Effecting Lasting Change

2022 Annual Report:
BluePrints for the Community Grants Program
FRIENDS,

The BluePrints for the Community grants program is an investment in the well-being of the people of Delaware, and we are pleased to share the impact of our 2022 grants in this annual report.

Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware (Highmark Delaware) created the BluePrints grants program in 2007 by establishing the Highmark Delaware Fund at the Delaware Community Foundation (DCF).

Since then, we have awarded more than $35 million in grants to support programs primarily in five focus areas: addressing social determinants of health, reducing health disparities in minority communities, increasing access to health care for the uninsured and underserved, recruiting and training healthcare professionals, and supporting early childhood development.

In partnership with the DCF, Highmark Delaware has maximized its philanthropic impact and earned the reputation of a go-to supporter among Delaware nonprofit organizations and the communities they serve. This year’s BluePrints grants alone totaled $10 million.

This report highlights how BluePrints 2022 grants are effecting lasting change in Delaware, thanks to Highmark Delaware’s generosity and thoughtful investment. By combining Highmark Delaware’s resources and healthcare expertise with the DCF’s deep knowledge of strategic philanthropy and Delaware, we are improving lives and strengthening communities statewide.

NICK MORIELLO
President
Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware

STUART COMSTOCK-GAY
President & CEO
Delaware Community Foundation
Sitting outside the doctor’s office takes on a new meaning for individuals with a cancer diagnosis. Pulling out pen and paper and practicing the Zentangle Method – a kind of meditative doodling – provides a brief escape.

Teaching such exercises and artistic practices to promote stress reduction is central to the work of Cancer Support Community Delaware. The organization hosts statewide support groups and educational programming for patients and their caregivers and families. Offerings range from poetry classes to sound meditation workshops and nutritional guidance.

“At the end of the day, this funding is about each individual person we’ve been able to serve, because we’ve changed their lives for the better as they are going through probably one of the most difficult times of their life.”

Erika Narducci
MSW, LCSW and Program Director
Cancer Support Community Delaware

“We provide a place where a patient and their family member can come for no cost and be supported through the emotional journey of cancer,” program director Erika Narducci said.

Following the coronavirus pandemic, ensuring safe and easy access became increasingly important. BluePrints funding was critical in expanding hybrid and virtual programming, establishing a library of digital content, and training a dedicated program facilitator.
Vision To Learn

**Program:** Free Eye Exams and Glasses for Children in Underserved Communities of Delaware

**Grant:** $50,000

When a school-aged child can’t see the board, they can’t see their potential. That’s the crux of the mission at Vision To Learn, which deploys mobile clinics to provide eye exams and glasses to students in need, free of charge.

“It gives the kid a chance to see themselves in a new way,” said Pete Silberman, chief growth officer at Vision To Learn. “They might be able to think, ‘Oh, I’m not behind my peers, I’m not struggling to read, I just needed a pair of glasses.’”

About one in four children need glasses, according to the American Optometric Association. In high poverty areas, that number can be even higher, said Tina Danz, Vision To Learn Delaware program manager. “This is a real need that we can fix instantly, and it has a lifelong impact on these kids.”

Families in underserved communities often face multiple barriers to vision care access, from insufficient healthcare education and awareness to lack of transportation. Vision To Learn bridges the access gap and, thanks to BluePrints funding, increased its operations statewide.

“Highmark funding has been critical in allowing us to continue running the program and reaching more students throughout the state.”

Pete Silberman
Chief Growth Officer
Vision To Learn
Across the U.S., primary care practices are underfunded and under stress. Yet increased spending on primary care is associated with fewer emergency department visits and hospitalizations.

With this in mind, and with BluePrints funding, the Delaware Medical Education Foundation launched the Primary Care Investment Initiative. Simple measures — like hiring care coordinators to ensure patients make follow-up appointments and receive necessary medication — can make a big difference, noted Dr. Brian Levine, chair of the Delaware Medical Education Foundation.

“This grant delivered much needed investments directly to independent primary care practices, providing them with the resources they need to do their jobs.”

Dr. Brian Levine
Chair
Delaware Medical Education Foundation

Through the funding, more than two dozen practices were able to make improvements like increasing access to telehealth, enhancing clinical support or adding services like drug and alcohol counselors.

“Each office has utilized these finances for a different aspect that has been limiting their ability to provide the best primary care services, so this is a win-win — not just for the physician, not just for the community, but for the individual patient as well,” Levine said.
Do Care Doula Foundation, Inc.

**Program:** Central Delaware Community Doula Program

**Grant:** $125,000

Black pregnant people are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than white pregnant people. Multiple factors contribute to this disparity, from variation in accessible health care to structural racism.

Founded in July 2021, Do Care Doula Foundation aims to eliminate such birth disparities in Kent County and beyond. Thanks to BluePrints funding, this emerging organization provided doula support at no cost to members of the Black community, as well as community outreach and education for expectant families.

“I can’t express how much we appreciate Highmark. They have definitely made a difference in us making a difference.”

Erica Allen
Certified Birth Doula and Founder
Do Care Doula Foundation, Inc.

Providing physical, emotional and informational support is key to making a difference, said Erica Allen, Do Care Doula founder. Thanks to Highmark, the organization has steadily increased its number of doulas, with the funding most recently covering the training of more than 20 doulas in January 2023.

“We, as doulas, are a part of the recipe,” Allen said. “It takes everybody coming together to facilitate and make sure people are safe, educated and feel supported when they are having their babies.”

Reducing health disparities in minority communities

**2022 Grantees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Grant Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Heart Association</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delaware Health Equity Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do Care Doula Foundation, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donate Delaware</td>
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<td>Public Allies Delaware</td>
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<td>The Nemours Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>YMCA of Delaware</td>
<td>$700,000</td>
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A stay at overnight camp is an empowering and exciting rite of passage. For campers with Camp Abilities Delaware, who are blind or have low vision, this is especially true.

Coming from across Delaware, campers try a variety of sports, like cross-country running, football, boating and dance. Through such physical activity, as well as learning to take care of themselves away from home, campers develop confidence and improve self-esteem.

“Camp is a culture. It’s something that if you never experienced, you couldn’t realize how excited these kids get and how positive and empowering everyone is while they’re there,” said Shawn Musgrove, a teacher for the visually impaired and board member of the Tether Foundation, which organizes the camp.

The camp requires specialized equipment for adaptive sports to operate, and the ratio of campers to counselors is one to one. BluePrints funding helped cover such costs and assisted Camp Abilities Delaware in introducing an overnight camp, which allowed for more opportunities for participants.
2022 Grants: BluePrints Five Focus Areas of Impact

Total: $9,996,891 million

- **$4,044,415**
  Addressing social determinants of health

- **$1,582,950**
  Increased access to health care for the uninsured and underserved

- **$2,181,850**
  Recruiting and training healthcare professionals

- **$1,639,547**
  Reducing health disparities in minority communities

- **$548,129**
  Supporting early childhood development

Priority area totals reflect primary application designations. Many grants often address more than one priority area.

Questions? Contact BluePrints for the Community representatives:

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