

Community Giving  
FOUNDATION™

A 2024 STORYBOOK OF  
**COMMUNITY**  
*Giving*

## A PARTNERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE ♥

2024 marked a milestone year as the Community Giving Foundation celebrated 25 years of philanthropy and impact. Through the many celebrations and moments of connection with each of you across the region this year, the Foundation has felt the incredible generosity of our community. Thanks to the philanthropic spirit and vision of hundreds of individuals, families, and organizations, the Foundation continues to invest over \$3.5 million annually in grants and scholarships right here in the Central Susquehanna region, addressing critical and emerging needs. This significant impact is only possible because of people like you!

Over the course of our anniversary celebration, the Foundation has highlighted “25 stories for 25 years”. These community giving stories have reflected the diverse partners that make our work possible—family legacies with local roots, teen leaders catalyzing a community, nonprofits focused on future sustainability, scholarships offering new opportunities for students, and so many more.

This book includes the last five stories in our anniversary campaign. Like the stories above, these reflect the heart of our Foundation, found in the passions and dedication of our donors and stakeholders. The Community Giving Foundation continues to grow because of our collective commitment to local philanthropy—

**FOR GOOD. FOR EVER. ♥**



♥ **GROWING OUR**  
*Community Giving Legacy*

To view all the stories from the 25th anniversary campaign, visit [\*csgiving.org/25-years\*](https://csgiving.org/25-years).











## FAMILY FUND CONTINUES MULTI-GENERATIONAL LEGACY OF GIVING

A family of multi-generational business owners, the Bowers and Gibsons have exemplified a longstanding commitment to community. Many family members were born and raised in Selinsgrove, and the people and programs that help support this area are close to their hearts. Family patriarch James Bower Sr. was known for his kind and generous spirit. After his passing last year, the family came together to establish a fund in honor of James and their family's community giving legacy.

**"We have been blessed to witness past generations generously give to their community and have been inspired by the Bower and Gibson families to continue the tradition,"** reflects Nicole (Bower) Henry, James Bower Sr.'s granddaughter. **"We view this family fund as a way to continue the legacy of compassion, generosity, and community spirit, ensuring a brighter future for all residents of our beloved region."**

Being able to impact others as a family has been a truly rewarding experience for the Bowers and Gibsons. They know strategic investments through their fund will be part of sustaining the organizations and programs that foster a positive and thriving community.

**"Our time, donations, and advocacy are all valuable ways to give back and help enrich our community. Community giving to our family is the act of coming together in these ways to better the world we live in,"** explains Nicole.

Partnering with the Community Giving Foundation, the **Bower-Gibson Family Legacy Fund** is dedicated primarily to supporting initiatives in the Selinsgrove area that enhance the lives of children and families, promote disability awareness and inclusion, and contribute to a vibrant and connected community.

The Foundation is honored to work alongside families like the Bower-Gibsons to inspire a tradition of giving that spans generations. Through funds like this, the Foundation helps families experience the impact of community giving and teach future generations about the power of collective philanthropy. **"We value the opportunity to help families achieve their goals and advance their legacy of giving,"** shares Alyssa Meyers-Sanonu, Director of Philanthropy. **"It's a privilege to see families come together to create lasting gifts that will benefit their community for years to come."**

## FROM STUDENTS LEADERS TO COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPISTS

If there is one Foundation program recognized and celebrated across the region for its meaningful impact, it's **Youth in Philanthropy**. This fall marked the 21st kick-off of the program, which has experienced tremendous growth over its remarkable history. Through a hands-on approach to giving and grantmaking, Youth in Philanthropy empowers high school students across the region to develop leadership skills as they work together to create visible impact in their schools and communities. During the year, students learn about the meaning of “philanthropy”, the nonprofit structure, and the important role volunteerism plays in helping communities thrive. They survey their peers in each school district to build local needs assessments, and then organize their own grant round to support youth programs in their schools and communities.

In 2003, Youth in Philanthropy began with just one group of Berwick students. Over the program's history, 650 grants totaling \$686,000 have been awarded back into the region through student-led giving. In 2024, a record 18 school districts and 250+ high schoolers will work together to award \$90,000 in local grants. The program is excited to welcome new groups from the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, Milton Area School District, and Shamokin Area School District for the first time.

After their first session, Shamokin students shared what they are looking forward to learning: **“Youth in Philanthropy is teaching us how to give back to people who need it, making a difference in their lives and in our community. We're excited to learn different skills to think outside the box and use our time, talent, treasure, and ties to create a big impact.”**

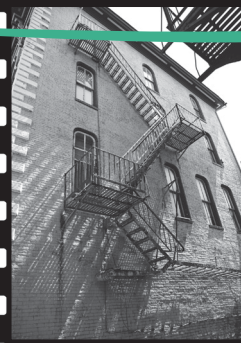
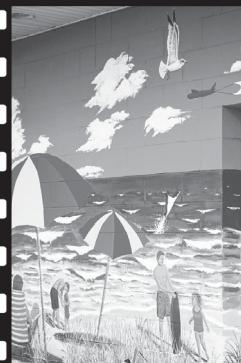
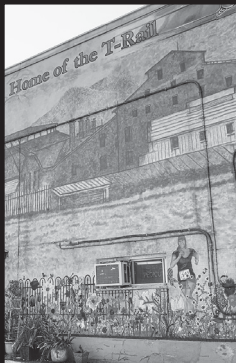
Youth in Philanthropy is funded through charitable donations by individuals, families, and businesses who recognize the important role of philanthropy in the community and the need to instill a giving spirit in local youth. The Foundation was honored to receive the 2024 Young Philanthropist Award from Wellspring Evangelical Community Hospital in recognition of the program's impact on building strong student leaders and future community philanthropists.

**“Youth in Philanthropy, at its core, is about community engagement—as students invest in the communities around them, they begin to foster a loyalty to the area and a passion for giving back. We believe that the impact of this program is a legacy of community philanthropists, ensuring a brighter future for our region. The Foundation is grateful to all of our partners who continue to help this program grow,”** writes Kara G. Seesholtz, Foundation President and CEO.











## TRUCKING SCHOLARSHIP REMEMBERS FAMILY PATRIARCH'S HARD-WORK MINDSET

Stanley Gum was born to parents of very humble means. After the death of his father, Stanley left high school to help financially support the family. At just 17, he began working on the dock of Fullmer Trucking in Danville and started driving trucks the following year. Stanley had a dedicated and successful trucking career spanning forty years. He retired from North Penn Transfer in 1991, and spent the next 29 years with family and restoring his antique tractor collection.

Joel Gum remembers the commitment and hard work his father displayed throughout his career: **"If we think back to our parents and their friends and neighbors, we see a lot of hard-working people that provided essential services to our community. Our father represents many people from his generation who worked tirelessly to support their families. These people are truly the backbone of our communities."**

Stanley's job as a truck driver allowed him to proudly provide for his family and retire at a reasonably young age. Although he was not able to finish high school or pursue higher education, he strongly encouraged it for his children and others. His commitment to this was evident as his children graduated from college debt-free due to his many hours of overtime and hard work. After Stanley's passing in 2021, the Gum family felt that creating a trucking scholarship with the Foundation was the perfect way to honor his legacy in the field, especially in a time where truck drivers are desperately needed.

**"Over the last several years, we have heard more and more about the truck driver shortage across the country. Our family believes there is an opportunity for students who are not interested in pursuing a degree program to make a good and honest living by entering this career field, just as our father did. If we can help supply locally owned and operated trucking companies with qualified employees through this scholarship, we will see the benefits returned to our local communities,"** explains Joel.

The **Stanley B. Gum Memorial Trucking Scholarship Fund** awarded its first scholarship in 2024 to Grant Allbeck, a senior at Central Columbia High School. The award has created a life-changing opportunity for Grant's future.

**"It is truly a privilege to be selected for this award. Thanks to the Gum family's generosity, I am now able to pursue my commercial driver's license, which would probably not have happened without the scholarship. Once I graduate from the five-week course at Professional Drivers Academy, I plan to use my CDL in the agricultural side of trucking. This opportunity has made an impact on my life, just as I have heard Stanley Gum impacted many people during his life."**

## KEEPING THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY ALIVE AND THRIVING

Although Patricia A. McDowell has lived in the Lancaster area for nearly a decade, Bloomsburg holds a special place in her heart. Much of her past community service and advocacy took place right here in Columbia County, and her strong commitment to keeping the community an engaging and thriving place for families continues to this day.

**“Some things in Bloomsburg have changed since I lived there. But you still want to go back and remember what your children and family did there and the fun they had. Keeping the spirit of community alive and thriving is important,”** reflects Patricia.

In 2008, Patricia partnered with the Community Giving Foundation to create a meaningful way to give back in perpetuity. She established two funds, the **Patricia A. McDowell Donor Advised Fund** and the **Patricia A. McDowell Field of Interest Fund**, to benefit children and youth in Columbia County and other local programs close to her heart.

**“Thanks to the generous grant we received from the Patricia A. McDowell Donor Advised Fund, the YMCA is able to engage even more kids and families in our programs. It is incredibly important that we offer financial support to the communities we serve in order to fulfill our mission of making the YMCA available to all. The YMCA would not be able to offer membership and program scholarships or childcare financial assistant programs without donors like Patricia,”** writes Wayne Stump, Bloomsburg Area YMCA, a 2024 grant recipient.

Seth Joseph, with past grant recipient Camp Victory, reflects on Patricia’s support: **“As a recipient of grant funding from the Patricia A. McDowell Donor Advised Fund, Camp Victory can better serve the needs of our special campers. We are grateful for the support from generous donors like Patricia, helping us create a fun and memorable experience for children, families, and individuals facing a variety of medical and life challenges.”**

As Patricia has continued to give and grow her funds, more organizations are benefiting from her thoughtful generosity. Since their establishment 15 years ago, Patricia’s funds have awarded a combined 84 grants and over \$350,000 to support Columbia County growth and vitality. Patricia’s community giving legacy in our community is certainly one to celebrate.





## CONNECTING NONPROFIT NEEDS WITH DONOR PASSIONS ♥

Serving in multiple roles—community leader, connector, donor service provider, grantmaker—community foundations offer great value as a partner in philanthropy. This model puts community foundations in a unique position to connect the critical needs of nonprofits with the passions of donors who display an ongoing commitment to community development and growth. Money stays local, helping individuals, families, and businesses invest in the causes they care most about to create meaningful and permanent impact.

The collective work of the Community Giving Foundation's staff of seven brings this model to life in 5 ½ counties across the Susquehanna Valley. With a commitment to personalized service and stewardship, Foundation staff work together to achieve the community's charitable goals and multiply the impact of local nonprofits who make our region a thriving and beautiful place to live.

Staff reflected on the Foundation's values and "superpowers" as they considered the impact of each of their roles to meet the Foundation's mission in local communities.



"I'm inspired daily by the Community Giving Foundation's core strengths—especially the **trust** we've built, the **integrity** we uphold, and the **knowledgeable, engaged team** that keeps us closely connected to our community's needs. Leading with these values in mind empowers us all to foster relationships across our region, helping advance our mission with purpose and care. Together, we're creating lasting impact in the communities we serve."

(Kara G. Seesholtz, President and CEO)

"I focus on **helping others** by providing **personalized support** to grant and scholarship applicants, ensuring they understand the resources available to them. By customizing my support to address individual needs, I empower recipients to reach their goals, reinforcing our shared mission of promoting access and opportunity in the community. Through **collaboration** and empathy, I contribute to the Foundation's commitment to making a meaningful impact in the lives of those we serve."

(Karri Harter, Grant and Scholarship Administrator)



**“Stewarding donor contributions and Foundation resources is important to my role—by properly accounting and investing funds, we ensure the Foundation can benefit future generations of grantees in perpetuity.”**

(Al Meale, Chief Financial Officer)

**“My role of maintaining strong relationships and effective communication with our board members and partners embody the Foundation values of integrity and collaboration. By focusing on these important daily details and smooth workflows, our stakeholders and Foundation team are empowered to support our mission and amplify our impact in the community.”** (Kim Groshek, Administrative Assistant)

**“At the Foundation, education is central to my role and personalization enhances its impact. Whether I’m helping a donor establish a fund or guiding students in the Youth in Philanthropy program, I tailor each experience to meet individual goals and needs. It’s rewarding to see donors understand how their specific contributions will make a lasting difference, and to help young people realize their unique potential as future leaders. By combining education with personalized guidance, I contribute to our mission of building a stronger, more engaged community.”**

(Alyssa Meyers-Sanonu, Director of Philanthropy)

**“Building strong relationships with our nonprofit partners through communication and site visits reflects our care and stewardship of the community’s charitable resources. By working closely with these organizations and carefully tracking the impact of our grants, my role helps ensure the Foundation is in touch with community needs and maximizing our support for positive change across our region.”** (Becky Stugart, Impact Coordinator)

**“I believe storytelling is a call to community. Telling the stories of our donors, nonprofits, and local partners requires trust in the Foundation’s work and the connections that bring us together to ignite change and cultivate growth. It’s an honor to put into words and images the unique passions and generous spirits that make up our community—a collection of stories that define our Community Giving Foundation both now and for generations to come.”**

(Katie Simpson, Director of Communications)







Like each of the stories in this book and our 25th anniversary campaign, you have your own unique giving story, motivated by your passions and connections in the community. As we look to the next 25 years of the Community Giving Foundation and beyond, you are the inspiration for our work. Together, we turn your ideas into action, and your investments into a giving legacy that will strengthen our region for generations.

## YOU CAN PARTNER WITH US TO MAKE AN IMPACT RIGHT HERE IN YOUR *community*!

### 1. GIVE TO AN EXISTING FUND

*The Foundation manages over 365 charitable funds, each with a unique purpose. With many different types of funds benefiting both regional and specific communities throughout the Central Susquehanna Region, your gift will work together with others to create visible community impact.*



*To view a full list of Foundation funds and make an online donation, scan the QR code or visit [csgiving.org](https://csgiving.org) and click Donate. Donations can also be mailed, payable to Community Giving Foundation (memo: fund name), to 725 West Front Street, Berwick PA 18603.*

### 2. CREATE YOUR OWN FUND

*You can establish a permanent legacy in your community that supports the causes and values most important to you. Creating a new fund does not require a large income—there are flexible options to choose what works for you.*



*The Foundation's Giving Workbook is a simple tool to help you get started. Scan the QR code or visit [csgiving.org/giving-workbook](https://csgiving.org/giving-workbook) to learn more.*

Together, we can achieve bigger and better things to help our communities thrive. Are you ready to join our *community giving story*?

♥ Contact the Foundation to begin: [csgiving.org](https://csgiving.org) or 570.752.3930





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