

# Center for Community Solutions West Chester University

2019 - 2020  
Annual Report



# About Us



"If you have a university in your community, the first question you should be asking when a problem surfaces is, I wonder how our university can help us."

Michael G. Gartner, Keynote Speaker,  
International Town and Gown Association's Annual Conference

In 2013, West Chester University announced its plans for the next decade in a document entitled, "Building on Excellence" to strengthen campus understanding of the meaning and value of external engagement and its impact on student learning and academic excellence. In setting forth its goals, the University cited a number of strategic commitments including outreach to, and engagement with, regional and global partners "through which intellectual and material resources can be leveraged for mutual benefit." As a leader in engagement by building relationships with both our local and global partners, West Chester University sought to formalize and expand upon the positive impact already existing between the University and community by creating the Center for Community Solutions (CCS) in 2016. This community-university partnership provides a single point of contact to facilitate University and community connections, to promote the expertise and capabilities of the University's students, faculty and staff to the community-at-large and to provide opportunities for students to develop and apply their in-classroom knowledge while enhancing their educational experience. Since 2016, the Center for Community Solutions has connected over 200 local businesses, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, municipalities and government agencies with West Chester University resources.

This past year, 62 students, through the Center for Community Solutions and with guidance from faculty and CCS staff, interned and/or worked together with organizations assisting in 3D mapping and other GIS services, app development, business development and marketing, coding, community health initiatives, data archival, graphic design, research, social media and digital marketing, survey creation and compilation, technical support, video production and editing, volunteering, web site creation and development, writing and blogging, and many others.

Also this year, CCS was pleased to add Jeanette Donahue to the staff at the beginning of the program year. Jeanette provides much needed assistance managing the growing number of projects and students CCS is responsible for.

## Carnegie Foundation Elective Community Engagement Classification



In January 2020, West Chester University was selected to receive the 2020 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification endorsement from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. WCU is one of only 359 institutions to receive this elective classification, which involved data collection and documentation of important aspects of our institutional mission, identity and commitment related to community engagement. The CCS Liaison was pleased to support and enhance the University's efforts in community engagement by serving as a member of the core writing team to complete the 84 page application along with faculty and staff from a variety of departments and disciplines who contributed to the efforts of the Task Force. This milestone could not have been achieved without all of us at WCU who are responsible for, and committed to, community engagement.

# Community Organizations

From July 2019 through June 2020, the Center for Community Solutions responded to 65 organizations' requests for assistance from WCU. We would like to thank these organizations for providing our students with the opportunity to expand their classroom experience and skills.

- ACT in Faith
- Align Fitness
- Ancient Wisdom
- Boroughs Association
- Brandywine Health Foundation
- Chester County 2020
- Chester County ACEs Coalition
- Chester County Futures
- Chester County Human Services Office
- Chester County Juvenile Probation Office
- Collingdale Borough
- Community Warehouse of Chester County
- Compendium Boutique
- County of Chester/ CC Commissioners
- Creative Healing Arts
- Delicate Designs by Amanda
- Design Life Kids, LLC
- Distat Company
- Dynamic Home Therapy
- East Fallowfield Township
- East Goshen Township
- Entourage Music
- Friends of Chester Valley Trail
- Friends of Everhart Park
- Go Green Cleaning Experts
- Iota Tau Omega Chapter
- iSwich Gourmet
- Kennett Township
- Kinetic Physical Therapy
- Kovarvic, LLC
- Little Miss Moffitt
- Localized App
- Matt Trago, Swope Lees Commercial Real Estate
- Matthews School of Dance Arts
- Middletown Free Library Campaign
- My West Chester
- Natural Lands
- Play Arts
- Renew Laser & Aesthetic Medicine
- Rize Pizza
- Robyn Jewitt Senior Moves
- SASH
- SCORE
- Spire Broadcast Talent
- St. Maximilian Kolbe School
- The Knight School
- The Refinery Hair Studio
- Uncommon Individual Foundation
- Uptown Knauer Performing Arts Center
- VISTA Today
- Vitali Workshops & Coaching
- WCU Diabetes Prevention Program
- WCU Economics and Finance Department
- WCU Women's Commission
- West Bradford Township
- West Chester Borough Mayor's Office
- West Chester Film Festival
- West Chester Food Co-Op
- West Chester Free Ride
- West Chester Friends School
- West Chester Green Team
- West Chester Historical Commission
- West Chester United Methodist Church
- West Vincent Township
- West Whiteland Township



## 65 ORGANIZATIONS

28	20	5	12
FOR PROFIT	NONPROFIT	EDUCATION	GOVERNMENT

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# Project Spotlights



## West Chester Historical Commission Project: Social Media

The Historical Commission agency is advisory in nature and is usually given the responsibilities of, but not limited to, implementing the historic preservation plan and identifying local historic resources that may be in jeopardy. The Center for Community Solutions assigned two students with the Commission to enhance their social media presence and to expand their marketing efforts. This work was critical in the implementation of the Commission's Black History Month features on social media, particularly local influencers JR Fugett and Horace Pippin and the Commission's social media segment of "Then and Now" photos of downtown West Chester historical landmarks.



## West Chester Green Team Project: Environmental Activism

The West Chester Green Team was formed in 2019 from four different environmental-related interest groups. The Green Teams calls the community to action on keeping West Chester residents green, urging local and federal government to support environmental policy, and assisting community organizations to create change within their working environments. The Center for Community Solutions, in collaboration with the University's Sustainability Office, supported two students to promote environmental health in our community. These students enthusiastically participated in multiple activism projects and events, many of which provided them hands-on opportunities to affect the community. Those projects included Roots and Shoots: A Childrens' Gardening Program, Don't Spray Me, West Chester's First Annual Organic Food and Garden Tour, Vigil against Single Use Plastic, Hot Button Talks, River Blue, Annual Auction, Little Faces Daycare Trip to Longwood Gardens, Mosquito Research, Plastic Ban Public Hearing, and proposals to local government.



## Uncommon Individual Foundation (UIF) Project: Media Associate Internship

Uncommon Individual Foundation is a local non-profit organization founded in 1986 by Dr. Richard Caruso to help individuals and organizations recognize and embrace the power of mentoring to achieve success. The Foundation assists individuals and organizations through mentoring programs in five key areas: corporate, education, entrepreneur, media, and technology. With assistance from the College of Arts and Humanities, the Center for Community Solutions assigned two undergraduate English majors to intern with UIF. Their work involved taking proper professional photos, captioning, social media creation and management, harnessing interview skills, editing scripts and writing articles for publication in PhillyVoice. The students were also able to assist video production associates to create video copy while making critical connections through the work with Uncommon Individual Foundation. These experiences built on the foundation in the classroom and internship experience for both students.

# CCS Effect

2016

On behalf of RESTART Your Life/ RENEW Your Mind, I want to thank you for the wonderful website that the WCU Center for Community Solutions staff was able to donate to us. RESTART is a nonprofit assistance fund for brain injury survivors. Without the assistance of this office and gracious generosity of the University to donate services, we would not have been able to create this wonderful site. It has been highly viewed and appreciated by survivors of "The Hidden Injury". I think the service you are providing in this area is invaluable! Thank you.



Kevin McDonald, Founder & CEO  
RESTART Your Life/ RENEW Your Mind  
Project: Design Website

2017

It was fantastic to have one point of contact to help us benefit from the knowledge base of the entire University. We look forward to working with the Center for Community Solutions on future projects.



Mark J. Yoder, President  
Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce  
Project: Economic Impact Studies,  
Annual Holiday Parade, & Twilight Bike Race

2018

I think CCS is an incredible resource for the community and I have had fantastic experiences working with the staff and the students. I have no suggestions for improving an already fantastic program.



Glenda Brion, Founder and President  
Community Warehouse Project of Chester County  
Project: Design Logo & Web Site

2019

"I'm happy that we're able to get these resources from the University and I'm not sure we'd be able to continue if it wasn't for the Center for Community Solutions. So, for that thank you!"



Dan Balmer, Founder  
Localized App  
Project: Develop App

2020

"The program is a win-win for the University and the Township as we meet mutually beneficial goals through these partnerships. Other Universities should follow suit."



Erica Batdorf  
West Vincent Township  
Project: Data Archiving

# Student Experiences

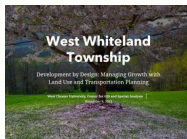


"I learned how to better provide guidance in writing, how to run a small-group writing conference, and how to collaborate with other teachers."

Kristen Loughlin | St. Maximilian Kolbe School

"During the Center for Rural PA grant, I worked as a research assistant assisting in the economic analysis part of our interdisciplinary project. During this experience I got to build and refine economic impact models, interpret data and results, present and articulate findings during regular meetings, and write up the results of my analysis. These experiences were invaluable for my development as a researcher as they allowed me to participate in the various stages of the research process."

Keith Hazen | Center for Rural PA Grant



"I have had so many amazing opportunities with the Center for Community Solutions so thank you so much. I appreciate everything that you have done for not only myself, but the Planning and Geography Department."

Morgan Sapia | West Whiteland Project

"As someone who cares deeply about our natural environment, I felt proud to work with West Chester Green Team."

Tristan Brueks | West Chester Green Team



"Assisting with this project has provided me with the opportunity to collaborate with faculty, organize information, improve problem solving skills, and demonstrate commitment and reliability. This position has already proven to be invaluable and has inspired me to consider doctoral work."

Erin Spencer | Center for Rural PA Grant



"I liked working as the videographer because it was up to me to make all the creative decisions while filming and editing the footage."

Alexis Bocelli | Robin Jewitt Senior Moves



"My involvement with the CCS has enabled me to engage with the community on issues that I'm passionate about- it has made a hands-on activist out of me, a role that I'm proud to fill and hope to never step out of."

Paige Vermeulen | West Chester Green Team

"Before this project I generally didn't know what went on in a township building. Now I've had the opportunity to learn about local government processes."

Maria Morresi | West Vincent Township

1,894.50		MKT 490				
Hours Worked Outside	+	PPA 535	=	Total Student		
of the classroom		Classroom Hours		Experience		

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# Student Spotlight

## Bridget Marley, Public Health '20, '16

This year, Bridget continued as the Center for Community Solutions Graduate Assistant. Her experience working with students in her work outside of WCU CCS has been invaluable to her management of students and projects bringing a unique perspective. Bridget is part of the CCS team managing several projects each semester as well as working on her own projects. This year Bridget provided social media and graphic design assistance to the **West Chester Historical Commission** and **Little Miss Moffitt**. She also diligently worked on designing the 2019-2020 CCS Annual Report.



"Working for the Center for Community Solutions has allowed me to continue to harness my creativity in a way to positively impact the community. I have loved working for CCS and wish more students would become involved in such a wonderful initiative."

## Jordan Lopez, Computer Science '22

Jordan worked with four local companies, **Ancient Wisdom**, **Align Fitness**, **SASH** and **Localized App**. During his time with these companies, Jordan utilized his skills in leading and assisting in the development of apps and websites for each company's unique market. Jordan's knowledge evolved as he researched competitors, investigated new frameworks for apps and implemented his findings, creating platforms improving performance. Just this past January an app which Jordan created along with Dan Balmer, owner of Localized App and a West Chester University alumni, went live and can now be found on all app stores. Jordan's time with CCS proved highly advantageous for him and the companies he touched.



"I worked with many organizations throughout my time with CCS, which helped advance my communication skills, developed my WordPress skills, and increased my involvement in research and creating mobile applications."

## Courtney Bodle, Environmental '21

Courtney has a great interest in sharing her enthusiasm in caring for the environment with the West Chester community. She has worked on several projects with the **West Chester Green Team** which include; creating the first annual organic food gardens tour, teaching the community how to flip a lawn into a garden, creating Roots and Shoots, a kids gardening program, sitting on several committees including Peace/Climate March & GreenEd Auction Planning. It was through these experiences Courtney learned how to be a community organizer for several types of programs.



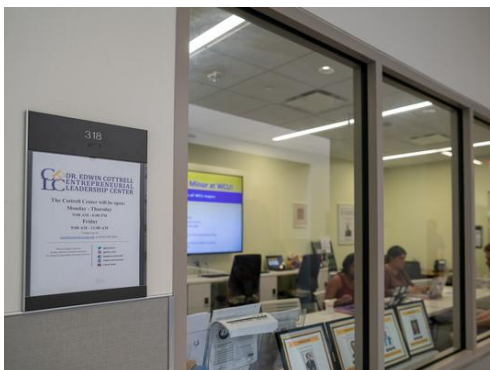
"My experience with the CCS at West Chester University has been, in a word, fulfilling. With the CCS, I have support in creating a life in which I do the work I love within my community."

# University Collaborations

Throughout the year, the Center for Community Solutions collaborates with faculty and staff in almost all of the University's colleges, disciplines and program offices. These collaborations and connections are invaluable to the Center for Community Solutions. They provide the resources and knowledge needed to successfully assist the organizations that have contacted the Center for Community Solutions Office for assistance from WCU. Faculty and staff provide support and resources to the CCS office by locating skilled students and by providing guidance and oversight of projects including internship assignments. These connections have resulted in ongoing internships, stronger relationships and partnerships which continue long after the CCS project work is completed by our students.

In these collaborations, we are working together to meet the goals and initiatives of the University's Strategic Plan for Community Engagement. These collaborations exemplify how the CCS, with the resources and assistance from across the campus, are able to contribute by creating mutually beneficial partnerships between WCU and our local, national and international communities.

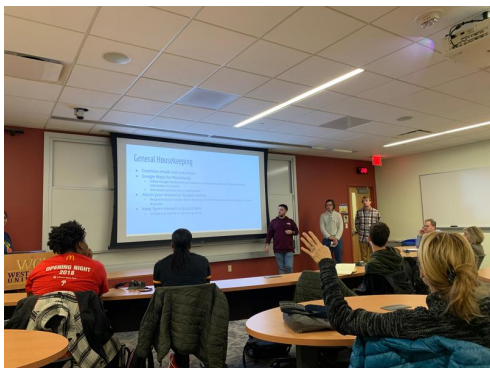
Thank you to the University's administration for their continued support of the Center for Community Solutions. We would also like to thank all of those across campus who collaborate with us in supporting the University's Strategic Plan. These prodigious opportunities serve to deepen community engagement and broaden the University's many contributions for the common good.



Cottrell Entrepreneurial Center



GIS and Spatial Analysis Center



MKT 490, Fall 2019



Little Miss Moffitt



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# Contact Us

The West Chester University Center for Community Solutions serves as a link between the University and the community. For information on how West Chester University can work together with your organization, contact:

**Center for Community Solutions**  
**Division of University Affairs**  
**West Chester University**  
**communitysolutions@wcupa.edu**  
**610-425-7431**  
**[www.wcupa.edu/ccs](http://www.wcupa.edu/ccs)**

Susan Argentieri, CCS Liaison  
Jeanette Donahue, Administrative Support  
Bridget Marley, Graduate Assistant

The Center for Community Solutions serves the mission of West Chester University and the Division of University Affairs. University Affairs cultivates and maintains effective relationships with internal and external constituencies to enhance the overall visibility, reputation, and appreciation of West Chester University and its institutional priorities.



Designed by Bridget Marley  
Masters of Public Health 2020

