

# The Neighborhood Center in Camden

## 102<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report



### Celebrating a year of service, change, and love

The Neighborhood Center in  
Camden is an independent  
501(c) 3 Non-Profit

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The past twelve months have been a period of profound change and growth for the Neighborhood Center in Camden. Almost every aspect of the Center's programming, infrastructure, and staff experienced positive changes that improved the Center's ability to meet its mission of "loving our neighbors as ourselves."

Today, the Neighborhood Center in Camden is positioned for unparalleled growth and service to children, teenagers, and parents here in Camden where we are needed everyday.

Without our donors, volunteers, and friends none of what you are about to read would have been possible –Thank you!

# What will the future hold for The Neighborhood Center?



Letter from the  
Executive Director, Mike  
Landis

*“We work with children at a pivotal time in their lives: realizing the power in self-awareness.”*

One of the major consequences of living in poverty, especially for children and teenagers, is a lack of choice and empowerment. A child living in an affluent family may choose to pursue athletics or the arts, and is fully empowered by his/her parents to pursue their dreams that build upon their talents.

**At The Neighborhood Center in Camden, we are deeply committed to empowering individuals who suffer from an absence of choice—especially children.** The right to choose is a fundamental human right, and we strive to end the poverty that robs us of that simple but basic right. By awakening imaginations and fostering creativity, the performing and visual arts create a unique space to rediscover choice. The young people we will serve will be able to imagine new futures and possibilities, as well as the potential to gain the skills and strengths to achieve them.

We work with children at a pivotal time in their lives: realizing the power in self-awareness.

**Art puts children in charge of what they do with their self-awareness.**

Our work creates safe spaces for a child's imagination to guide play—writing, singing, dancing, drawing—awakening dormancies

and sharing what needs to be talked about whether it's positive or negative. Our programs will provide artistic prompts for the children to speak their struggles and realize their successes. These dialogues in turn allow the children to flourish.

From improving reading comprehension to advancing critical thinking, and from teaching problem solving to fostering collaboration, access to the arts brings about significant improvements in children's ability to think and communicate effectively.

**In addition, we believe that the arts can build strong communities through activities that promote community development, enhance cultural awareness, and build community bonds.**

The Center will be committed to cultivating a network of artists who use the arts as a tool to empower youth. We will connect professional musicians, singers, dancers, and actors with children and families in the Camden community to share their passion and demonstrate the transforming power of the arts.

So, in the coming months you will see and hear a greater focus on not just academics, athletics, and faith formation, but also the “Arts.”

Mike



A Letter  
from the  
Chairperson  
of the Board  
of Directors,  
Mary Martz

The Neighborhood Center over the past three years has made many important strides to improve the academic performance of children and teenagers in our programs. **The curriculum in the child-care program fosters imagination and literacy to prepare a child for Pre-K or kindergarten.** The Summer Camp program curriculum works to improve the cultural capital of children while working to help them to be grade-ready for the fall term. The L.I.G.H.T. Teen Leadership Academy, which meets Monday through Thursday every evening, focuses on tutoring, homework, civics, character development, cultural capital, and a path to college.

The after-school program is now working with the consulting firm Equal Measure to develop a system of achievable and measurable academic outcomes for the children in our programs. This work will lead to an application to the State of New Jersey to become a Twenty First Century After School Program, which will fully fund the program. The Center, through funded grants, is improving the Computer lab to enhance computer literacy, academic research, and positive social media behaviors. The Center also plans to begin debate and forensics speech teams that will compete at a High School level.

**I want to personally thank the Board Members that serve with me for their outstanding commitment to the Neighborhood Center and the many hours of work they devote to the mission of the Center –Thank you!**

Mary

**“The Summer Camp program curriculum works to improve the cultural capital of children while working to help them to be grade ready for the fall term.”**





Action  
Changes  
Things



## The Volunteer Experience

**“Whenever we leave the Neighborhood Center after helping out in the kitchen, we feel more joyous than when we entered.”**



The Neighborhood Center continues to thrive with a significant and outstanding volunteer base. These volunteers come from many different places and backgrounds. Some of our volunteers come from local schools and churches. Some come to serve from as far away as Cleveland, Upstate NY, and Boston. We've even had volunteers from Germany and Italy! The Center has also developed a strong relationship with Rutgers University, whose Civic Scholar program places a heavy emphasis on Civic Engagement. We also regularly receive volunteers from local organizations like the Romero Center and the Center for Environmental Transformation.



At the Center, we strive to cultivate a volunteer experience that is spiritual, meaningful and productive. On any given week, we host anywhere between 30 and 160 volunteers. During special events the number is even higher! Volunteers help by preparing and serving lunch, tutoring teens in the after school program, working in the garden, and more! Volunteers also enjoy spending time in Fellowship with our children and the community. Some volunteers serve on a weekly or monthly basis. Other volunteers serve once as part of a service trip with school or work. Our volunteer experience caters to both the needs of the

**“We greatly appreciate our volunteers of all ages, from students in middle school to senior” citizens!**

Center as well as the interests and skills of the volunteers. We greatly appreciate our volunteers of all ages, from students in middle school to senior citizens!



**“It's nice to know that what I was doing would help people in the future.”**

With the help of volunteers, we were able to accomplish the following this year:

- Renovate our daycare building
- Construct a greenhouse
- Install new shelving in the food pantry
- Build a new shed
- Build and install new bookcases
- Install new raised plant beds
- Complete a new stone pathway
- Paint the gym
- Plant a variety of crops for our urban garden
- Serve over 450 families during Thanksgiving week, and so much more!

Thank you to all our volunteers who dedicated countless hours to make these improvements possible!

Christa



## The Neighborhood Center's Teen Leadership Academy

This year's teen program has been focused on bringing more options of College and careers to the teens of Camden. The program is centered on three main topics: career awareness and exploration, life skill development, and college access.

For Career Awareness and Exploration we have been bringing in guest speakers from different career backgrounds and having them talk to the teens about what they do and the path they took to get where they are today, which brings focus to the fact that past goals help to make present ambitions possible. For life skills development, we have lessons with the teens about respect, relationships, financial management, and more to help them in developing the skills necessary to be productive individuals in their future lives.



Lastly, for college access, we have been partnering with Rutgers University and an eight-week College Readiness course that is run by current college students. The course is focused on giving students in-depth knowledge about Colleges/Universities, the steps they need to take to get into one of these institutions, what kind of information they will need when applying, and further information after being accepted. The teens have also been visiting Universities in New Jersey to help give them a sense of what college will be like.



***"The teens have also been visiting Universities in New Jersey to help give them a sense of what college will be like."***



## The Neighborhood Center Community Kitchen

The Community Kitchen at The Neighborhood Center continues to grow and expand more than ever before.

We are now serving over 47,000 meals a year and over 300 meals a day during our peak time of each month.

We are very grateful for the help of organizations like The W.W. Smith Trust, which have helped us to be able to continue making our kitchen into a more professional facility.

We have also been able to improve the quality of food, thanks to donations from Wegman's in Cherry Hill, NJ, Whole Foods of Marlton, NJ, and Shoprite in Lawnside, NJ. We are also still receiving fresh produce from Flaim Farms Inc. in Vineland, NJ during the summer, which provides healthy food for all of our programs. Moving forward over the next year we hope to continue to improve the quality of meals served, the overall nutrition of the meals, and improve upon the food education we offer for all of our children.



***“We are now serving over 47,000 meals a year and over 300 meals a day during our peak time of each month”***

Back in March we did a survey of our guests that come in for our daily lunch that we serve. The results impacted everyone that read them. Most of the people we serve are able to find employment, seek housing, and provide better meals for their families because of what we provide through the Community Kitchen. We also learned that over half of the people that come would go hungry if it were not for the noon meals that we provide. I would personally like to thank everyone that volunteers or helps support the kitchen financially, because without your help we would not see the impact that we are seeing today.

**Chef Lou Wilson**

## Child Care

With a new focus on providing high quality infant and toddler child care programs, this past year our classrooms were redesigned to address the needs of our youngest learners. The entire childcare facility at the Center was renovated this past year.



Our infant program and toddler program have operated at capacity for most of the year. Our increased focus on healthy eating through participation in the Steps to Healthy Success program has revitalized our menus, provided new food service equipment sized for smaller hands, and prompted increased training on healthy portion sizes and the importance of physical activity.



## After School Program

This year in our after school program has been a wonderful time of building on a solid foundation. We have continued in our efforts to establish and maintain healthy habits for our children by serving healthy foods and providing frequent and varied opportunities for physical activity. We provide interest-based clubs for our children so that they may enjoy and value their time here with us. We have also kept our extended hours and we have worked hard to establish and maintain excellent relationships with our parents and families.

So what's new? We are so pleased to report that we have been able to invite more volunteers into our program to run clubs. Through the efforts of volunteers we have hosted clubs for Capoeira (a Brazilian form of martial arts), modern dance, and sewing. We have also started our very own Girl Scout Troop.



# The Neighborhood Center Summer Camp

*It's huge, it's fun, it's loud, it's challenging, and it's the best camp in the Delaware Valley; creating memories that will last a lifetime!*





## Sage's Program

It has been a great year for the seniors who participate in the Center's Sage's Program. The Center continues to be a place where they can participate in activities they enjoy and that enhance their wellbeing, as they spend time in community building friendships with each other and the many volunteers who get to know them.

This year, Ms. Belinda Hall returned to the Sage's Program to lead the seniors in Bible studies. Ms. Belinda loves leading the weekly Bible study and the seniors are grateful for the knowledge, passion, and friendship she shares with them. The

sentiment is mutual, as Ms. Belinda appreciates learning from the seniors as well.

The seniors have also received health education from Ms. Terri Nocentino, a volunteer nurse. After sharing the importance and benefit of making healthy food choices, Ms. Terri observed great improvement in the food choices the seniors are making. In addition to promoting health, Ms. Terri brought in volunteers to lead bingo, exercise classes, and arts and crafts, which provide opportunities for the seniors to improve their health holistically.



# Neighborhood Center in Camden Inc. 2015 Budget and Financial Results

Income	2015 Budget		2014 Budget		2014 Actual (Unaudited)		2013 (Audited)	
	2015 Budget		2014 Budget		2014 Actual (Unaudited)		2013 (Audited)	
Women's Division	\$19,448.00		\$19,448.00		\$14,586.00		\$19,448.00	
United Methodist Support	\$152,733.00		\$123,476.00		\$153,212.00		\$154,088.00	
Government Sources (2)	\$319,004.00		\$398,754.00		\$193,754.00		\$421,497.00	
United Way Support	\$1,775.00		\$2,135.00		\$1,776.00		\$2,836.19	
Fundraising	\$144,321.00		\$196,359.00		\$164,312.00		\$193,594.27	
Grants & Foundation	\$182,892.00		\$125,174.00		\$348,810.00		\$179,498.00	
Other Income	\$87,573.00		\$100,356.00		\$96,436.00		\$119,856.00	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$907,746.00</b>		<b>\$965,702.00</b>		<b>\$972,886.00</b>		<b>\$1,090,817.46</b>	
			12 Months				12 Months	
Expense	2015 Budget		2014 Budget		2014 Actual (Unaudited)		2013 (Audited)	
Total Salaries & Wages	\$452,626.00		\$620,073.00		\$563,865.00		\$682,764.00	
Total Employee Benefits	\$56,198.00		\$31,003.00		\$29,829.00		\$45,325.00	
Total Payroll Taxes	\$66,706.00		\$71,928.00		\$66,663.00		\$82,628.00	
Total Program Expenses	\$73,000.00		\$76,000.00		\$76,318.00		\$88,871.00	
Total Transportation	\$25,824.00		\$23,000.00		\$14,911.00		\$27,910.00	
Office Expense	\$45,612.00		\$18,000.00		\$40,637.00		\$31,725.00	
Buildings & Grounds(1)	\$45,600.00		\$20,000.00		\$109,853.00		\$16,247.00	
Total Heat & Utilities	\$43,000.00		\$40,000.00		\$43,105.00		\$54,757.00	
Bus and Building Funding	\$85,180.00							
Total Other Expenses	\$14,000.00		\$50,000.00		\$16,147.00		\$42,816.00	
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$907,746.00</b>		<b>\$950,004.00</b>		<b>\$961,328.00</b>		<b>\$1,073,043.00</b>	
<b>Income</b>			<b>\$0.00</b>		<b>\$11,558.00</b>		<b>\$17,774.46</b>	

**Notes**

- (1) 2014 includes mandatory grant spending on facility of \$55,000
- (2) Government Sources are down due to the forced downsizing of the after-school (lead abatement) for 1/1/2014 thru 6/30/14

The Neighborhood Center's Independent Auditor is Neal Curry (CPA) of Haddon Heights, N.J. (856) 546-4683 the 2014 Audit is scheduled for May 2015

All financial transactions including reporting, banking, payroll, and accounts payable is now managed by Vin Parker and Associates of Haddonfield, N.J. (856) 795-7976

## Board Members

- **Mary Martz**, President Board of Directors, Council Member, Magnolia N.J. Director of Planning, Codes, and Licensing, Magnolia N.J. Past President, United Methodist Women – Gateway District
- **Ruth Schultz**, Vice President, Board of Directors, Lay Leader, St. Paul's United Methodist Church, United Methodist Women District Leader
- **J. Scott Susich** – Treasurer and Finance Chair, Board of Directors, Senior Partner-Advanced Energy Commerce, Former Sr. Vice President – American Petroleum Exchange, Scott has testified for the U.S. Senate on fuel pricing; assisted the IRS in investigating fuel tax evasion; and been an industry authority for The Wall Street Journal, CNN, USA Today, and the major broadcast networks. MBA Northwest Missouri State University
- **Jane Butler**, Board Secretary, Pioneer in the field of Nurse Practitioners in Geriatrics Retired Director of Nursing at Folkways at Gwyneth CCRC Masters in Nursing University of Pennsylvania
- **Anita Braun** – Executive with Taylor and Francis Journals, Chair of the Outreach Committee of Chews UMC, works with UMCOR Disaster Relief, BA Eastern College
- **Rev. Douglas Goldsborough** - Senior Minister, Mount Zion United Methodist Church – Lawnside N.J.
- **Belinda Hall** – Adjunct Professor – Rowan University, Retired Vineland Public Schools Principal, MA Rowan University, BS Cheyney State College
- **Tom Martin** – President, Martin Personnel and Placement Services, Inc. Member, Board of Directors Interfaith Homeless Outreach Council
- **Paul Parker** – Chief Human Resource Officer Carnival Cruise Lines, Former Chief People Officer-Deloitte, Vice President Human Resources-Colgate-Palmolive, Professor, Manhattanville College, MBA New York University, Stern School of Business, United States Naval Academy
- **Deb Podolin Whiting, PhD** -Assistant Professor at UMDNJ-School of Medicine, frequent lecturer in nutrition, health, and obesity to groups such as the NJ Department of Education, the Assembly Committee at the State House in Trenton, NJ, the UMDNJ-SOM Medical Science Academy and various high school and middle school groups. Current research focuses on aspects of health and nutrition.
- **Margaret Williams** - Retired Human Resource and Operations Executive – Strawbridge and Clothier, Vice President – United Methodist Women of Mount Zion
- **Janice Woodcock, AIA** - Architect and Urban Planner in private practice, previously director of the Philadelphia Planning Commission, Secretary and property chair of the Philadelphia Art Alliance, an Arts organization specializing in craft located on Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia. M-Arch. University of Washington, BA Saint Lawrence University

### Ex-officio Members

- **Sharyn Bailey**, *Neighborhood Center in Camden Trust*, Nurse – Neonatal Unit – Kennedy Hospital, Certified Grief Counselor, BS Nursing Hahnemann
- **Rev. Myrna Bethke**, *District Superintendent Greater NJ Conference*
- **Mike Landis**, *Executive Director – Neighborhood Center Inc.*
- **Marilyn Powell**, *President of United Methodist Women, Greater NJ Conference*
- **Frank Cahill**, *Board Member Emeritus – Retired Senior Executive Campbell Soup Company, Stratford Borough Land Use Board*