.

*“Not in my wildest dreams
did I ever think that I would be
where I’m at in my life today.”*

and hard work that fuel her passion.

They are used to seeing her as a student – that is what she has been for almost a decade of their young lives. She jokes that once she is done with school and has a career in her field it will be an adjustment for them.

Sotomayor hopes to eventually work at a research institution where she can teach, continue to make art, and keep doing research in Cuba. She

returned to Havana in the summer of 2017 to host a solo art exhibit.

In 2004, AAUW created an endowment fund, the AAUW State College Branch Scholarship Fund, at Centre Foundation. Since then, the fund has issued \$174,000 in scholarships to 35 women. The fund will ensure that the organization will be able to distribute scholarships to students like Sotomayor for the next 100 years and beyond. 🌱

BACKPACKING

Providing the opportunity for kids to learn on a full stomach

ADVENTURES



*The Elliott children
pose with YMCA
weekend packs. Top
to bottom: Nadine,
Vladimir, Widelande,
Manny, and Niko.*

Frank and Diane Elliott are passionate about giving children a loving home. The State College couple has nine kids, many of whom are adopted or have special needs.

During the last school year, their seven school-aged children enrolled in the YMCA of Centre County's Backpack Weekend Food Program.

"Once a week we get these nice backpacks full of food for our kids," Diane says. "It's really been a help for a large family like ours."

The program began in 2014 in the Philipsburg-Osceola Area School District with just 40 backpacks. There, 53% of students qualify for free or reduced lunches and teachers were reporting that students were coming to school on Monday saying that they did not have any food at home over the weekend. It quickly became clear that other school districts in the county were experiencing the same problem.

"If I had told someone 'within three years, we're going to be at 1,000 backpacks' they would have looked at me like I should have been locked up somewhere," says Mel Curtis, director of the Moshannon Valley YMCA and administrator of the backpack program.

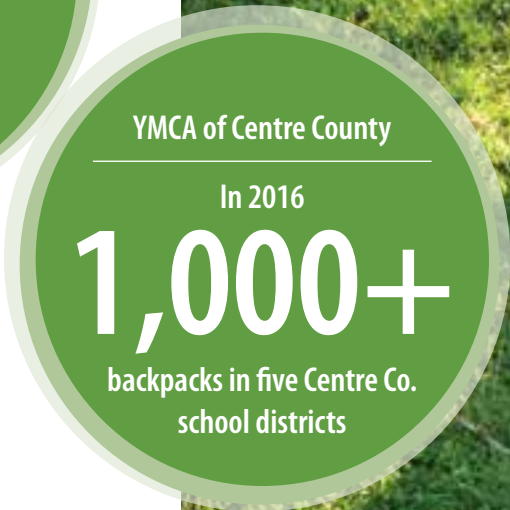
But that's exactly what happened as the program's demand grew quickly.

Each week during the school year, backpacks filled with food for the weekend are distributed to students in each of Centre County's five school districts.

Students receiving free or reduced price lunches are the main focus of the program, but, says Curtis, no child is turned away. Backpacks can also be provided for younger siblings who are not yet enrolled in school.



The Elliott children are full of smiles and their backpacks are full of food - the perfect combination for childhood.



The kid-friendly menu includes rotating favorites like macaroni and cheese, soup, oatmeal, cereal, fruit, and pudding – often bought in bulk to get the best price. The foods are easy for kids to prepare themselves in case parents are at work during mealtimes.

Full backpacks are handed out on Fridays and are returned empty on Mondays. School administrators report that students who receive backpacks experience less absenteeism and are more attentive.

The program is also providing an important lesson to kids who volunteer to pack the backpacks, but do not receive them. Student volunteers do not know who relies on the backpacks, but know it could be their classmate or friend.

“They’re getting a life lesson out of this,” Curtis says.

The program recently expanded to the State College Area School District, where more than

10% of students receive free or reduced lunches.

“You can’t tell who’s hungry. You can walk down College Avenue in State College and pass 1,000 people and you’d never guess that any of those people are hungry,” Curtis says. “There’s no face to hunger. There’s no territory to hunger.”

As a whole, Centre County has a higher food insecurity rate than many nearby counties, including Blair, Clinton, and Clearfield.

Diane says her kids have really looked forward to getting their backpacks each Friday.

“Any time you can give people food and make it an easy process that’s convenient and that the



*“There’s no face to hunger.
There’s no territory to hunger.”*

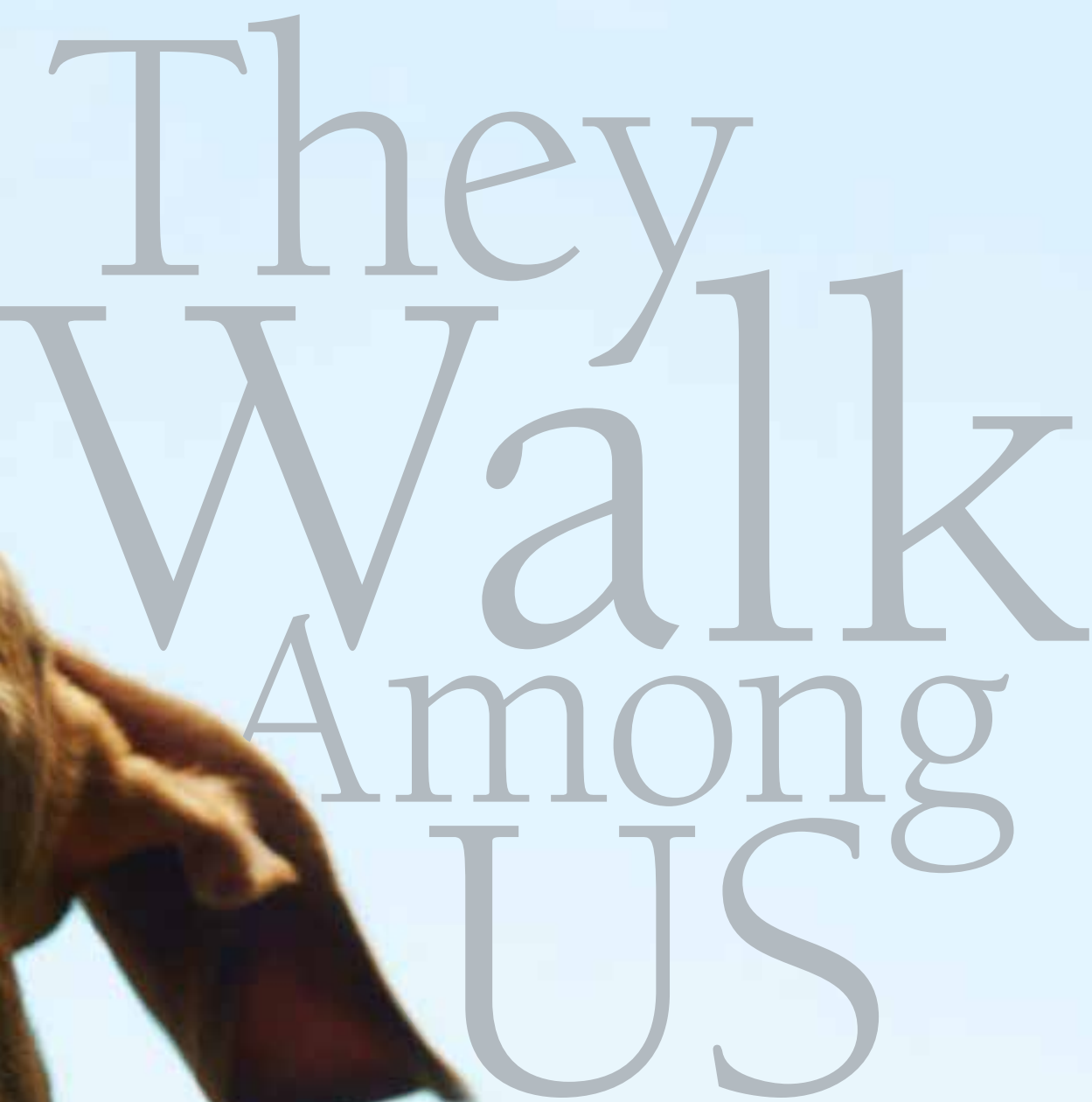
kids are going to eat, that’s the best,” she says. “I’m so grateful to everyone who’s involved in this program.”

The Backpack Weekend Food Program has an annual budget of about \$100,000, all of which is funded by grants and donations.

Centre Foundation supports this program and other YMCA programs through an endowment

fund, the YMCA of Centre County Fund, and other granting programs. The YMCA participates in Centre Gives, raising \$17,726 through it in 2016 and \$21,895 in 2017. Grant money that went to the YMCA through Centre Gives, endowment funds, donor-advised fund grants, field-of-interest fund grants, and Centre PACT grants totaled \$94,124 in 2016. 🌱





They Walk Among US

Connecting people with four-legged
companions that become family

*Who doesn't love
coming home to a wet
kiss and a wagging tail?*

Dewey, Hanna, Fluffy, and Donna. Those are the names of Pat and Rick Ellenberger’s quartet of dogs, all of which they adopted from Centre County PAWS.

“All of these four-legged family members bring us great joy,” Pat says. “Dewey gives the best hugs, Hanna is our little spitfire, Fluffy watches over all of us and is sweet and gentle, and Donna is our happy girl who loves to cuddle on the couch.”

The Ellenbergers have lived in Ferguson Township for more than 20 years and are retired. They both do volunteer work at organizations throughout the county. Pat volunteers at Centre County PAWS, helping at the front desk and with birthday parties or other celebrations.

Animals that are older and have health or behavioral issues can be difficult to place. After losing a beloved dog to cancer, the Ellenbergers chose each of their PAWS dogs precisely because they wanted to help animals that were most in need of their help.

“People tell us that our dogs are so lucky to have us, but we know we are the lucky ones,” she says. “We just love each one of them for who they are!”

The dogs bring joy to the Ellenbergers and to

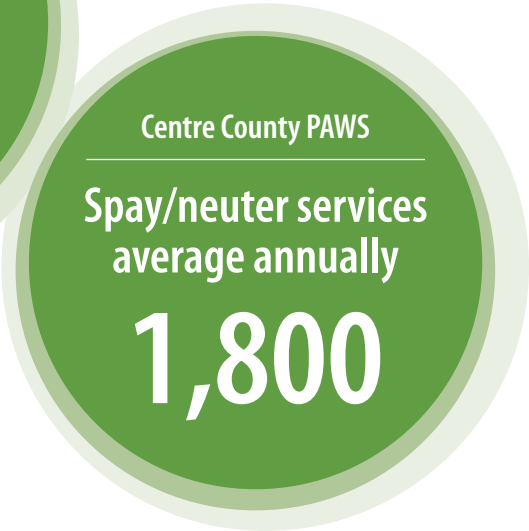
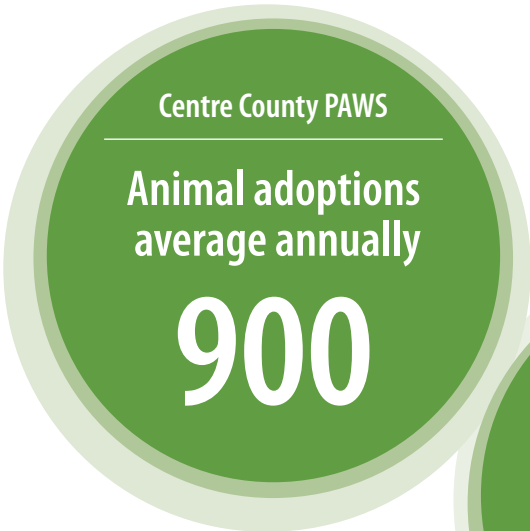
many others in the community. Pat takes Dewey and Hanna to nursing homes to visit with the residents and to parties at PAWS to play with children. Dressed as Mickey and Minnie Mouse, or in other costumes, the dogs give everyone lots of hugs and kisses.

Their most recent adoptee, Donna, has been with them for a few months. She came from a puppy mill, which resulted in emotional issues, dental problems, and arthritis from living in a small crate. Donna is also deaf and the Ellenbergers are teaching her sign language.

“Even though her walk is crooked, when she trips, she gets up, keeps going, and is smiling the entire time,” Pat says. “She is the happiest little dog.”

Seeing animals like Donna transform is one of the things Christine Faust enjoys the most about her job. Faust is the Director of Development and Marketing at the animal shelter located on Trout Road in State College.

“It’s very rewarding when scared, shy cats and dogs open up and begin to trust our volunteers,” Faust says. “We also love to see the changes in the animals that arrive at PAWS in bad shape and greatly improve due to the care and love given to them by our volunteers.”



In 2016, PAWS processed 512 cat and 337 dog adoptions by community members. Through low-cost clinics and free vouchers for Centre County residents in need, they also provided 1,806 spay/neuter services to the public.

Those numbers were similar in 2015 and have been increasing since 2014. This is why financial support, including from Centre Foundation, is so important for this non-profit shelter.

PAWS enjoys annual grants from several funds that are housed at Centre Foundation, including the Centre County PAWS Fund, the Bob & Sue Nuss Fund, the Elizabeth K. Held Memorial Fund, the Carl and Josephine Gettig Memorial Fund, and the Mattil Family Fund.

And PAWS is always a favorite during Centre Gives – the organization raised \$49,686 through it in 2016 and \$61,055 in 2017. Grant money

from Centre Gives and endowment funds totaled \$55,744 in 2016.

The money helps to support the organization’s shelter operations and medical budget. In one year alone, PAWS spends an average of \$150,000 on medical care for its animals, including preventive care, vaccines, blood work, medical procedures, and spays/neuters of PAWS animals.

“We’re grateful for the support we receive from Centre Foundation and that our community has so many generous, caring people who support Centre County PAWS and all of the great non-profits in our town,” Faust says. 🐾

“People tell us our dogs are so lucky to have us, but we know we are the lucky ones.”



*All paws on deck!
This puppy is
ready to play.*

Providing

Peace

of

Mind





Henry and Kathy Weaver (left) are no longer over-burdened by worries of money management thanks to Interfaith Human Services' Financial Case Care Managers, Judy Kennedy and BJ Weaver (above).

Gloria*, from Philipsburg, knew she needed help with her finances. “I couldn’t manage my own money,” she says. “When I would get money, I would spend it.”

She was referred to Interfaith Human Services (IHS) and its Money Management Program, which provides people in need with one-on-one money management assistance by a financial care case manager. IHS created the program in 2007, when it became evident that many people in Centre County were struggling through the recession and needed help managing their money. Since then, the program has helped between 50 and 70 people annually, many of whom have an intellectual disability or a diagnosed mental health condition.

At first, Gloria was hesitant to contact IHS about the program. Eventually, she made the call and is glad that she did. Gloria met with a case manager a few times and now reports that, “I have not



Henry Weaver stands confidently, knowing he is on secure financial footing.

had any kind of anxiety or stress over money. I don't fight about money with anybody. I feel great."

Gloria has recommended the program to others who are struggling financially. Her 16-year-old son has started meeting with the case manager, so that he can get a good start on personal money management.

Kathy and Henry Weaver have also experienced great relief and peace of mind through the assistance of their financial care case manager, Judy Kennedy. When their family finances became too overwhelming, Kathy and Henry turned to IHS and Kennedy worked with them to become financially stable.

"We've had people in this program tell us that they're just really grateful that someone is able to help them take the stress away," says Wendy

Vinhage, Executive Director at IHS.

Some people come directly to IHS, while others are referred by the Social Security Administration, which sends payments to qualified "representative payees." IHS serves as a representative payee for many clients who have no one else to trust with their finances. These clients rely on IHS case workers, who proactively place check-in calls to ensure that the heat is on during the winter and that the rent is paid to keep the fear of eviction at bay.

Meetings often take place at the IHS State College office or in Bellefonte, where case managers travel to serve clients in the area. Travel costs and time constraints made getting out to Philipsburg more difficult. However, IHS knew that there were people in Philipsburg – like Gloria – who desperately needed this service.

“...they’re just really grateful that someone is able to help them take the stress away.”

So, IHS applied for a grant from Centre Foundation’s Giving Circle. The Giving Circle is a group of community members who pool their resources to make project-based grants.

“It’s an amazing opportunity to get in front of a room of all these philanthropists and explain to them, ‘this is a problem in our county’ and make them aware of it,” Vinhage says of the Giving Circle.

In August 2016, Centre Foundation’s Giving Circle members voted to award their \$10,000 grant to IHS, expanding the financial care program to Philipsburg. Case managers began going to Philipsburg on a monthly basis in January, then bi-monthly in April, meeting clients at the Moshannon Valley YMCA.

“If we can reach those people and make it easy for them to get that basic financial education, then they’re going to be less reliant on other limited non-profit resources,” explains Vinhage. Clients

will have more money available to pay for rent, groceries, utilities, transportation, medical care, and other needs, Vinhage adds.

Gloria says being able to meet with a case worker in Philipsburg, where she lives, is “absolutely” a big help.

Centre Foundation is home to an endowment fund, the Interfaith Human Services Fund, which provides a grant to the organization each year. The non-profit also participates in the online granting program, Centre Gives, raising \$12,950 through it in 2016 and \$16,135 in 2017. Grant money that went to IHS through Centre Gives, the Giving Circle, endowment funds, and donor-advised fund grants totaled \$24,762 in 2016. 🌱

**Gloria’s name is changed for privacy.*





*Whether you are in
waders or on the bank,
the view downstream is
always mesmerizing.*



HOME

no
place
like

Protecting the places where we find balance



If you visited your doctor recently, you may have been given an unusual prescription – for going outside.

That is because spending time outside is just plain good for you, from helping you shed a few extra pounds, to strengthening your heart, or warding off depression, says Deb Nardone, Executive Director of ClearWater Conservancy.

That fact led to the creation of Centred Outdoors, a program that encourages people to enjoy our community’s natural resources and to learn more about them. The 2017 summer program featured nine locations in Centre County: Black Moshannon State Park, the Barrens to Bald Eagle Wildlife Corridor, Bald Eagle State Park, Talleyrand Park, Spring Creek Canyon, Poe Paddy Tunnel, Millbrook Marsh Nature Center, the Arboretum at Penn State, and Mount Nittany.

Each location began with a sign that provided health and wellness information. This included how the air quality can affect your health, the terrain difficulty level, how many steps you can expect to walk, and how many calories you could burn. There was also information about the flora and fauna found in the area.

Centred Outdoors

6

organizations partnering on the project

Each Sunday and Wednesday, guided excursions were led by local environmental educators, historians, and healthcare providers. The website, CentredOutdoors.org, provided a virtual hub for people to learn and connect, both before and after the hikes.

While these guided excursions were free and open to participants of all ages and fitness levels, Nardone also encouraged people to explore Centre County’s natural beauty on their own. It is not only good for people, she says, it is also good for those outdoor places.

“Spending time in the outdoors, particularly in your backyard, motivates people to understand why it’s worth protecting those places,” she says.

It is hard for Nardone to pick just one favorite among the Centred Outdoors’ sites.



Open views, cattails, and water sounds surround visitors to Millbrook Marsh as they stroll along the boardwalk.

“They all provide something very special and different,” she says.

Mount Nittany was her son’s first big hike, so that has a special place in her heart and it remains a regular family outing. She also loves to walk, hike, bike, and fish at Spring Creek Canyon.

Nardone and her family challenged themselves to explore all nine locations during Centred Outdoors. She hopes other families follow suit.

Centred Outdoors was led by ClearWater, in collaboration with the Penns Valley Conservation Association, Mount Nittany Conservancy, Millbrook Marsh Nature Center, and the Sustainability Institute at Pennsylvania State University. The Mount Nittany Health System was also a partner and prescriber of “PaRx” prescriptions to get outside.

The program received a \$100,000 grant through Centre Foundation’s Centre Inspires granting program. Centre Inspires was established in 2014 and is designed to be transformative on a county-

wide scale by creating positive change through community engagement.

In 2016, Centre Inspires’ focus was creating community engagement through the environment, so Centred Outdoors was a natural choice to receive the grant at the Foundation’s Annual

Dinner in November.

“It was incredibly exciting,” says Nardone. “It was an opportunity to do an important project at the right time that we wouldn’t have had the leverage to do without this grant.”

Centre Foundation also supports ClearWater through two endowment funds: the ClearWater Conservancy Fund and

the ClearWater Conservancy Conservation Easement Stewardship Fund. The organization also participates in Centre Gives, raising \$50,370 through it in 2016 and \$101,783 in 2017. Grant money that went to ClearWater through Centre Gives, Centre Inspires, and endowment funds totaled \$107,348 in 2016. 🌱

“It was an opportunity to do an important project at the right time...”

Executive Director's Message

In the more than 35 years that Centre Foundation has been inspiring and facilitating a culture of giving, we have been part of many wonderful stories. Our circle of impact is broad and reaches throughout the county. Our funds provide scholarships, create shelter, preserve and protect our environment, save animals, and build community.

To me, the most important impact happens at a very personal level. At the heart of each circle of impact is the story of the people who were touched – those are some of the stories we've shared in this publication.

There is another important circle to share: the circle of people who provide the energy that fuels Centre Foundation. Our staff and Board of Directors embody our mission in a deep and personal way. We are all passionate about this place that we call home and the people who make it special. We all love where we live and, more importantly, we love what we do.

By sharing these stories, I hope we have given you a glimpse into our world and the joy we find in the work that we do. We would love to help you create your own story of impact.

Please join us in making Centre County a more vibrant community.

Molly Kunkel

Executive Director, Centre Foundation

Left to right: Centre Foundation staff members: Irene Miller, Ashley Pipe, Lauren Petrone, Molly Kunkel, and Carrie Ryan.



OUR MISSION

To inspire and facilitate a culture of giving to create a vibrant community



Stories Made Possible By

The stories found in this publication were made possible by donors like you. To create your own story of impact, please contact Centre Foundation. To read the stories of 300+ funds,

make an investment in any existing fund, establish your own fund, or learn more about events, please visit Centre-Foundation.org.

American Association of University Women (AAUW) – State College Branch

AAUW State College
Branch Scholarship Fund

Centre County PAWS

- Centre County PAWS Fund
- Bob & Sue Nuss Fund
- Elizabeth K. Held Memorial Fund
- Carl and Josephine Gettig Memorial Fund
- Mattil Family Fund

ClearWater Conservancy

- Centre Inspires – 2016 Grant
- ClearWater Conservancy Fund
- ClearWater Conservancy Conservation Easement Stewardship Fund

Interfaith Human Services

- Giving Circle – 2016 Grant
- Interfaith Human Services Fund

YMCA of Centre County

- YMCA of Centre County Fund

Awards & Recognition

We're proud to share some of the accolades we have recently received, none of which would have been possible without the support of community members like you.



Voted "Best Fundraising Event in State College" by *State College Magazine*



Voted one of Central Pennsylvania's "Top 100 Organizations" by *Pennsylvania Business Central*



Centre Foundation has been accredited for having organizational and financial practices that are in compliance with the National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations.



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On the Cover: What do Judy Kennedy (left), Joseph Cleary and Remi from Centre County PAWs (center), Widelande Elliott (right), and Millbrook Marsh have in common? Each are featured in a story of local impact.

