Forging a Healthier Delaware

2023 Annual Report
BluePrints for the Community Grants Program
FRIENDS,

Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware (Highmark Delaware) and the Delaware Community Foundation (DCF) are committed to helping improve the well-being of Delawareans through the BluePrints for the Community grants program, as we have done for the past 16 years. We are pleased to share the impact of the 2023 grants in this annual report.

Since the BluePrints grants program was started in 2007 through the Highmark Delaware Fund at the DCF, we have awarded $39 million in grants to support programs, primarily in five focus areas:

- Advancing equitable access to quality healthcare
- Reducing unemployment, food insecurity and housing instability
- Connecting people to social and community resources that will improve their health and well-being
- Improving neighborhoods and environments to promote health and safety
- Recruiting and training healthcare professionals

In 2023 alone, BluePrints grants totaled nearly $4 million, reflecting Highmark Delaware’s commitment to making a substantial impact.

This report sheds light on the transformative outcomes of the past year of BluePrints grants, showcasing the positive changes unfolding in Delaware’s communities. This work would not be possible without Highmark Delaware’s continued investments and leadership, along with the DCF’s philanthropic and community knowledge. Together, we are committed to improving the quality of life of all Delawareans.

NICK MORIELLO
President
Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware

STUART COMSTOCK-GAY
President & CEO
Delaware Community Foundation
Too often, families with children experiencing homelessness have an unthinkable decision to make – split up to receive services or stay on the streets. Family Promise of Northern New Castle County helps families stay together, regardless of size, make-up or composition.

Since 2020, that mission has become more important, as the number of families with children experiencing homelessness has almost tripled. Family Promise’s expansion project, underway with the aid of Highmark funding, will double shelter capacity and create space for families to connect with local health-related resources and services.

“Once the new shelter is constructed, families will have access to a whole host of new services provided in-house and by outside partners that will empower families to focus more on their health and well-being,” said Tyler Shade, executive director of Family Promise.

The expansion will create space to serve an additional eight families at any given time, and an additional 40 to 50 families sheltered every year. Meeting space and a commercial kitchen will further empower families to address their health needs. Family Promise envisions inviting outside partners to visit for group workshops on topics such as nutrition, exercise, mental health and financial literacy, as well as hosting one-on-one therapy sessions or health consultations.
No family is living in this three-bedroom ranch house near the center of Georgetown. Rather, inside you’ll find an “old-style family doctor” and healthcare providers treating all ages with compassion and care.

“I wasn’t really trying to build up a medical practice per se as much as building up a practice that helped the community,” explained clinic founder Dr. Rama Peri.

The Rosa Health Center’s namesake is Sister Rosa Alvarez, one of three Carmelite sisters who served the people of Sussex County for over 20 years. In that spirit, the nonprofit is focused on serving the uninsured and underinsured in the community, and has grown to serve more than 1,900 patients. They’ve helped children facing painful emergencies, registered community members for free cancer screenings – and even delivered a baby.

In recent years, enlargement of the clinic’s facility – which has only two exam rooms – has become critical.

That expansion will now be a reality, thanks to significant investment from Highmark. An addition to the clinic and updates throughout will help providers expand preventative health and education programs, recruit new physicians, healthcare staff and translators, and welcome more patients through the doors.

“Knowing that Highmark recognized what we do and was willing to support us, that gave us what we needed to know – that, ‘Okay, let’s keep doing this. We can do this.’”

Dr. Rama Peri, MD. PhD
Founder, The Rosa Health Center

The Rosa Health Center

Service Area: Sussex County
Program: Make It Real for Rosa
Grant: $100,000

Advancing Equitable Access to Quality Healthcare

2023 Grantees

$15,000
AltruVision

$20,000
Black Mothers In Power

$44,000
Catholic Charities – Diocese of Wilmington

$25,000
Central Delaware Housing Collaborative

$80,000
ChristianaCare Health Services

$142,700
Community Education Building

$45,400
Delaware Adolescent Program, Inc.

$113,925
Delaware Pharmacists Educational Center, Inc.

$25,000
Down Syndrome Association of Delaware

$25,000
Ingleside Homes, Inc.

$211,365
Jewish Family Services of Delaware

$542,769
Nemours Children's Health Delaware

$100,000
The Rosa Health Center

$50,000
SL24 UnLocke the Light Foundation

$100,000
The Springboard Collaborative

$18,600
St. John’s Community Services

$100,000
Unite for HER

$60,000
Vision To Learn
The Jewish community in Delaware cares, and this support from Highmark will enable us to continue our work with the Dignity Totes program and make a significant impact on the lives of others throughout the year.

Michelle Silberglied
Chairperson
Dignity Grows Delaware Chapter

“The Jewish community in Delaware cares, and this support from Highmark will enable us to continue our work with the Dignity Totes program and make a significant impact on the lives of others throughout the year.”

Jewish Federation of Delaware

**Service Area:** Statewide  
**Program:** Dignity Grows  
**Grant:** $10,000

A big message is packed inside these tote bags from the Jewish Federation of Delaware, the location of the Delaware chapter of Dignity Grows, a national nonprofit addressing period poverty across the U.S.

The Dignity Grows Tote program delivers a full-month supply of hygiene products and period necessities to the people who need them most, in partnership with shelters and organizations. More than a third of Americans who menstruate experience period poverty, according to Dignity Grows, and it can impact employment, education, mental health and personal relationships, among other aspects of life.

Packing the totes is also central to the program, as it helps create a sense of community. Alongside volunteers from the Jewish Federation of Delaware, Michelle Silberglied, chairperson of the Delaware chapter, takes the totes on the road. They’ve packed with volunteers at private schools, law firms, real estate companies and a women’s prison.

The Highmark grant marks a significant milestone, as it will enable the packing and distribution of an estimated 1,000 totes throughout the year.

**Improving Neighborhoods and Environments**

**2023 Grantees**

- $10,000  
  Jewish Federation of Delaware

- $10,000  
  Urban Bike Project of Wilmington
Physician recruitment and retention have always been a challenge in rural spaces like Southern Delaware. Leaders at TidalHealth have a solution: Offer training with state-of-the-art equipment to make rural programs more appealing to build a pipeline of great physicians who will stick around.

Investment from Highmark allowed for incorporation of the da Vinci Surgeon Console, a specialized robotic training system, in the curriculum. It also helped fund renovation of on-call rooms.

The changes support a multi-hospital training program that provides doctors with advanced surgical skills and invests in their well-being.

Additionally, the training teaches doctors the skills needed to perform complex procedures with precision. This is considered particularly beneficial in western Sussex County, where access to specialized surgical care can be limited.

“Highmark’s investment cannot be understated,” said Jessica Hales, president of the TidalHealth Foundation. “Building a pipeline of doctors that integrate into our community, exposing the medical residents to the community’s unique healthcare needs, culture and challenges, can foster a sense of belonging and commitment among residents, making them more inclined to remain in our rural area after completing their training.”
**Endless Possibilities in the Community, Inc. (EPIC)**

**Service Area:** Statewide  
**Program:** EPIC’s Strategic and Sustainable Expansion Plan  
**Grant:** $200,000

Physical fitness is but one aspect of a life well lived, and that’s something those at Endless Possibilities in the Community, Inc. (EPIC) can appreciate.

The organization emerged from the need to provide ongoing support for individuals who had aged out of the school system. With a mission of serving those with intellectual, developmental or physical disabilities, the organization fosters community and belonging through inclusive group exercise. Notably, such programming takes place in integrated settings within the community, such as the Bear-Glasgow YMCA.

“We are truly, really integrated in the community,” said Kat Luebke, executive director of EPIC. “We’re in the fitness center, we’re swimming in the pool, we’re playing basketball, we’re playing hockey. We’re going for a walk on a nice day.”

EPIC saw a clear demand for its services: The Division of Developmental Disabilities Services recognizes it as one of the fastest-growing organizations within its provider network. However, bringing these services to more individuals would not have been possible without funding from Highmark.

The grant will assist in covering the upfront cost of expansion throughout Delaware, such as an additional location at the Dover YMCA, as well as investing in staff and creating multiple full-time positions.

“This was kind of a mom-and-pop-organization, and for EPIC to really succeed, it needed to become a solid business. The funds from Highmark are being used to expand services while maintaining quality services from qualified staff who feel like they’re supported.”

Kathryn Luebke  
Executive Director  
EPIC Delaware

**Connecting People to Social and Community Resources**

**2023 Grantees**

- **Grants:** $16,750
  - The Challenge Program
- **Grants:** $100,000
  - Easterseals Delaware & Maryland’s Eastern Shore, Inc.
- **Grants:** $200,000
  - Endless Possibilities in the Community, Inc.
- **Grants:** $65,000
  - First State Squash
- **Grants:** $10,000
  - Girls on the Run Delaware
- **Grants:** $50,000
  - Lori’s Hands, Inc.
- **Grants:** $61,000
  - Make-A-Wish Philadelphia, Delaware & Susquehanna Valley
- **Grants:** $10,000
  - Strive: How You Lead Matters
BluePrints Five Focus Areas of Impact

2023 Grants

Total: $3.7 million

- $460,000 Reducing Unemployment, Food Insecurity and Housing Instability
- $1,159,461 Recruiting and Training Healthcare Professionals
- $1,639,759 Advancing Equitable Access to Quality Healthcare
- $20,000 Improving Neighborhoods and Environments
- $512,750 Connecting People to Social and Community Resources

Questions? Contact BluePrints for the Community representatives:

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Priority area totals reflect primary application designations. Many grants often address more than one priority area.
BluePrints for the Community Advisory Council

Theodore “Ted” Becker
Zaida Guajardo
Richard Heffron
Rita Landgraf
Kim Markiewicz
Vita Pickrum

Hon. Gregory Sleet
Janice Tildon-Burton, M.D.
Fred A. Townsend, Esq.
Terry Wiley
Bill Willis, Jr.

This annual report is dedicated to the memory of David Roselle, a founding member of the BluePrints for the Community Advisory Council, whose tremendous contributions to our community serve as an example for us all.