

Human Services Center (HSCC) 2014 Annual Report

Celebrating 32 Years of Serving the Mon Valley

Highlights from Another Fantastic Year

Essentially everything the Human Services Center Corporation (HSCC) does is in collaboration with other agencies and leaders to achieve outcomes for individuals and the community. There are countless examples of partnerships that lead to outcomes and they are captured in this report. This report strikes a balance between outcomes and stories of impact. The following are some key highlights of outcomes and impact for 2014:

Emerging Leaders Program (ELP)

- **93% (70/75)** ELP participants earned a high school diploma.
- **77% (54/70)** of ELP graduated seniors entered post-secondary training/education.
- **87% (65/75)** of ELP graduated seniors entered post-secondary training/education, entered the military, and/or entered the workforce.
- In partnership with the 3 Rivers Workforce Investment Board **all ten** Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) participants that interviewed to gain an internship through WorkReady Pittsburgh were offered placements (eight accepted). WorkReady Pittsburgh provides deserving youth in Allegheny County with six-week, paid internships with regional corporate employers. The program provides youth with exposure to the corporate world and career opportunities and emphasizes the connection between school and economic success.

Youth LIFE (Learning In a Fun Environment) After-School Program

- **88% (88/105)** of Youth LIFE participants with sufficient data utilizing Study Island improved in math.
- **79% (83/105)** of Youth LIFE participants with sufficient data utilizing Study Island improved in reading.
- **90% (95/105)** of Youth LIFE participants with sufficient data utilizing Study Island improved in math or reading.
- **96% (101/105)** of all youth participants with sufficient data did not miss 10% or more of school days.
- **87%** of all PATHS participants funded by the United Way of Allegheny County reduced violent and/or problem behavior.

KOOL (Kids Outgoing, Outdoing, and Learning) Summer Program

- **90% (105/118)** of students with sufficient data utilizing Study Island improved in math or reading.
- **68% (105/154)** (based on a pre- and post- test) of students improved or maintained their math or reading skills, as determined through an online computer curriculum, Study Island.

McKeesport Collaborative

- **100% (22/22)** of the women are actively working towards employment, better employment, or education in order to obtain a living wage and achieve self-sufficiency.
- **71%** of the currently enrolled women are employed and are actively working toward better employment in order to attain a living wage.

Did You Know?

- *Over 750 people per day access services at the HSCC
- *The HSCC received the prestigious Wishart Award for Nonprofit Management Excellence from The Forbes Funds in 2004
- **The Communicator* is the quarterly newsletter of the Mon Valley Providers Council (and HSCC) and is a supplement in the McKeesport Daily News to over 20,000 people
- *The HSCC's Youth Programs were one of the initial 12 members of the APOST Quality Campaign
- *Outcomes of the MVPC will be published in the January edition of *The Communicator*
- *The HSCC is a member in the Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership
- *Four of the eight HSCC professional staff have master's degree and two more are in the process of earning their master's degrees
- *Nine of the ten full-time staff started at the HSCC as interns or part-time staff
- * Even after two major retirements in 2014, the average tenure of staff at the HSCC is almost seven (7) years while the average in the social service sector is 2.3 years

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Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

In 2014, the HSCC once again offered their Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) free tax preparation site in partnership with the United Way's Money In Your Pocket Coalition. The HSCC was able to complete 378 total returns returning a total of \$338,421 to the Mon Valley, of which \$136,610 were Earned Income Credit refunds. Beyond the Turtle Creek site, the HSCC also offered four one-day tax clinics in Duquesne and McKeesport and expanded services to reach foreign students, graduate students, and military families.

The tax site utilized nine volunteers, who contributed a total of over 500 hours during the tax season. According to the Coalition-wide results from the United Way, the median Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) of the people served at the HSCC tax site was lower than that of any other site at \$9,752. That AGI was lower than any of the other sites by over \$2,200. Further, 5% of the people who visited our site were not required to file federal returns because their income level was not high enough to be required to file and they would receive no benefit for doing so.

Beyond completing tax returns, the HSCC tax site assists people in obtaining information to apply for food stamps, completing SNAP applications at the site, and providing them with the resources and information to bolster their financial success, such as offering free check cashing letters, the ability to open a no-fee check card, and assisting people in enrolling or re-enrolling in Duquesne Light's Customer Assistance Program.



Volunteers at the HSCC

This year, the HSCC has seen an extremely high level of support from hundreds of volunteers, who have contributed nearly 4,000 hours of service. Volunteers at the Center include people who donate their time regularly to assist in clerical and maintenance capacities, corporate groups, and volunteers who help us with our programs. Highlights this year include our volunteers for our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, who contributed over 500 hours between January and April – thank you!

Other special volunteers include Joan Polesnak, who has exceptionally served as a greeter and friend to many at our HSCC I/519 Penn Avenue front desk – thank you! The Urban League's Mature Workers Program affords us an opportunity to work with incredible individuals who are seeking to improve their work skills. This year, this outstanding team has given over 700 hours to our organization – thank you!

Finally, the HSCC has the fortune to be a partner with many corporate volunteer groups in the Greater Pittsburgh area, including Duquesne Light, The Techs, Pittsburgh Corning, American Eagle, and South University. Volunteers from these organizations have assisted our staff from June to November by coming out on days of service, often assisting our building and cleaning staff in many areas – thank you!

Advocacy Efforts

This year, the Center worked diligently with the Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership, the Campaign for What Works, and by teaching an Advocacy Series with the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work to advocate for adequate funding for the nonprofit social services sector at the federal, state, and county levels. Voter engagement is a critical piece of our work and over 64% of our consumers are registered to vote as of June 2014. If you have questions about our initiatives in advocacy and lobbying, please contact Dave Coplan, the Executive Director.

Current HSCC Staff

The Center continues to utilize a variety of creative staffing resources.

Staff

Dave Coplan, Executive Director
 Leah O'Reilly, Youth Programs Director
 Arwen Davis, Operations and Special Projects Director
 Denise Daugherty, Family Development Specialist
 Sarah Burger, Youth Programs Assistant Director
 Paul Jenkner, Lead Youth Development Associate
 Jessica Merchant and Erica Szewczyk, Youth Development Associates
 Lynn Anelmo, Receptionist
 Bob Mitnik, Building Superintendent
 Debbie Davenport and Tyrone Johnson, Building Assistants
 Part time temporary staff in the youth programs include Lead Education and Education Associates.

Student Interns

Mallory Clark, Deanna Glover, Erica Maloney, Erica Szewczyk, and Amelia Thorne

Urban League Mature Workers

Judy Meyers, Kathy Simon, Joann Snider, Ursula Wilson, and Mona Winton

Ongoing Volunteers

Joan Polesnak and Rose Smeltzer

Emerging Leaders Program Successes

A participant of the Human Services Center Corporation's Emerging Leaders Program (ELP), a college-readiness and workforce development program for low-income seniors in high school, is studying nursing at the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC). Throughout his senior year of high school, the student faced many challenges, including homelessness, which made it difficult for the student to attend school daily. With one on one case management provided to the teen throughout the school year, the ELP staff made sure that he had transportation to school, helped him apply to college, and prepare for life after high school. Despite the circumstances, the student worked hard in his classes and was able to graduate on time. After the graduation ceremony, he found one of the ELP staff, and with tears in his eyes, said, "You know I would not have made it if it had not been for you."

Another student faced many obstacles at home and at school this past school year and he was in serious danger of not graduating. The student is very bright, but had a difficult time completing his work due to an unstable and unhealthy home life. With one on one case management provided to the student throughout the year, the staff helped the student to develop homework completion strategies, learn how to manage multiple assignment deadlines at once, assist in completing his junior and senior projects, apply to college, secure scholarships, and research potential careers in the information technology field. With a ton of guidance from the staff and hard work on his end, the student completely turned around his senior year! He not only graduated on time, he was awarded two academic-based scholarships from Penn State University where he is now currently attending. Despite the challenges that the student faced, he learned how to overcome them and is focused on graduating college and achieving his career goals.

McKeesport Collaborative Successes

The women in the McKeesport Collaborative are usually single, often with children, and are seeking employment or training. They always have the motivation to move themselves forward in their lives and our Family Development Specialist and supporting team are here to help them out. The women who join us are ready to work hard to achieve their goals and, in turn, our team gives them a serious commitment, too. Achieving self-sufficiency is hard – they must free themselves from all benefit programs, assistance, and subsidies. It is a long, hard road to do this and our women come with unique needs and barriers that have led them to a life where they are deep in poverty.

Some of our women are superstar achievers, and show us every day their willingness to work. Recently, we had a woman join us by being referred from another organization. She had been forced to retire due to medical reasons that left her unable to do the job she had been faithfully completed every day for thirty years. She has grown children she was supporting and few working skills outside of assisting in a kitchen. The staff assisted her in joining a training program where she was able to gain basic clerical training. When she succeeded there, she moved on to a training that helped her enhance her computer and more intermediate clerical skills. Finally, she entered a customer service training where she was able to build even further. Her hard work, her motivation to keep improving, and her tenacity to take it one step at a time recently led her to employment as an office assistant. She is able to continue to support her kids, and has commented that she has found real satisfaction in the work she is doing!

MVPC

The Mon Valley Providers Council is a major project administered by the Human Services Center. Serving residents in 37 Mon Valley communities, the MVPC is an alliance of over 70 dues paying human service organizations that collaborate to provide services and solutions to the diverse needs of people.

A separate annual report for the MVPC is published as an insert in the McKeesport Daily News the second week of January each year, and further information is available online at:

www.hsc-mvpc.org

McKeesport Collaborative

With over 50 agencies working together, the McKeesport Collaborative has created new linkages for women and children affected by substance abuse, enabling participants to access many services.

Family Development Specialists provide services addressing the main challenges faced by women in recovery: treatment for substance abuse, mental health issues, and improving self-reliance through stable housing, education, and employment programs. The Collaborative works toward strengthening families and encouraging educational success for children and adults, remaining dedicated to developing and improving services for women and their children affected by substance abuse. Community Service Block Grant funds from Allegheny County help to support case management.

The McKeesport Collaborative is a program of the HSCC and staff are located at HSCC II in Turtle Creek. Services are provided in homes throughout the Valley, at the HSCC offices, and in McKeesport at the Family Center.

Two Major Retirements at HSCC

Both Ruth Smith and Jake Yeager retired in 2014. Ruth was with the HSCC, MVPC, and McKeesport Collaborative at HSCC for over 10 years and worked in the Valley in social services for over 20 years. Jake worked with the HSCC for nearly 30 years.

Both individuals were exceptional stewards of the HSCC's service to the community. As one Board Director put it, "Jake is the reason the rest of us were able to sleep at night." "Ruth's strengths-based approach to working with people embodies team-work. Her leadership and positive attitude will be missed, but her legacy and all that she helped to start, nurture, and grow, will carry on. For this, and all she has accomplished for people in the Mon Valley, we are thankful," said Dave Coplan.



Current Tenant Agencies

HSCC I – 519 Penn Avenue FIRST FLOOR

Braddock Carnegie Library Extension - A mini-library providing books, videos, and other services. 412-829-7112

Eastern Area Adult Services - Support services to the over 60 population: noon meal, transportation, recreation, socialization. 412-824-6880

Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council – Provides English as a Second Language (ESL) and Adult Basic Learning GED tutoring services. 412-969-8486

Learn "N" Play - Provides childcare services for infants (6 weeks) to 12 year olds. 412-829-0240

SECOND FLOOR

Adagio Health Nutrition Services - Provides individual nutrition counseling and Power Up nutrition education to area schools. 724-224-1530

Allegheny County Health Dept. - W.I.C. Program - Supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children. 412-823-1333

Alternatives - Chemical abuse program. 412-824-8510

Turtle Creek Valley Mental Health/Mental Retardation - Adult Outpatient Services - Emergency help; crisis intervention; counseling. 412-824-8510

Turtle Creek Valley Mental Health/Mental Retardation - Psychiatric and Social Rehabilitation - Rehabilitation coaches; classes; socialization. 412-461-4100

Turtle Creek Valley Mental Health/Mental Retardation - Children, Adolescents, and Families - Emergency help; crisis intervention; counseling. 412-349-0632

THIRD FLOOR

Allegheny Intermediate Unit - Community School East - Alternative educational program for disruptive youth, grades 7-12. 412-464-4043

HSCC II - 413 PENN AVENUE

Human Services Center Corporation - Facility management and coordination of the Westinghouse Valley Human Services Center, Mon Valley Providers Council, Youth Programs (Youth LIFE, ELP, and KOOL), and McKeesport Collaborative. 412-829-7112

Community Outreach Services - Space, marketing, and coordination is provided for a wide range of services using the Center on an as-needed, on-going, or seasonal basis. 412-829-7112

Pantry Network of Eastern Suburbs – Westinghouse Valley Food Pantry and pantry referral in the east suburban communities. 24-hour hotline: 412-824-0006

How You Can Help the Center

A question we are often asked is, "How can I help the Center?" There are many ways to assist the work of the Human Services Center, but the primary ways to get involved are volunteering, donating, and providing corporate support:

- ☑ The MVPC/HSCC **Annual Fund Drive** accepts donations throughout the year. These unrestricted dollars allow us flexibility in programs.
- ☑ The HSCC is a **United Way Contributor Choice** agency and donations can be designated to our agency using code 922.
- ☑ The **Holiday Toy Project** accepts monetary donations to buy a \$25 gift for a child.
- ☑ **Corporations can sponsor** a variety of events such as the HIV/AIDS Walk of the McKeesport Collaborative or the MVPC events.
- ☑ **Tax credits** are another means for corporate support as the HSCC's youth programs are approved to receive Educational Improvement Tax Credits (EITC).
- ☑ **In-kind contributions** are accepted for a variety of purposes, and the HSCC does utilize **volunteers** in many additional capacities throughout the year, such as with the library, youth programs, toy program, pantry, and other critical community services.
- ☑ The Emerging Leaders Program seeks **site visits** for job shadowing, site tours, or professional speakers.
- ☑ **Opportunities for internships with multiple programs and part time staff** for the youth programs are usually available at the Center.

All contributions are tax deductible, and can be sent to the HSCC, attention Dave Coplan. Questions can be directed to Dave at 412-829-7112 or dcoplan@hsc-mvpc.org.

2014 Key Partnerships for Positive Change

Each year, dozens of outreach agencies provide services to **thousands** of Center visitors. It is impossible to list each and every program provided, so several are highlighted here.

- 381 people completed the Center's annual visitor survey with over 63% earning an annual household income below \$15,000; 92% of the respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the services they receive.
- Hundreds of individuals and families were provided funds for housing through the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh's Housing Assistance Program.
- The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program prepared 378 federal returns for low-income citizens, bringing in nearly \$338,421 in refunds to people living in the Mon Valley.
- Dozens of individuals met at the Center for support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Domestic Abuse Counseling Center, and others.
- 172 individuals from 40 communities received free seasonal flu shots through a partnership with the McKeesport Hospital Foundation, the SHIP, FLEET, and Eastern Area Prehospital Services.
- Through a partnership with the Pantry Network of Eastern Suburbs, over 200 hundred local families received free supplemental groceries monthly, and the Emergency Pantry provided support to a dozen individuals monthly.
- Dozens of individuals were assisted in gaining information and enrolling in the Affordable Care Act due to a partnership with YWCA Greater Pittsburgh and Enroll America's Get Covered Campaign.
- Dozens of individuals gained important knowledge and began planning for their financial future with the assistance of NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania's on-site financial counseling.
- Through a collaboration with the Braddock-Carnegie Library and Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh's Mature Workers Program, the Turtle Creek Library provided hundreds of families and individuals with books, DVDs, audio books, VHS tapes, literacy programming, and free computer access.
- In conjunction with Eastern Area Adult Services and the Community College of Allegheny County, dozens of seniors attended two free computer courses, learning a variety of technology issues and skills, from turning on a computer to working with Windows 8.
- Over 250 people participated in the Community Resource Fair hosted by the HSCC in conjunction with Lights On After-School and the Mon Valley Providers Council.

Our Supporters

We gratefully acknowledge the following for their generosity and support of the Human Services Center in 2014. Contributors to the MVPC Annual Fund Drive and individuals who gave through the United Way's Contributor Choice program are recognized in the January edition of **The Communicator**, which is available on our website at www.hsc-mvpc.org or upon request.

Operations and Special Projects

Allegheny County Dept. of Human Services
 BNY Mellon Foundation of Southwestern Pennsylvania
 Citizens Bank
 DSF Charitable Foundation
 Duquesne Light

Operations and Special Projects (cont.)

Eat'n Park
 Eden Hall Foundation
 G.C. Murphy Foundation
 Grable Foundation
 The Heinz Endowments
 Highmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield
 Kennywood
 Local Emergency & Shelter Board - FEMA
 Massey Charitable Trust
 McKeesport Hospital Foundation (SHIP)
 Mellon Bank N.A.
 PA Dept. of Economic Development
 Peoples Natural Gas
 PNC
 PPG Industries
 Steel Dynamics
 The Techs, a Division of Steel Dynamics
 Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board
 United Way of Allegheny County
 UPMC Health Plan
 Westinghouse Electric Company

Facility Improvements

The HSCC was able to coordinate with multiple agencies to get the facility back to full occupancy in 2015. Adagio Health joined the HSCC's list of tenants in 2014, and with some changes for Turtle Creek Valley MH/MR and the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, as well as some imminent moves to the HSCC's youth programs, the Allegheny Intermediate Unit will expand its youth services to the whole third floor by July of 2015.

One of the exciting aspects of this endeavor is that Auberle's Employment Institute has been secured as a contractor for their youth to do general construction, painting, and carpeting work in the HSCC.



HSCC Staff Win “Be There” Award

On May 29, 2014 the United Way of Allegheny County hosted the “Be There” Awards. These awards honored adults in the greater Pittsburgh region who have served as positive forces promoting attendance in schools. Out of over 50 nominations only eight winners were chosen. These winners were selected based on their ability to inspire kids to be in school by motivating and encouraging students, celebrating good attendance, and making school attendance a priority.

The Human Services Center Corporation’s (HSCC) 2013-2014 Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) team members were rewarded for their hard work! Sarah Burger, Denise Daugherty, and Paul Jenkner were praised for their work with high school seniors. Their nominator commented, “High school students are the most challenging population of students to motivate to not only stay in school but to attend regularly. There are numerous barriers that our students have faced this year that could have kept them from attending school; teen pregnancy, teen parenting, mental and physical challenges, homelessness, lack of social skills, parent illness, and loss of a parent just to name a few. All three of the staff worked daily with our participants to keep them engaged in their academic careers. They continuously met with students during the school day, before and after school hours, and on weekends to ensure that each teen was receiving the help they needed to succeed.” As a result of the HSCC staff’s hard work over 93% graduated from high school and approximately 87% of youth will be entering post secondary education, the military, and/or the workforce!

In addition to the HSCC’s award recipients a “Be There” Award was also given to Kellie Irwin a Home School Visitor with the Woodland Hills School District. Woodland Hills is a close partner of the Human Services Center and another awardee representing the Mon Valley.

In addition to their work in the Woodland Hills School District the Emerging Leaders Program has been implemented at East Allegheny and McKeesport high schools. At all three schools the ELP staff work to empower youth to achieve their goals. The “Be There” awards once again recognized their commitment to youth by saying, “Every year the ELP staff see students turn their school achievements into tangible outcomes changing the direction of their lives for the better.”



Human Services Center Corp.

HSCC I – 519 Penn Avenue
 HSCC II – 413 Penn Avenue
 Turtle Creek, PA 15145
 Phone: 412-829-7112
 Fax: 412-829-4363
 Website: www.hsc-cmvpc.org
A copy of the official registration and financial information of the Human Service Center Corp. can be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

HSCC Leadership

The 2015 Board of Directors:

- James Anderson, President
- David Priselac, Vice President
- Lynn Tatala, Treasurer
- Jo DeBolt, Secretary
- Aerion Abney
- Chrystal Alexander
- Joseph Dombrosky
- Nathan Dorfman
- Greg Galford
- Kevin Kearns
- Beth Lackner
- Darla Poole
- Ellen Skakalski
- Michelle Smith
- Damion Wilson

39 Communities Served:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Braddock | McKeesport |
| Braddock Hills | Monroeville |
| Chalfant | Munhall |
| Churchill | North Braddock |
| Clairton | North Versailles |
| Dravosburg | Pitcairn |
| Duquesne | Port Vue |
| East McKeesport | Rankin |
| East Pittsburgh | South Versailles |
| Edgewood | Turtle Creek |
| Elizabeth Borough | Versailles |
| Elizabeth Township | Wall |
| Forest Hills | West Elizabeth |
| Forward | West Homestead |
| Glassport | West Mifflin |
| Homestead | Whitaker |
| Jefferson Hills | White Oak |
| Liberty | Wilkins |
| Lincoln | Wilkinsburg |
| | Wilmerding |