



COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF HOLLY CITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Empowering Change and Building Resilience in
Center City, Millville, New Jersey

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Prepared by: Ross Whiting, Ph.D.

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Introduction

This report is a summary of the community and economic impacts of projects undertaken by Holly City Development Corporation (HCDC) from 2012-2022. Since 2012, Heather Santoro has served as the Executive Director of HCDC, leading projects that embody their mission to inspire and empower neighborhood change in Center City Millville, New Jersey. HCDC's primary focus is the Center City area, which is bounded by Main Street on the south, the Maurice River on the west, Broad Street to the north, and Sixth Street on the east. HCDC has engaged in projects that range from the collaborative creation of little libraries and a community garden to being a key funder in multi-million dollar capital projects that include an expansion of the Millville Public Library and the founding and creation of the Creative Enterprise Center that serves as an incubator for small business owners. HCDC's focus on inclusive, participatory, community-oriented projects has created long-lasting bonds between community members and established long-term, resilient community resources that have improved Millville residents' quality of life and economic conditions for local business owners.

This impact report was produced by Dr. Ross Whiting, President of Dogwood Consulting. Reporting is based on the review and summary of final reports and internal documentation provided by HCDC and interviews with current and former HCDC staff and partners. Final reports and internal project documentation were summarized by year and are included chronologically below. Dr. Whiting conducted interviews with current and former HCDC staff and key external project partners for projects which had no descriptive final or internal reports. Interview questions included:

- What were the original goals of the funding?
 - In what ways was/were that goal(s) achieved?
 - Who was impacted by this work and how?
- What amount (if any) of matching or capital funds were provided by this grant?
- What documentation (if any) is available for review?
- In what ways (if any) did this project lead to future projects or development?

Data including participant and volunteer numbers, number of events or sessions, durations of events, number of goods distributed, or other quantitative data are found in the final report summary. Where no quantitative data is available a description of projects and programming is provided. Data reported here are verifiable through final reports produced by HCDC, and likely represent the minimum number of engagements in HCDC's projects and activities.

Brief History of HCDC

HCDC was formed in 1998 as the non-profit arm of the Millville Housing Authority. The organization initially focused on affordable housing development, but stopped housing production in 2008 during the recession. In 2013, HCDC started to get more involved with community and resident engagement through the State's Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program. HCDC started to gain momentum in neighborhood revitalization work, and in 2016 the board decided to separate the HCDC from the Housing Authority to focus all of its efforts in neighborhood revitalization.



Purpose of This Report

This impact report includes a summary of all project reports provided by HCDC from 2014 through 2022 organized by funding source, and a comprehensive summary of the economic and community impacts of HCDC's work. The order of funders below is generally by the broadest, longest-term funding sources to more focused, shorter-term investments. This report highlights the diversity of funding sources supporting HCDC including local, county, and state resources, foundations, and businesses. Project summaries also demonstrate the breadth of community and economic development-oriented project goals. This report highlights the diversity of funding sources HCDC engages to support residents in intentional, inclusive community building and to develop real, permanent resources that promote individual, family, community, and economic growth

Total funding

Analysis of reports from 2014 through 2022 describe major community and economic development impacts on the Millville community over the last 10 years which include \$4,178,098 in direct funding to HCDC. HCDC engaged in community development initiatives that focus on community connection, support, and improvement through collaborative, community-responsive programs, events, and activities. Community development areas impacted by HCDC and its funders include community building, family strengthening, seasonal and holiday celebrations, food insecurity, public health, public safety, resource distribution, and COVID-19 prevention. In addition, HCDC engaged in economic development that included \$2,861,160 in gap funding resulting in \$22,250,000 in community assets, public space development, \$179,000 in home rehabilitation funding, \$337,398 in COVID-19 business relief grants, downtown aesthetic improvements, workforce development, and \$176,000 in direct small-business engagement.



Long-Term Funding Partnerships

Wells Fargo Regional Foundation

Neighborhood Activities Grant 2014

This grant for \$50,000 from the WFRF funded work for the Community Center Without Walls which included a series of 76 events over an 18 month period. This grant period included events focused on community development and engagement, and was part of a transition to community events that included more community focus including playstreets, pop-up events, in-person events, and more partnerships with local organizations. Though the events garnered community engagement, feedback from the community and from partners indicated the Community Center Without Walls concept did not meet the needs of the community. As a result of this project, HCDC shifted their focus from decentralized community building efforts to events that were centralized within locations that focused on making lasting community connections between individuals, businesses, and organizations within the community.

Wells Fargo Regional Foundation - Neighborhood Planning Grant 2018

In conjunction with NRTC funding, this funding in the amount of \$85,000 was used to create the Neighborhood Improvement Plan that continues to inform the work of HCDC through 2023. Developed through intensive planning sessions with community members, business owners, stakeholders, and City officials across Millville, the plan provides guidelines and plans to build a fun and healthy community, leverage Millville's arts and economic development, creating a market for homeownership and investment, improving public spaces, and increasing access to jobs and education and opportunities for civic leadership. Center City Neighborhood Planning including two public outreach events, 156 collaborative map comments, 82 on-street interviews, 64 open public house attendees, 70 youth participants, 188 resident survey responses, 75 attendees at a planning process meeting, and 100 attendees at the plan roll-out meeting.

This grant resulted in the [Center City Millville Neighborhood Plan](#), an inclusive, comprehensive, cornerstone plan created in collaboration with community members. HCDC continues to use this plan to identify priorities for projects, implement changes, and inform the strategic direction of HCDC's activities and initiatives in Millville.

Wells Fargo Regional Foundation: Neighborhood Redevelopment 2020

HCDC engaged in a multitude of projects as part of the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation's \$750,000 Neighborhood Redevelopment initiatives beginning in January 2020 and continuing through early 2023. Though HCDC's application was originally focused on the proactive development of community- and economic-development focused initiatives, grant activities were shifted dramatically in March 2020 with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout 2020 and 2021 activities focused on acute community needs resulting from the health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In late 2021 and throughout 2022, activities shifted to more proactive community- and economic-development activities as the acute effects of the COVID-19 pandemic waned. Below is a summary of quarterly reports highlighting HCDC's activities throughout the pandemic and into 2023.



In the report from January-October 2022 HCDC reported that their activities drastically shifted to meet the acute needs of family members as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As work and school shut down in Millville and across the state of New Jersey there was an increased need for food while families and caregivers were out of work. As part of this work HCDC began to deliver school meals to families with a lack of transportation, and partnered with the local food pantry to disseminate food. From March to October 2020 we have delivered **8,749 bags of groceries** to residents, and **27,453 school meals; 1,111** supplemental bags of food to residents in need. As part of this effort HCDC supported 23 businesses to secure grants to access COVID-19 related resources. Little libraries that previously held books have been repurposed to hold canned goods and other nonperishables for families to access. In place of Playstreets in Summer 2020, 300 activities packages were delivered to families for six weeks during Summer that encouraged youth to play outside.

Activities originally in the grant that required in-person components are on hold. Original Wells Fargo Regional Foundation plans included the development of a variety of activities focused on economic and community development. The majority of those activities were on hold at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, but entered planning and development phases beginning in early 2021. The activities listed below remained in planning phases unless otherwise indicated in future reports:

- Lot beautification at 2nd and Vine streets in Center City,
- Neighborhood cleanups,
- Community dinner,
- Pocket Park development,
- Fit and Healthy Program,
- Streetscape development along the Railroad line,
- Homeowner rehabilitation, housing counseling, homebuyer subsidies program, and property acquisition,
- Improvement and expansion of existing parks including 4th street park,
- Workforce development activities, and
- Artist recruitment for murals and artistic engagement in Center City.

From November 2020 through January 2021 food insecurity remained the main focus. In the last three months HCDC delivered 26,739 school meals to children and 4,043 bags of groceries to an average of 600 families per month. In January 2021 HCDC partnered with the Food Bank of South Jersey to host pop-up pantries. First pop-up event provided 200 boxes of food to families. During the last three month period, HCDC provided 14 forgivable loans totalling \$70,000 to local businesses. From October-December 2020 HCDC provided support to 26 businesses that allowed them to receive direct grants, provided a four-part workshop series to 15 businesses, purchased PPE supplies for businesses, local Code Blue members, and the Millville Police Department, hosted a gift card program that resulted in \$50,000 in investment in local businesses, and provided digital marketing assessment and action planning to 35 businesses. A total of \$337,398 was invested in local businesses through the NPP program. During this time period HCDC also hosted the Fit and Healthy Program which included eight outdoor fitness programs averaging 23 participants each week.



Addressing food insecurity remains the main focus in the February through April 2021 report. HCDC delivered 3,000 school meals to students each week, and food to an average of 700 households each month. 59 total applications for COVID relief through the City of Millville's forgivable loan program have been approved to date. HCDC partnered with the Cumberland County Health Department to make COVID vaccinations accessible to neighborhood residents, providing vaccines to residents in April. HCDC continues to host the Fit and Healthy program for outdoor fitness programming including yoga and zumba over eight weeks for an average of 23 participants each week. Pop-up food events continue to supplement meal deliveries. Over three events in three months 100 families were served at each event. HCDC hosted a neighborhood cleanup on April 24th with 46 volunteers collecting 58 bags of trash. 126 residents received a take-out dinner as two restaurants and a local cafe partnered to host a community-dinner take-out event.

Food insecurity remains the main focus from May through July 2021. 3,000 meals were distributed each week to students without transportation, and local food pantry delivery to 700 households over each month. The Fit and Healthy Program continues to run with an average of 15 participants each with taking classes in yoga and Zumba. Three pop-up food pantries were held over the last three months with an average of 100 families served at each pop-up event. 300 packets of activities were distributed for virtual Play Streets events each week for eight weeks during Summer 2021. The Community Garden continues to grow during this time period as residents become more involved in in-person activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the first period of work with the WFRF grant that included more robust in-person activities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Food insecurity continues to be a focus from August through October 2021. Schools have opened; school meal delivery is no longer a responsibility of HCDC, and the local food pantry has taken over meal delivery this month. HCDC hosted a vaccination clinic in partnership with the Cumberland County Health Department. Pop-up pantry continues to be hosted every month with an average of 100 families in August and September, but an uptick in families in October with 131 served. The Community Garden was harvested, cleaned up, and prepared for Winter. HCDC hosted a Pumpkin Extravaganza in Center City on October 30th in which 300 youth participated in pumpkin decorating, a trunk-or-treat event, and other Halloween crafts. Food insecurity is a growing concern in the City of Millville as direct food delivery has shifted outside HCDC's area of responsibility.

From November 2021 through January 2022, HCDC continues to host pop-up pantry events in which 100+ families receive 10,000 lbs of food, serving 350-400 adults and children. During this period, Millville was one of 50 New Jersey communities designated as a food desert. The gift card program returned in this year, providing purchasers of gift cards a matching amount of funding on their gift cards to local businesses; \$48,000 was invested in small businesses as a result of this initiative.

From February through April 2022 HCDC continues to focus on food insecurity, but has moved to more proactively address community anchors through real resource investment in public spaces and businesses. Pop-up pantries continue to increase in family participation with more than 100 families participating and 340-400 individuals served at each of three events in the last three months. Library expansion has been approved in this time period; the \$8.0m expansion will double the size of the current library and significantly increase the space available for community programming. HCDC partnered with Impact Harvest during this time period to sign residents up for food delivery. The Homeowner rehabilitation program received robust funding via the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit in March, 2021, and will include library expansion, apprenticeships, and community engagement and outreach.



In-person activities expand as Millville recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic from May through July 2022. Pop-up pantries continue to be a main focus through three months of programming, serving 100+ families of 350-400 individuals. For the first time in two years, Playstreets was held three weeks in July with an average of 142 children attending each week. Activities included crafts, basketball, a dunk tank, fitness, lawn games, and fire hydrant play. Six new facade applications have been approved to support aesthetic improvements to businesses on High Street. Construction is underway for the library expansion. The community garden continues to host weekly programming, and will include a new shed this year. The Girl Scouts completed a mural that will be installed at the end of Summer. Impact Harvest hosts produce delivery to 70 households a week for 10 weeks in the Summer.

From August through October 2022 Pop-up pantry continues to be a main staple of programming, serving an average of 125 families and a total of 450 individuals. Three weeks of Playstreets events were held in August with an average of 120 youth participating each week. New fencing was installed in this time period at 4th street park; HCDC continues to partner with the City of Millville on improvements to the park. Eight businesses received facade improvements for their businesses on High Street. The Community Garden was fully harvested and winterized. HCDC hosted a pumpkin extravaganza in which 300 youth participated in events that included arts and crafts, pumpkin painting, and a trunk-or-treat event. The Girl Scout mural was painted on the shed at the community garden, and an artist is being hired to paint a mural in Glasstown Plaza, a high-visibility area on High Street.

Pop-up pantries continue to be held from November 2022 through January 2023 with over 125 families and 450 individuals receiving food during this time period. A streetscape mural was painted on a sidewalk near the community garden, and six tree pots were painted on High Street. New picnic tables, benches, and trash cans were purchased and installed at 4th street park. Clay College participated in several events with our community partners including the Police Athletic League and the Holly City Family Center. A winter wonderland celebration was held in December; 150 children participated in arts and crafts, face painting, hair tinseling, photos with Santa, Elsa, and Anna with five businesses participating in the event. Eight new businesses completed facade improvements as part of the initial round of improvement grants. The business apprenticeship program specialist has developed documentation to support the program, engaging seven businesses in apprenticeship programs and interviewing 12 students for various positions. 21 businesses participated in 1:1 matching gift card programs, totalling \$78,000 in local, small-business economic development as a result of this program. Five organizations received mini-grants for partner organizations to implement local activities including:

- St. Paul Lutheran Church purchased hand carts for residents to pursue shopping and errands,
- Clay College worked with HCFC and PAL to decorate 300 holiday ornaments,
- The Library purchased lego sets for their Lego Club,
- HCFC hosted three events including ornament making for seniors, slime making for kids, and Swim with Santa, and
- Millville PAL purchased sports and recreation equipment for 340 participants in events that included football, basketball, wrestling, and fishing.



Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit

Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC, 2023) funding has been the longest-term and most consistent form of funding for HCDC, and highlights the diversity and evolution of projects undertaken by HCDC. NRTC funding is provided by the Department of Community Affairs in the State of New Jersey, and gives business entities a 100% tax credit for funds provided to nonprofit entities carrying out comprehensive revitalization plans. In turn, nonprofits like HCDC must use at least 60% of tax credit funds for housing and economic development, while the remaining 40% of the funding can be used for other efforts that promote neighborhood revitalization. Each year, HCDC staff talk to local businesses and banking institutions to identify organizations with NJ State tax liability as a way for those businesses to invest those tax dollars in their local communities. HCDC received NRTC funding for report years ending in 2014, 2016, 2018, 2019, and 2022 which is currently ongoing.

NRTC 2014

As part of the 2013-2014 NRTC project HCDC had several objectives related to economic development. The first was to demolish abandoned properties in the Center City area in collaboration with the City of Millville, targeting blocks with heavily abandoned buildings and allocating \$274,875 of NRTC funding to this project. HCDC sought to demolish between 12-15 blighted properties, eventually demolishing 11 residential properties and three commercial properties in the Center City area. Commercial properties demolished as part of this work contributed to the Cumberland County Arts and Innovation Center project that opened in 2017.

HCDC also sought to acquire properties in collaboration with the City of Millville to engage them in future rehabilitation or demolition, and allocated \$327,875 of NRTC funding towards this effort. HCDC acquired two vacant lots on North Third Street, and worked with multiple agencies to determine the best use for the projects in upcoming projects.

HCDC provided gap funding for the construction of the Cumberland County Arts and Innovation Center, a 21,000 square foot building that housed all of the Arts programming for Cumberland County College, and provided business classes to local residents. The building opened on January 23, 2017 for the beginning of Cumberland County College's Spring semester.

The Millville Community Campus Center Activities continued through 2014 with the goal of providing 12-24 activities per year for 1,000 residents. A community builder was hired to coordinate programming over the two-year grant period, facilitating over 140 events with 2,500 participants including:

- Two back to school fun fairs with 300 book bags with school supplies distributed at each,
- A community day event with over 1,000 participants,
- A community health fair with over 300 participants,
- A job readiness program for 20 high school students,
- 20 imagination playground events with an average of 40 participants each, and a
- Neighborhood summit for neighborhood residents to provide feedback on additional programming.



A streetscape for the Millville Community Center Campus was developed as part of activities in 2014. HCDC developed and installed signage identifying the current Community Center campus partners and their location in front of the Holly City Family Center, and was part of a multi-phase project that incorporates streetscapes for the Library, American Legion, Holly City Family Center, and Creative Enterprise Center.

NRTC 2016

HCDC worked with the Millville Urban Redevelopment Corporation and New Jersey Community Capital to renovate an existing building to create a high-tech Creative Enterprise Center that serves as a creative, state-of-the-art business incubator in the heart of Center City. Activities include rehabilitation of the building, rental of apartment and studio spaces, and membership to utilize common areas.

\$400,000 was provided via the NRTC for this effort. A grand opening of the Center was held in December 2017.

The Homeowner rehabilitation program offered down payment and closing cost assistance to attract new homeowners to the Center City neighborhood. HCDC matched \$5,000 per new homeowner, and \$7,000 for existing homeowners to undertake a home improvement project. A total of 12 homeowners took part in the program. Work on homes included exterior porch, deck, and cement work, plumbing, interior repairs and painting, roof repairs, window repair and replacement, and carpentry.

HCDC engaged in a neighborhood improvement grant program in this round of NRTC funding, providing residents an opportunity to create an action plan that shows resident involvement in planning and implementation of neighborhood projects. Applicants were also required to match 10% of overall program costs. A total of 11 projects were completed, including:

1. St. Paul's Lutheran Church improved a vacant lot including landscaping, benches and signage. This lot is utilized by both the Church and HCDC for community outreach and engagement events
2. Citizens United revitalized a vacant lot and developed it into a wildlife garden with native vegetation. They held educational events for neighborhood residents and volunteers throughout the process
3. The Levoy Theater provided vouchers to families that live in Center City to attend events at the Theater, increasing access to the arts for neighborhood residents. 2,500 vouchers were distributed.
4. Millville Public Library replaced 12 computers for their computer classes (for both children and adults). An average of 9,125 patrons have utilized the computers each month.
5. Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts held Creative Play Saturdays at various locations throughout Center City for over 200 participants.
6. Help and Hope Ministries provides well balanced meals to low-income residents in Center City. They have served over 12,500 in the last 18 months.
7. Bethel Development Corporation received funding to purchase supplies for their food services program. Bethel continues to serve over 400 residents each week.



8. Make and Move Club for STEM summer camp series of activities for 36 Center City youth. They provided additional STEM programming for 50 youth.
9. CCC Luthiery program worked with Center City youth to create banjos. 10 participants.
10. Millville Development Corporation installed 40 banners along High Street identifying the Glasstown Arts District.
11. The SHINE Program provided after school activities for Center City youth including homework help. There are currently 168 registered participants in the program

Organizations that participated in the Neighborhood Improvement Grant program invested an additional \$56,382 in implemented projects, while volunteers donated \$20,670 in time to projects.

The Millville Community Campus Center Activities continued through 2016 with the goal of providing 12-24 activities per year for 1,000 residents. Activities completed in 2015 and 2016 included:

- Playstreets
 - 6 weeks in 2015, 100 youth, families, and residents, and 30-40 volunteers.
 - 7 weeks in 2016, 423 participants, 85 volunteers
- 300 book bags distributed
- Six Adopt-A-Block cleanups from April to October
- A financial course completed by 13 families
- Distribution of 20 bike helmets
- Co-sponsored a business program for 20 small business owners.
- Family day of service: 2015 246 participants, 2016 229 participants.
- NeighborGOOD festival with 398 participants
- Energy expo with 210 participants
- Family Night out with 255 participants
- Holiday event with 195 participants.
- Community Counts program: 120 middle school students participated in a leadership program that identified projects/programs to benefit Center City neighborhoods.

The 2015-2016 NRTC also included a Center City Gateway and Mural Arts Project to develop a mural to be placed at 3rd Street, and develop an additional two murals on vacant lots. Murals were designed with resident input in collaboration with Cumberland County College community development students. The Gateway Mural at 3rd Street was completed in December 2016, while two complimentary murals were completed and installed on Mulberry and High streets.

The 2015-2016 NRTC also included crime prevention initiatives through environmental design to reduce or eliminate opportunities for crime by using elements of the environment to control access, increase opportunities to see and be seen, and define ownership of an area. Training in crime prevention through environmental design was held for 12 officers, one police chaplain, and three representatives for nonprofits, which also resulted in the installation of 18 cameras in three locations across Center City.



NRTC 2018

During the 2018 reporting period HCDC engaged in four activities with funding from the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit. Some of this programming extended through 2020 through contract and project extensions, which were subsequently disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The first goal was to complete pre-development processes for the 500 block of North High Street. HCDC partnered with the Cumberland County Improvement Authority, the Cumberland Empowerment Zone, and the Millville Urban Redevelopment Corporation in the construction of a new 14,000 square foot building and the renovation of a 6,000 square foot building for commercial tenants. Nine lots were acquired as part of this activity. Pre-development site work was completed including plan completion, outbounds surveys, topographics surveys, and environmental work. Final construction drawings and bid documents were completed at the end of 2019, though construction was delayed in 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of \$300,000 was allocated in the 2018 NRTC to this effort.

The second activity was to acquire equipment, training, and start-up funds for entrepreneurs to take residence in the Creative Enterprise Center (CEC). \$103,410 was allocated to this effort in the project report year 2018. As a result, four studio spaces were rented to 12 tenants. The CEC also hosted 15 small business seminar classes, held 40 community events, and acted as a site for an afterschool program. With the onset of COVID-19 in 2020, all six businesses operating in the center received free rent for a minimum of three months. Additional in-person events scheduled through 2020 were reduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community policing was also a main focus of the 2018 NRTC, with the goal of increasing community policing hours within the Center City neighborhood in an effort to increase public safety presence and increase resident/police engagement. As a result of this activity, the Millville Police Department purchased a Nikon camera and lens package for surveillance and ongoing investigations, purchased four new community policing bicycles and equipment, and refurbished and equipped four existing bikes. Over nine months community policing patrols increased in the Center City Neighborhood including a two-person walking patrol, increasing neighborhood policing by over 600 hours total during that time period. In-person patrols were curtailed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Neighborhood improvement grants and activities were an integral part of this NRTC funding cycle. 2018 programming and events included:

- Playstreets, including 1,200 youth, 145 volunteers, 62 collaborating organizations, and distribution of 275 bookbags,
- Neighborhood bbq with 125 residents,
- Fall festival with 380 residents,
- Visioning and goal setting exercise with 31 youth,
- Community day of service with 50 participants,
- Thanksgiving baskets to 28 families,
- Job Fair at the Arts and Innovation Center with 59 participants and 33 employers.

2019 programming and events included:

- Playstreets, including 1,317 youth, 145 volunteers, 16 partner organizations, 1,229 lunches served, and 300 bookbags distributed,
- Fall festival with 380 residents,



- Community counts monthly youth meeting with 120 participants,
- Center City Neighborhood Planning including two public outreach events, 156 collaborative map comments, 82 on-street interviews, 64 open public house attendees, 70 youth participants, 188 resident survey responses, 75 attendees at a planning process meeting, and 100 attendees at the plan roll-out meeting.

In March 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic HCDC changed its services to support food delivery for food insecure families in the Center City neighborhood, delivering food to an average of 165 families for seven weeks from late April through May, 2020.

NRTC 2019

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, activities in this cycle were significantly limited. The final property for the 500 block project of North High Street in Millville was acquired, and all pre-development, financing, and site plans have been completed. Construction delays limited the development of this property.

Neighborhood Preservation Program

Neighborhood Preservation Program COVID Relief Efforts 2020

In October 2020, HCDC entered into an agreement with the Department of Community Affairs for the State of New Jersey to distribute \$337,398 in COVID-19 relief grants, PPE, and business support funding to businesses in Millville via the neighborhood preservation program. HCDC supported 26 businesses in applying for and receiving Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) COVID relief grants that were used to pay rent or mortgages, utilities, and other expenses. 35 businesses also received support with marketing assessments by a local communications company. HCDC also provided \$5,203 in PPE to local businesses, and created a gift-card matching program that generated \$54,000 in local business revenue. In addition, an average of 12-15 businesses took part in a business survival series hosted by HCDC in four sessions throughout late 2020 and early 2021.

Neighborhood Preservation Program - Capital Funds Grant 2022

This \$920,000 grant provided capital funding for an expansion of the Millville Public Library that will more than double the amount of space available to patrons. New spaces include new classroom spaces that include sinks, a public space accessible outside of the library for use after-hours, family meeting spaces, and new project meeting and activity spaces. The expansion of the library will be complete in late 2023.

Pascale Sykes Foundation

The Pascale Sykes Foundation (PSF) launched the South Jersey Strengthening Families Initiative in 2012 for the purpose of supporting working-class families in advancing their careers and families. The South Jersey Strengthening Families Initiative utilized the Whole Family Approach, an approach that focused on supporting two-caregiver households with children in developing healthy relationships, financial stability, and child wellbeing in their households. As part of this effort lead organizations form collaborative partnerships with multiple agencies that includes individualized goal-setting, support, and resource connection for families across the nonprofit collaborative groups. In 2015, HCDC formed Connecting Families to Communities (CF2C), a collaborative that included



HCDC, the Millville Public Library, and the Millville Public School system to support families in Millville, NJ. CF2C formed this partnership under the umbrella of the United Advocacy Group, a group of nonprofits working to support change in communities through community connections, support, encouragement, and accountability. CF2C was part of the United Advocacy Group until the 2018 project year when CF2C's goals evolved to include more community connection between community members and less 1:1 interaction between CF2C staff and families. Goals, engagement, and activities for the PSF Strengthening Families Initiative project evolved throughout project implementation from 2015-2020. CF2C received \$882,000 in project funding from 2014-2020 to support CF2C's projects and activities.

Activities evolved throughout the initiative as PSF better defined their goals and values, and CF2C identified the priorities and approach that worked best with their communities. In general, collaborative activities focused on five areas: financial stability, child wellbeing, healthy relationships, collaboration with partners, and community building. Examples of typical activities in each area are included below.

Financial Stability

- A family budgeting course,
- 1-on-1 resume appointments at the Library,
- GED class registration and completion,
- Cumberland County College job fair
- Homebuyer education course
- Homeowner maintenance course
- Landlord and tenant training

Child Wellbeing

- SHINE Events
- Parents as Leaders Cooperative Events
- Activities at Imagination Playground
- Holly City Family Center Summer Camp
- Family swim nights
- Community swim events
- Nutrition programs at Holly City Family Center and PALC

Healthy Relationships

- Monthly PALC meetings at four schools
- Families schedule and meet with family advocate at least monthly
- Creation and distribution of a monthly calendar of events that includes inclusive opportunities for family and youth engagement

Collaboration

- Monthly case-management meetings with project partners
- Monthly collaborative meetings
- Monthly advocate training



- Family recruitment activities including PALC, community events, and direct Center City Outreach,
- Collaborative sponsored family engagement event schedule
- Other agency/partner referrals to CF2C

Community

- Neighborhood summit to identify neighborhood needs, preferences, and challenges,
- Neighborhood survey,
- Family day of service in Center City Neighborhood
- Police trained in CPTED,
- Environmental assessment days for Center City families.

PSF Report 2016

In the 2015-2016 project effort, CF2C had reached out to 1,067 individuals, engaging 71 in one or more collaborative activities, with 31 families in active case management. During this time, 11 families achieved financial goals, 8 improved their employment status, 7 worked to obtain stable housing, 7 increased academic engagement and achievement, 25 increased engagement in summer programming, 14 increased healthy behaviors, 18 increased involvement of families in schools, 31 families (100% of families) worked towards goal plans, and 28 increased communications within the family unit.

During this first year of operation CF2C grew their community connection and case management through the Parents as Leaders Cooperative and their partners within the Millville Public Library. 16 families participated in the entirety of programming throughout the program year, qualifying for a trip to the Philadelphia Zoo, the Camden Aquarium, or Morey's Pier in Wildwood. 14 families participated in Family Day of Service, working in the Millville Community Garden next to the Millville Public Library, and in Center City Cleanup via Adopt-a-Block.

A survey was conducted at the end of the year for the Parents as Leaders Cooperative. 100% of families agree that activities bring them closer together, and that their family advocate provided helpful resources to help the family attain their goals and needs. Quotes included "I feel this is a wonderful program. We got to have more time together as a family without distractions. We enjoyed all the activities. We will continue attending PALC as long as it's an option for us," "CF2C has united our family and transformed the way we live our day-to-day-lives," and "The value of an Advocate is endless. It was very helpful to have information that I needed and to have someone available who knew those things and could connect me to it."

PSF Report 2017

In the 2016-2017 project effort, CF2C reached out to 1,143 individuals, engaged 136 families in one or more collaborative activities and 49 active families in case management. During this time, 60 families worked to improve their financial situation, 60 families worked to increase their employment status, 51 worked to obtain stable housing, 41 worked to increase academic engagement and achievement. In the area of child wellbeing, 45 families worked towards goals to improve their child's achievement, 62 families worked to improve relationships within the family unit, and 35 families worked towards health and wellness goals.



In this grant period the CF2C collaborative worked with the neighborhood alliance to establish partnerships, build relationships, market the initiative, and survey the community. CF2C completed the second year of Parents as Leaders at Bacon and Silver Run Elementary Schools, and the Community Counts Civic Lab at Lakeside Middle School. 12 families participated in Family Day of Service including a community garden, beautification at Silver Run Elementary School, flowers and cards to Riverview West Senior Housing, and Center City cleanup through Adopt-a-Block. CF2C also connected families to community resources through informational sessions at the Millville Public Library, and established monthly case management meetings for family advocates to discuss challenges, successes, strategies, and resources.

Collaborative partnerships continued to strengthen during this grant period as CF2C engaged caregivers in communities and schools. The Parents as Leaders group met monthly at four schools, hosting an end-of-year celebration at the Holly City Family Center for 70 people to celebrate families who achieved goals in the last year, and the development of strong, positive working relationships with families and organizations.

PSF Report 2018

In the 2017-2018 project effort CF2C reached out to 849 individuals, engaged 168 families in one or more collaborative activities, and had 58 families in case management. During this time, 34 families worked towards financial goals, 40 worked to improve their employment status, 6 worked to increase their educational status, and 19 worked to improve their housing. In the area of child wellbeing and healthy relationships, 36 families worked to increase their children's achievement in schools and 37 worked to improve their children's health and wellbeing. 38 families worked to improve their relationships as a family unit, 53 worked to improve parenting strategies, and 30 set goals related to health and wellness.

During this period, CF2C hosted and partnered in multiple events with participation from 474 families. Events included:

- Healthy homes, a series of workshops focused on building relationships between community members and families that included family bonding and positive family discipline,
- Community Counts, a 6-month leadership program for 120 students in 6th through 8th grade that culminated in the presentation of projects that included supporting the homeless, park-cleanups, SPCA fundraisers, and other community-oriented events to a community panel,
- The Franklin Institute Travelling Science Show with representatives from every Millville Public School,
- CF2C's annual energy expo with Atlantic City Electric and South Jersey Gas where 31 families received at least \$150 in relief towards their gas bills,
- Community resource fair to learn about Summer resources and programming,
- End-of-year celebration with 23 families and 62 participants to reward families and celebrate achieving family goals, and
- Holly City Family Success Center Mom's Meet and Greet where 22 expectant mothers and partners worked to build informal supports with other community members.



During this grant period CF2C implemented a new Community Builder position and introduced Community Action groups to the collaborative. The Community Builder works with both new and existing families to identify goals, present opportunities to participate in groups and goal-setting workshops, and identify resources, services and supports that position families to grow themselves. Families are encouraged to build community with each other through group discussions, feedback, resource identification, events, recruitment, and scheduling guest speakers and presenters.

PSF 2019

During the 2018-2019 PSF project effort CF2C transitioned from operation under United Advocacy Group to independent operating, altering the way they connect with families and provide programming related to the PSF Strengthening Families Initiative. During this project period, CF2C reached out to 638 individuals, engaged 186 families in one or more collaborative activities, and had 56 families in active case management. During this time, 34 families worked towards financial goals, 28 families worked towards goals for child wellbeing, and 35 families worked on goals related to healthy relationships.

During this time period, the CF2C collaborative engaged in activities designed to increase community involvement and support within and between families involved in the Strengthening Families initiative. Activities in this time period included:

- Family health and wellness groups in which five families supported each other in working together towards their family health and fitness goals,
- The Strengthening Families Program in which families collaborate to develop parenting skills and relationships across families of all socioeconomic backgrounds,
- Silver Run Healthy Play Community Action Group created to develop an action plan towards improving the school's public playground equipment and installing a new walking trail,
- An Energy Expo in which 22 participants received information on reducing their energy bills with Atlantic City Electric.
- Six entrepreneurship classes with eight consistent participants,
- A job fair with 59 participants and 33 employers,
- Eight Family Day of Service projects including 118 participants,
- Two community projects completed by action groups with 34 total participants, and
- A community building family camping trip with 23 participants.

PSF 2020

The 2019-2020 project year was the final year of effort for HCDC and the CF2C collaborative. In this year, HCDC reached out to 1,704 individuals, engaged 229 families in collaborative activities, and had 52 families in active case management. During this time, 24 families worked towards financial goals, 31 worked towards goals for child wellbeing, and 34 families worked on goals related to healthy relationships.

During this period, nine families reported increased communication between adults, children, and their family unit as a whole, and reported that connection to other families they relate to has been valuable. 14 families received homework help assistance for their children during the pandemic. All 52 families in case-management received weekly wellness calls, texts, and emails to gauge their overall status at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.



The moms support group met 11 times via zoom to discuss how to cope with stress, homeschool their children and overall act as a support system and sounding board for each other. A teen group met 10 times via zoom to discuss how to cope with stress, engage in healthy activities at home, receive help with homework, and as a forum for them to meet safely and check-in with each other. They also had frank conversations about Black Lives Matter and their fears and concerns about being young men and women of color. The Neighborhood Care Group met via zoom to discuss how to support the community during the pandemic. The group made 1,200 cards that offered words of encouragement and hope to distribute to nursing homes, senior centers, and other residents.

New Jersey Health Initiatives

Neighborhood Redevelopment Grant 2018

This project was implemented as a result of the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation neighborhood redevelopment planning grant and included two grants in the amounts of \$100,000 and \$50,000. This project was designed to actively engage community members in the identification, development, and implementation of community-oriented projects. Three action groups were formed based on residents' priorities: the establishment of little libraries throughout the Center City neighborhood, development of a community garden, and installation of a new walking path near the Millville Public High School. In addition, this project was designed to actively engage community members; as a result, community members engaged outside of the parameters of the program to identify lots in the Center City area to clean up, coordinate a neighborhood dinner, and develop opportunities for pop-up shops on High Street. As a result 32 people continuously and actively engaged beyond the scope of the original project to improve their neighborhoods.

10 little libraries were purchased, painted by residents, and installed with over 200 books collected from a book drive from community members. Five local youth have been identified as library stewards, and are responsible for the care and upkeep of little libraries. The community garden group has identified a vacant lot owned by the City of Millville, and is in the process of establishing a community garden in conjunction with other RWJF grants and Impact Harvest. The walking path was developed in 2020 with the support of Millville Public schools. In addition to these activities, this project was integral in connecting community members who themselves started grassroots efforts towards the development of projects within their communities.

Healthy Initiatives: Food Insecurity 2019

From 2019 through 2021, HCDC engaged in a project that was originally meant to focus on the development of community partnerships and resources. However, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 RWJF and HCDC shifted their efforts to focus on food delivery to local residents. This grant was part of several grants that were repurposed to focus on the distribution of meals and food to community members during the pandemic, and included:

- Partnering with a local food pantry to deliver food to residents (see next year's report)
- Delivering school meals to students (see next year's report)



- And in 2021 hosting pop-up pantries at community sites with the Community Food Bank of South Jersey.

In 2021, this work focused on pop-up pantries, and partnerships with Impact Harvest, a local group focused on supporting local residents through local food delivery services, providing the organization \$10k in funding to acquire a cold storage trailer that they use for produce to deliver to families during 10 Summer weeks.

COVID Relief Efforts 2020

The goal of this \$20,000 grant was to vaccinate 200 people in the City of Millville. HCDC coordinated the establishment of three clinics at three centrally located spaces: St. Paul's church, the Housing Authority, and the Family Center. Attendees at each clinic were provided Tylenol, water bottles, and snacks as well as information about COVID-19 and vaccination efforts. Information was provided to 400 residents and 130-150 residents were vaccinated as a result of this effort. In addition, this project led to a collaboration with the State of New Jersey to coordinate mobile vaccine clinics at local venues including Pop-up Pantry events.



Short-Term Funding Partnerships

Kaboom! Foundation - Imagination Playground 2014

This grant for \$13,200 from the Kaboom foundation was used to purchase an imagination playground, a collection of foam blocks that can be used indoors or outdoors to build to climb on, jump over, and play with. This was used with the 21st Century School System twice a year for after school programming, was used at Playstreets, and in the Holly City Family Center. Elementary school students, community residents and kids, and families engage in joint play to build relationships and use their imagination. The imagination playground continues to be an asset used by HCDC across the community. This grant and the relationships formed from it led to better relationships with the Millville School District, who partnered with HCDC on the Pascale Sykes Foundation Whole Family Approach project from 2015-2019.

Millville Urban Redevelopment Corporation

The 2015 reporting year included ongoing activities from NRTC project funding, and was the first year of implementation of the Pascale Sykes Strengthening Families Initiative first reported in 2016. The sole grant reported in this project year is from the Millville Urban Redevelopment Corporation for streetscape improvements in the amount of \$13,200. This grant provided matching funds in the 2014-2015 NRTC streetscape project that contributed to the redevelopment of signage in Millville, and the rehabilitation of the steps in front of the Creative Enterprise Center at 14 E. Mulberry Street.

Cumberland County Empowerment Zone Corporation Neighborhood Redevelopment

HCDC received \$55,000 in funding for the Millville Neighborhood Alliance, run by Kim Ayres, which included the collaboration of multiple agencies towards neighborhood objectives. The entity that was part of this collaboration merged with HCDC.

The Carly Foundation

\$50,000 in funding provided to support activities related to the Millville Neighborhood Alliance, which later merged with HCDC.

New Jersey Community Capital

New Jersey Community Capital provided \$135,000 in funding for the Creative Enterprise Center at 14 E. Mulberry Street that allowed for refinancing of a loan on the building.



Merck

Merck provided \$150,000 in funding for the Creative Enterprise Center at 14 E. Mulberry Street that allowed for refinancing of a loan on the building.

Millville Urban Redevelopment Corporation

The Millville Urban Redevelopment Corporation provided \$150,000 in funding for the Creative Enterprise Center at 14 E. Mulberry Street that allowed for refinancing of a loan on the building.

Rob Shannon Tournament 2018-2019

In 2018 and 2019 HCDC received \$2,000 total in funding from the Rob Shannon Tournament, a softball tournament that benefits local nonprofits and organizations in completing their mission. This funding is purposefully flexible and can be used for general operating expenses for the organizations. Dedicated general operating funds are rare, which make flexible funding like those provided by the Rob Shannon Tournament essential to the function of community-focused organizations like HCDC.

New Jersey Community Capital COVID Relief Efforts, Wells Fargo Regional Foundation COVID Relief Efforts, and WRI COVID Relief Efforts

In mid-March 2020 Help and Hope Food Pantry, the only food pantry in Millville, announced that they would shut their doors as the volunteers who support the organization are generally elderly, and would be at a higher-risk from the effects of COVID-19 should they continue to volunteer in-person. As a result, HCDC coordinated efforts to deliver food to students who could not go to school for food delivery and meals, and families receiving a total of \$25,500 from three organizations. Families who received support via this service varied; at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic families were mainly low income, but as the pandemic progressed and family members lost jobs the number of families needing support increased throughout the pandemic. At the outset of food delivery in early 2020 there were approximately 250 families who needed support. Towards the end of the grant period in 2020 more than 750 families needed direct support with food insecurity. This project was often cited in HCDC's future applications related to food insecurity in coming projects including with the Community Food Bank of New Jersey, the Millville Elks, the Rennoc Foundation investment in the Community Garden, and collaborations with the Presbyterian Church in 2021.

Atlantic City Electric Neighborhood Improvements

The City of Millville approached HCDC to lead a \$50,000 project on behalf of Atlantic City electric to engage in community development initiatives across the City. In this project, HCDC led the development and establishment of Millville's first dog park and investment in Fourth-Street Park, which is still underway. Park improvements include new picnic tables, benches, trash cans, regular park maintenance, mulching, fencing, and the development of a mural.



New Jersey Health Initiatives - Vaccination Efforts 2021

The goal of this \$20,000 grant was to engage Millville residents with information on COVID-19 vaccination and host pop-up sites in areas of Millville that have less accessibility to transportation. HCDC engaged residents through a grassroots approach, knocking on doors to distribute information in people's homes. HCDC prepared vaccination care packages including Tylenol, snacks, and water to participants in vaccination clinics, distributed information door-to-door and in clinics, and ultimately vaccinated 60 residents through these efforts. HCDC partnered with Millville Public Schools to deliver family fun packs to 93 families who have children with disabilities and ability differences to provide both indoor and outdoor activities for families. 1,000 newsletters were distributed to families during the COVID-19 in April and May to provide information to families on how to go out in public, file for unemployment, mental health services, and federal programming available for small businesses.

Community Food Bank of New Jersey 2021

This \$15,000 project focused on the delivery of essential items to families, coordination and connection of community members to resources, and connection to COVID-19 relief efforts. HCDC purchased essential items including toothbrushes, shampoo conditioner, and other essential items for families to use during monthly Pop-up Pantry events in the community. During cold months, families also received gloves, scarves, coats, and other winter essential items. This funding was also used to connect families to external resources including clothing, utilities, SNAP benefits, and insurance. HCDC coordinated with the State of New Jersey to host a van to provide vaccinations at a Pop-up Pantry event, and coordinated with the City of Millville on a one-time rental assistance program. The goal of this funding was to provide as many resources as possible to families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic as they became available.

Truist Bank - Eyeglasses and Essentials 2021

This \$5,000 project focused on access to eyeglasses to community members. HCDC collaborated with America's Best Contacts and Eyeglasses on this project. Through that collaboration, America's Best provided 100 vouchers for a free exam and free eyeglasses that were distributed to residents. As a result of the generosity of America's Best, funding originally allocated for this project was then used to purchase additional essential items (see community food bank of New Jersey funding above) to provide to families at Pop-up Pantries.

Ocean First Bank 2021

This \$2,500 funding was provided by Ocean First Bank to serve as general operating funds for HCDC. Ocean First generously offered this flexible funding source in 2021 and 2022.



Presbyterian Church

\$4,000 in funding was utilized to be responsive to community members' needs. Funding has been allocated to purchasing essential items for distribution during Pop-up Pantry events. A portion of this funding is still available to be allocated at HCDC's discretion.

N95 Mask Distribution 2021

HCDC was approached to distribute 5,000 N95 masks during the COVID-19 pandemic to all school staff across 10 Millville Public Schools, the Millville Police Department, the Millville Public Library, and the Holly City Family Center. HCDC coordinated distribution of the masks from an anonymous donor.

Rennoc Foundation 2021

The Rennoc Family Foundation provided \$2,000 in funding to support the community garden in Millville. HCDC purchased gloves, supplies, shears, and other equipment for community members to use in the garden. These materials are currently in use in the community garden.

Healthy Places by Design Grant 2022

This \$15,000 project funded mini grants to five organizations including the Police Athletic League, Holly City Family Center, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, and the Arts and Innovation Center. Projects included:

- St. Paul Lutheran Church purchased hand carts for residents to pursue shopping and errands,
- Clay College worked with HCFC and PAL to decorate 300 holiday ornaments,
- The Library purchased lego sets for their Lego Club,
- HCFC hosted three events including ornament making for seniors, slime making for kids, and Swim with Santa, and
- Millville PAL purchased sports and recreation equipment for 340 participants in events that included football, basketball, wrestling, and fishing.

New Jersey Economic Development Association Planning and DASH Grant for Community Surveying

\$50,000 in funding was utilized to collect data on economic development priorities and preferences in the City of Millville through Summer and Fall of 2022. The resulting report included the identification of priority areas, and the convening of partners including nonprofits, local and county officials, businesses, local organizations, and community members in collaborative identification of action items and priorities for future focus. This work continues through NRTC 2022 funding, and is being implemented in the 2023 grant cycle. Data collection included focus groups, interviews, surveys, and a facilitated focus area planning session for participants.



Partners

Collaboration with community members, business owners, and organizations was a consistent theme throughout the reports. HCDC has cultivated a strong group of regular volunteers that include community members and business owners, and has developed strong partnerships with organizations with similar goals and local areas of focus. The Cumberland County Improvement Authority has been a consistent partner, supporting HCDC with capital improvement projects and general operating expenses through financing that position's HCDC to sustain their work. The City of Millville is a regular partner on projects that redevelop and invigorate city-owned spaces, engage and connect community members through events, and create long-term plans for development and investment. Impact Harvest has been a strong recent partner in the development of a community garden and delivery of fresh produce to food insecure Millville residents, and continually delivers on their goal of bringing fresh produce to food insecure areas by partnering with local farms. St. Paul's Lutheran Church on 3rd Street in Center City Millville has been a consistent partner, collaborating with HCDC on projects that include Adopt a Block, work with unhoused people living in Millville, and working to distribute food to food insecure Millville residents. In addition to the partners listed above, HCDC has partnerships with the following groups and agencies:

- Millville Public Library
- Millville Development Corporation
- Cumberland County Health Department
- Millville Housing Authority
- Holly City Family Center
- Millville Police Department
- Holly City Family Success Center
- Millville Neighborhood Alliance (merged with HCDC)
- Millville Urban Redevelopment Corp. (merged with HCDC)
- Rise and Shine Program
- Presbyterian Church
- First United Methodist Church
- Clay College of Rowan College of South Jersey



Impact Summary

Community Development

From 2012-2022 HCDC's project portfolio includes community development projects that focus on community connection, support, and improvement through collaborative, community-responsive events and activities. HCDC's activities include organizing and implementing community events and developing community resources, addressing food insecurity, providing resources, and improving health and public safety. These projects represent tens-of-thousands of hours of engagement with community members to organize activities, engage with residents, and connect community members in ways that improve the sense of community and support within the City of Millville.

HCDC led the organization of Playstreets, a collaboration between nonprofits, businesses, and the City of Millville that provides activities for kids and families during Summer months. From 2015-2022 more than 3,826 kids and adults participated in in-person events, while another 600 activity packages were distributed to families from 2020-2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. 407 volunteers have supported Playstreets events while attendance at in-person Playstreets events has increased year-over-year since the project began in 2015. In addition, HCDC has strong participation in other community focused events:

- 1,000+ attendees at Community Day in 2014,
- 2,500 Levoy Theater vouchers distributed in 2016,
- 398 participants in a NeighborGOOD festival in 2016,
- 120 youth participants in Community Counts youth meetings in 2016,
- 86 youth participants in High School STEM after-school programming in 2016,
- 168 youth participants in SHINE after-school programming in 2016,
- 70 caregivers engaged in a Parents as Leaders group in 2017,
- 22 expectant mothers participated in a meet-and-greet in 2018,
- 144 families participated in Family Day of Service from 2016-2019,
- 980 participants in Fall festivals from 2018-2022, and
- 335 family participants in Winter holiday events from 2016-2022,

HCDC also engages in concerted and collaborative family and community development. From 2015-2020, HCDC led the Connecting Families to Communities (CF2C) collaborative as part of the Pascale Sykes South Jersey Strengthening Families Initiative. During five years of the initiative CF2C made direct connections with 5,401 individuals and engaged 160 families with children in active family-driven case-management. As a result of that effort, 2,352 goals were achieved by families including 681 child wellbeing goals, 658 goals to develop healthy relationships, 593 goals to improve financial stability, and 420 goals to foster community development. In addition, a rigorous, quasi-experimental evaluation completed by the Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs at Rutgers University-Camden found that caregivers who were involved with the Whole Family Approach had significantly improved help given and received between adult caregivers, greater financial stability, and were more engaged and optimistic about their children's futures (Whiting, 2022).



HCDC has a long history of engagement with seasonal community engagement including the development of a community garden in the Spring and Summer, a Pumpkin Extravaganza in the Fall, and Winter programming that includes family-focused events. In 2019 the City of Millville designated a lot in the Center City neighborhood as a community garden. Community members and organizations have collaborated on its regular planting and harvest in Spring and Summer, and closure in Winter Months. Impact Harvest is now responsible for upkeep and coordination of activities within the garden including educational activities, planting, maintenance, and harvesting throughout the year. In addition, Over 600 youth participated in a Pumpkin Extravaganza in the Fall in 2021 and 2022, participating in pumpkin decorating, arts and crafts, and trunk-or-treat that included collaborations with businesses, community members, and local families. In Winter 2022, 150 youth participated in a Winter Wonderland Celebration, participating in arts and crafts, face painting, hair tinselation, and photos with Santa, Elsa, and Anna.

Addressing food insecurity in Millville and the surrounding community has continued to grow as a focus of HCDC's programming. From 2014 through 2016, 12,500 families participated in Help and Hope Ministries food pantry. In addition, lunches were provided to children during Playstreets events yearly, serving more than 6,000 lunches from 2015-2022.

HCDC's commitment to address food insecurity grew as a result of and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. HCDC coordinated the delivery of more than 132,192 school lunches to students and more than 12,792 bags of groceries serving an average of 600 families a month in the Millville area from March 2020 through June 2021. In Fall 2020, HCDC partnered with the Food Bank of South Jersey to host monthly Pop-up Pantry events, providing boxes of food to more than 2,911 families total through January 2023. In Winter 2022 HCDC provided a refrigerated trailer to Impact Harvest, collaborating to deliver fresh, South Jersey produce to an average of 700 households weekly for 10 weeks in Summer 2021 and 2022.

Public Health has been a growing area of focus for HCDC throughout the last 10 years. HCDC collaborated with families in case management during the Whole Family Approach initiative to meet family goals related to child and caregiver wellness from 2015-2020. Beginning in March 2020, HCDC expanded their activities to provide information on the COVID-19 pandemic and increase vaccination efforts. From March 2020 through December 2021, HCDC provided COVID-19 and pandemic-related information to more than 1,400 residents, coordinated events that resulted in more than 200 vaccinations for residents, and collaborated with Cumberland County Health Department and the State of New Jersey to identify additional vaccination sites and opportunities for community members. From November 2020 through December 2021 HCDC coordinated the distribution of more than 9,000 N95 and surgical masks and personal protective equipment to staff in the Millville Public School District, the Millville Police Department, Millville Public Library, and the Holly City Family Center. HCDC also coordinated the Fit and Healthy program that included outdoor physical activity for over 488 Millville residents throughout 2021.

HCDC has also engaged in several initiatives related to public safety. In 2016 HCDC worked with the Millville Police Department to train officers and leadership on environment-based policing and prevention. In 2018 HCDC collaborated with the Millville Police Department to implement a community policing initiative. HCDC purchased and outfitted four new bicycles and refurbished four existing bicycles for use by the department, resulting in bike and walking patrols totalling more than 600 hours in 2018.



HCDC also collaborates on the distribution of resources to community residents to meet their needs and build community. In 2014 HCDC purchased Imagination Playground equipment which includes pieces of connectable, flexible, buildable playground equipment for kids and families to engage in creative play. Imagination playground equipment continues to be used at community functions and is often used by school and community partners. From 2015-2019 HCDC distributed over 1,475 book bags stocked with school supplies before the start of the school year to Millville students at Playstreets events. During the COVID-19 pandemic community members experienced acute economic distress. HCDC applied for several grants from 2020-2023 that allowed for the purchase and distribution of essential items that include toiletries like toothbrushes, shampoo, soap, and bathroom products, and essential clothing items like hats, gloves, and scarves for families during monthly Pop-up Pantry events.

HCDC has consistently demonstrated a commitment to community development in both their community as a whole and with individual families. Tens of thousands of community members have met in Playstreets, Winter and Fall festivals, community garden, community service, and arts events throughout the last 10 years, while hundreds of volunteers have dedicated their time to connecting and growing Millville. In addition, hundreds of families were individually supported resulting in life-altering, measurable growth in their relationships, financial stability, and in the wellbeing of their children. HCDC is committed to responding to community needs including hundreds of thousands of meals and food boxes delivered to local families, resources for students to engage in school, and essential items to families who need them the most. HCDC improved the health of their community through information, vaccines, and access for community members throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and continues to identify ways to support community members through their work in healthy food initiatives. In addition, HCDC has demonstrated a commitment to public safety through community engagement, engaging in activities that make connections between law enforcement and community members. HCDC has a long history of growing connections between community members as a whole, and providing individual support and resources to families that measurably improve their families and meet their needs.

Economic Development

HCDC has engaged in economic development projects that include capital improvement programs, aesthetic improvements to the community and businesses, workforce and business development programs, economic stimulus programs, and business retention initiatives. Through capital improvement grants and programs, HCDC has applied for and provided \$2,861,160 in gap funding to prepare sites, develop plans, and pay for construction for four large capital projects. Those investments have resulted in the development and construction of the Arts and Innovation Center, Complete Care Health, the Millville Public Library expansion, and the Creative Enterprise Center totalling \$22,250,000 in community assets. Part of Rowan College of South Jersey, the Arts and Innovation Center is home to the Creative Arts Department and Clay College, offering Fine Arts and Ceramics degrees and classes and non-credit classes for community members that include introduction course for Arts beginners and kids, holiday-themed workshops, community events and demonstrations, and K-12 class trips focused on hands-on programming. Complete Care Health Network in Millville offers primary, family, and specialist care that improves lives by providing convenient, comprehensive, high-quality healthcare, and is the largest healthcare provider in the City



of Millville. The Millville Public Library expansion more than doubles the amount of space available to patrons, and will include new classroom spaces, public spaces accessible outside of the library for use by organizations after-hours, family meeting spaces, and new project meeting and activity spaces. The Creative Enterprise Center is a high-tech, well-appointed shared-working space that includes studio space in which six current businesses (including HCDC) operate.

HCDC has also led investment into a variety of public spaces and assets used by partners who serve the public. Those assets include:

- Development of the first dog park in the City of Millville and investment in picnic tables, benches, trash cans, maintenance, mulching, and fencing at 4th street park,
- Development of a community garden for use by Millville residents,
- Purchase of a cold storage trailer for Impact Harvest to use to deliver fresh, no-cost produce to Millville residents in Summer from 2021-2022,
- Purchase of a shed to house materials and equipment for the community garden, and
- Lot revitalization to create a wildlife garden that hosts educational conservation programming.

In addition to the capital investments above, HCDC also engages in regular investment in community housing and business retention via grant programs. Through the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit, HCDC has provided five year forgivable loans to Millville residents to repair and improve their homes, making over \$179,000 in forgivable loans to Millville residents over eight years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, HCDC supported 26 Millville businesses in applying for and receiving \$337,398 in COVID-19 relief grants to ensure their businesses persisted through the COVID-19 pandemic.

HCDC is actively engaged in aesthetic improvements within the Center City neighborhood. Aesthetic improvements led by HCDC include:

- Streetscape and sign development in the Center City neighborhood,
- Banners advertising the Glasstown Arts District,
- Multiple murals including the Gateway Mural, two murals on Mulberry and High streets, a streetscape mural near the community garden, and a mural on the shed located at the community garden,
- Facade improvements via grant to 14 businesses on High Street, and
- Multiple planting, gardening, and aesthetic improvements along High Street.

Workforce development is consistently part of HCDC's programming. Workforce development events created by HCDC include:

- A job-readiness program for 20 High School students in 2014,
- Business improvement and marketing programs for 20 businesses in 2016,
- Entrepreneurship classes attended by 48 potential small business owners over six weeks in 2016,
- Technology access for community members to apply for jobs, totaling 9,125 patrons/month at Millville Public Library,
- Digital marketing assessment and action planning for 35 businesses in Winter 2020, and



- A business apprenticeship program specialist who is engaged with 12 students across 7 businesses in 2022.

From 2020-2023 HCDC sponsored a local gift-card matching program in which participants purchase an amount of gift cards to local purchases which is doubled through the use of matching grant funding intended for economic development. As a result of that program, \$176,000 was invested in local businesses during the Winter holiday season over three years.

HCDC has provided over \$2.8m in gap funding resulting in \$22.2m in community-oriented assets over the last 10 years. In addition, HCDC has led the investment and development of public assets that include parks, gardens, libraries, and resources to address food insecurity in the Millville community. Millville residents have received over \$179,000 in forgivable loans to address problems and upgrade their homes, while 26 businesses persisted throughout the pandemic with the support of \$337,398 in Neighborhood Preservation Program funding through the COVID-19 pandemic. HCDC has led investments in aesthetic improvements that include signage, arts, facade improvement, and streetscapes throughout Center City Millville. Business owners, potential employees, and students preparing for the workforce have benefitted from ten years of job-readiness, entrepreneurship, marketing, and apprenticeship programs organized by HCDC. In addition, HCDC has led the investment of more than \$179,000 as a result of Winter holiday gift-card matching programs. These investments have resulted in public buildings that focus on arts, library access, entrepreneurship, and healthcare, have kept Millville residents employed and businesses open, and have improved the aesthetics of Millville for residents, patrons, and business owners to enjoy.



Planning for the Future

HCDC engaged in regular strategic planning and neighborhood community and economic development planning through its work. Developed in 2018, the Center City Millville Neighborhood Plan resulted in a comprehensive, community-driven plan that included plans to build a fun and healthy community, leverage arts and economic development activities, create a market for homeownership and investment, improve public spaces, increase access to jobs and education, and increase opportunities for civic leadership. Similarly in 2023 HCDC engaged in planning as part of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority's (NJEDA) 21st Century Redevelopment Grant to develop a plan to increase economic development in Center City, Millville. That plan resulted in several areas of focus, many of which overlap with the 2018 Center City Millville Neighborhood Plan including asset activation, public services, marketing, and business development. In Spring 2023, HCDC is currently convening nonprofit, public, business, and community partners in the implementation of the NJEDA plan and continues to engage in activities that reflect activities and priorities in the Center City Millville Neighborhood Plan.