



# BUHL REGIONAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

*Promoting a Healthy Community*

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2021

We have all faced a year and a half of extreme uncertainty and change. There has not been a moment when the Buhl Regional Health Foundation hasn't been focused on the health and welfare of everyone within our mission's footprint.

With that said, we continue our focus on equity and wellbeing, as well as access to health care addressing the needs of all people throughout the region. We are poised to begin impactful projects, programs and education for residents of the BRHF area. Our Board is ready to support the efforts of our Executive Director, Jennifer Barborak and I am excited for what lies ahead!

Rest assured, the year ahead will be challenging as we continue to keep our community safe. We will continue to address the pandemic and provide as much education and insight into every health related issue that may arise. My personal best to everyone and on behalf of the Board of Directors, we wish you well.

-Angela Palumbo, Board Chair

*from the desk of Jen Barborak,*  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

What a year! I was hired as the executive director of BRHF in September of 2020, mid-pandemic. It has been a bumpy ride, but I am proud of everything the foundation has accomplished over the last year.

In the fall of 2020, it became apparent that our community needed someone to step into the role of providing credible public health education. We formed an internal COVID committee that meets weekly and guides the staff in COVID related educational projects. BRHF created a campaign of public service announcements to keep people informed of COVID safety guidelines and began to provide credible and up to date answers to COVID questions in our community. We continue to host biweekly lunch and learns, a partnership with Primary Health Network and the Shenango Valley Chamber of Commerce. Topics have included Vaccine Fears Tackled, Self-Care for the Holidays and Planning a Safe Holiday COVID style. We frequently arrange for our board member, Dr. George Garrow, CMO of PHN, to speak to agencies, businesses and the general public about COVID, different COVID testing types and the COVID vaccines. Our website is updated regularly with the latest information compiled, such as: Agencies Ready to Assist a Person in Quarantine, COVID Testing Locations, Types of COVID Tests and When to Use Them, and the latest links from the PA Department of Health related to vaccine distribution. Make sure you visit it!

Aside from our COVID work, we managed to open our spring 2021 round of funding, providing \$323,095 to fund nineteen projects. We were also excited to provide scholarship opportunities for thirteen students entering health related fields. No doubt the year ahead will be a challenge for all of us. BRHF will continue to provide credible education and charitable support throughout the pandemic and beyond. We look forward to continuing the journey with you, our beloved community!

## 2021 Grantmaking IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

The mission of the Buhl Regional Health Foundation is to identify and address the diverse health care needs of the greater Sharon regional area. Among the Foundation's primary objectives will be the promotion of collaborative partnerships and programs, capacity building, and grants which will focus on and invest in all people impacted by health-related needs.

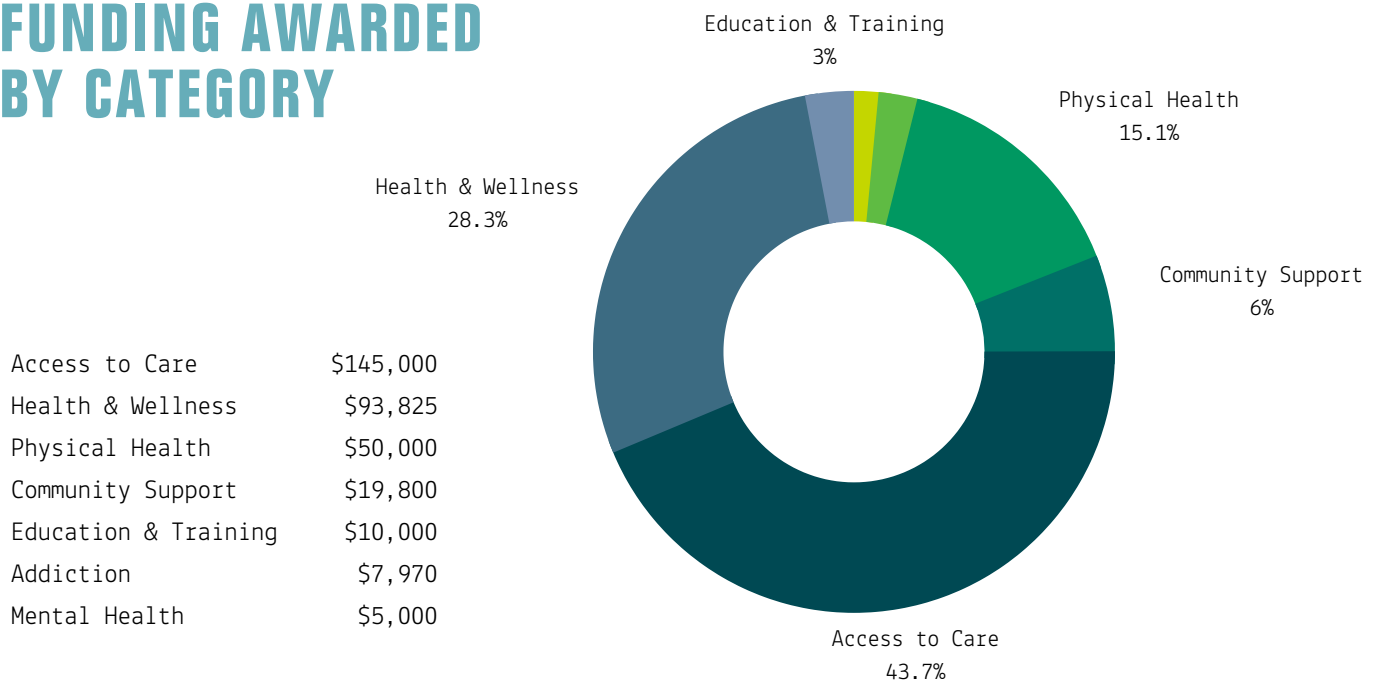
# \$323,095

*in grants awarded*

# 17

*grantees*

## FUNDING AWARDED BY CATEGORY



## 2021 GRANTEES

- Maple Tree Cancer Alliance
- PHN Charitable Foundation
- Children's Center of Mercer County
- Friends of MERP
- Penn State Shenango
- Adventures in Training with a Purpose
- Hope Center for Arts & Technology, Inc.
- CLSV Stey-Nevant Branch Library
- Community Action Partnership of Mercer County
- Trail's End Conservancy, Inc.
- Mercer County
- Friends of MERP
- City Rescue Mission
- Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc.
- PHN Charitable Foundation
- Shenango Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Children's Advocacy Center of Lawrence County, Inc

August 23, 2021 | Compiled by Tracy Schliep, RN

## Report to BRHF from the COVID VACCINE EQUITY TEAM

The COVID Vaccine Equity Team is tasked with addressing vaccine hesitancy and access in the Buhl Regional Health Foundation footprint. It is comprised of a fulltime coordinator and an assistant.

### *The team's approach to addressing vaccine hesitancy and access includes*

Removing real and perceived obstacles preventing people from getting vaccinated. This includes providing digital technical support for online registration and appointments, transportation to vaccine appointments, setting up vaccine clinics, and addressing vaccine hesitancy.

Soliciting and supporting community partners who open dialogues with consumers, families, and friends about vaccine status. These vaccine advocates enhance the team's outreach and acceptance.

Improving health literacy in group settings and through individual conversations. Much of this effort involves addressing misinformation, disinformation, and awareness.

Providing support and oversight is a five-person Steering Committee, which includes Frank Jannetti, Mercer County safety director; Jen Barborak, BRHF executive director; Nicholas Baron, PHN director of operations; Kevin McDade, PhD, Penn State Shenango associate teaching professor; and Tracy Schliep, equity team coordinator. The Steering Committee meets weekly. A 20-person Advisory Council made up of social service and healthcare providers, educators, and faith leaders meets monthly.

### *Deliverables since the team started in April include:*

- A single point of contact for vaccine information and access. The number is answered by a team member who gives real-time assistance.
- A database of area vaccine providers that is used to schedule vaccine appointments with the provider of choice, for the vaccine of choice, and at the time and place of choice. Using laptops and personal hotspots, the team holds onsite scheduling events several times each week throughout the county.
- Over 4500 contacts made, 2000 individual conversations had, and 125 events held.
- Approximately 84% of persons report themselves as vaccinated. Among those not vaccine, approximately 8% schedule a vaccine appointment at a community-based outreach event. Nearly all unvaccinated citizens accept information.
- Presentations to the Western Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, Mercer County Head Start, Communities That Care, Human Services Commission, Community Health Partnership, and several other professional networking, civic organizations, social clubs, faith-based, and consumer groups.
- Two live local talk radio shows, two podcasts, three published newspaper stories, Facebook live community Q&A, and creation of the Mercer Co Health Equity Facebook page.
- Vaccine scheduling onsite at storefronts, food pantries, thrift stores, substance abuse recovery centers, mental health waiting rooms, community parks, pools, church services, fairs, festivals, farmer's markets, libraries, senior living establishments, social clubs, entertainment venues, back to school events. and public housing neighborhoods.

The team is responsive to the latest FDA updates, CDC guidance, and DOH rollouts, thus a trusted source of information to citizens and a reliable partner to vaccine providers. Connecting vaccine providers with people is just as important as connecting people with vaccines. Their efforts are concentrated when and where needs present, including outreach to teens and young adults, to immunocompromised persons needing third doses, and for the booster dose rollout.