



Working together
to improve the
well-being of
Delawareans

Featured: Special Olympics Delaware

FRIENDS,

At Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware (Highmark Delaware) and the Delaware Community Foundation (DCF), we are dedicated to enhancing the well-being of Delawareans through the BluePrints for the Community grants program. We are excited to share the impact of our 2024 grants in this annual report.

Since the BluePrints grants program launched in 2007 through the Highmark Delaware Fund at the DCF, we have awarded over \$40 million in grants to support initiatives across five key areas:

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

In 2024, BluePrints awarded \$1 million in grants, reinforcing Highmark Delaware's commitment to driving meaningful change across the state.

This report highlights the transformative outcomes of this year's BluePrints grants, reflecting a steadfast commitment to statewide impact. In particular, we are proud to feature the initiatives of Maurice Pritchett Academy/Christina School District, Special Olympics Delaware, Meet Me at the Well Foundation, and La Red Health Center, whose programs drive substantial changes in community health.

This work would not be possible without Highmark Delaware's continued investment and leadership, alongside the DCF's philanthropic expertise and deep community connections. Together, we remain dedicated to improving the quality of life for all Delawareans.



RITA LANDGRAF

Chair
Blueprints for the Community



STUART COMSTOCK-GAY

President & CEO
Delaware Community Foundation

Newark

- **\$1,800**
Christ the Teacher
Catholic School
- **\$18,300**
Make-A-Wish
Philadelphia, Delaware
& Susquehanna Valley

Wilmington

- **\$10,000**
A Better Chance for
Our Children, Inc.
- **\$40,000**
AIDS Delaware
- **\$250,000**
ChristianaCare
Health System
- **\$35,000**
City of
Wilmington
- **\$7,200**
First Tee
Delaware
- **\$50,000**
Limen
House, Inc.
- **\$22,700**
Local Journalism
Initiative
- **\$40,000**
Maurice Pritchett
Academy
Christina School District
- **\$130,000**
Meet Me at the
Well Foundation
- **\$10,000**
Roofs from
the Heart
- **\$45,000**
United Way
of Delaware
- **\$45,000**
Wilmington
Alliance

Statewide

- **\$25,000**
Camp Sunshine at
Sebago Lake, Inc.
- **\$50,000**
Special Olympics
Delaware

Georgetown

- **\$200,000**
La Red Health Center

Sussex

- **\$20,000**
Green Beret
Project

- Healthcare Access
- Social and Community Context
- Neighborhood and Built Environment
- Economic Stability for Families and Individuals
- Health Workforce



La Red Health Center

Service Area: Sussex County

Program: Rural Re-entry Program

Grant: \$200,000

"The weeks right after someone is released from incarceration are the deadliest when it comes to opioid overdoses. Ensuring access to Narcan through Rural Re-entry during this vulnerable time saves lives."

Rachel Hersh, CEO of La Red Health Center



Photos courtesy of La Red Health Center

La Red Health Center is a patient-centered medical home that provides a network of care to diverse community members. The Rural Re-entry program at La Red Health Center supports individuals transitioning out of carceral systems and into the Sussex County community. It focuses on increased re-enrollment Medicaid or marketplace insurance, healthcare support and access for those with behavioral health and substance use disorder conditions, Narcan access and STI/HIV testing for those most at risk.

"La Red is a trusted resource for people who may feel uncomfortable seeking traditional healthcare," said Hersh. "Individuals transitioning from incarceration can often feel judged or anxious."

Launched in December 2024, Rural Re-entry through La Red partners with VitalCore Health Strategies at Sussex Correctional Institution (SCI) to directly refer transitioning individuals to care. This important partnership facilitates a seamless "warm handoff," enhancing patient safety and continuity of care by equipping receiving providers with comprehensive, up-to-date information for effective treatment.

"The Sussex County Probation & Parole office has been essential in connecting La Red to VitalCore and individuals who would benefit from a medical home upon release," said Hersh. "We are deeply grateful for their expertise and support in building relationships that will benefit the entire Sussex County community."



Rural Re-entry has already received 60 referrals and aims to support at least 200 individuals leaving the prison system in Sussex County with substance use disorder and behavioral health concerns. The program plans to test at least 100 individuals for HIV and STIs, connecting them to appropriate treatment, and provide Narcan to 150 individuals at risk of relapse.

Maurice Pritchett Academy and the Bayard School

(Christina School District)

Service Area: New Castle County

Program: Allegheny Health Network Chill Project/Space

Grant: \$40,000

"We intend to develop the Chill Rooms™ as a go-to space for students to learn coping strategies and share what they're feeling with a trusted adult."

Dr. Laura Burgos, Executive Director of the Wilmington Learning Collaborative



Photos courtesy of Maurice Pritchett Academy

The Christina School District opened the Chill Room™ in two Wilmington, Del., schools. The schools, about two miles apart, together serve a diverse population of 1,000 children in grades 1-8. Licensed through the Allegheny Health Network (AHN) Chill Project and Nemours Children's Health, the rooms provide space for school therapy appointments, evidence-based coping skill instruction, and short workshops.

"Instead of sitting with their head down or walking out of class, students can go to the Chill Room™," said Burgos. "They can engage in breathing exercises in a place that's going to cater to them and make them feel safe."

The Chill Rooms™ provide daily opportunities for students to pause and practice emotional regulation for five to fifteen minutes. Students engage in structured sessions that guide them through breathing exercises, grounding techniques, and other evidence-based practices proven to lower stress and increase focus. Beyond daily use, students can also participate in monthly "Fundamentals" lessons—30-minute sessions that teach essential social-emotional skills like naming emotions and developing healthy coping mechanisms.

For students in need of more intensive support, the AHN Chill Project Chill Rooms™ offer school-based therapy, with weekly appointments tailored to each student's needs. Over time, these students are expected to show decreased symptoms of anxiety and hyperactivity, as well as increased emotional engagement and focus.



Meet Me at the Well Foundation

Service Area: New Castle County

Program: Engage to Heal

Grant: \$130,000

"Engage to Heal creates highly specialized presentations for everyone in Delaware, from school nurses to women's shelters. Education is the key to reducing the number of victims and increasing support for human trafficking survivors."

Jennifer Cooper, Meet Me at the Well board member and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, Forensic Coordinator with Nemours



Photo courtesy of Meet Me at the Well Foundation

Meet Me at the Well is a faith-based organization that serves victims of human trafficking. While Delaware remains among the top 10 states for trafficking, Engage to Heal from Meet Me at the Well trains healthcare and service providers to identify at-risk individuals and connect survivors to care.

"The biggest challenge is getting community members to acknowledge that this goes on in our state," said Cooper. "Part of the problem is that human trafficking is severely underreported everywhere. Our job is to give folks the numbers and facts."

In Delaware, fewer than 10% of the 5,000 individuals who report experiencing trafficking receive appropriate care. Engage to Heal equips caseworkers, licensed mental health providers, and healthcare professionals with evidence-based training in complex trauma and human trafficking. They also work with doctors, nurses, medical social workers, and others in the medical field to identify and respond to trafficking indicators. By training 400 healthcare providers and 200 service providers annually, the program aims to strengthen support networks and increase survivor referrals to services by 30%.

"We're just scratching the surface on the scope of human trafficking in Delaware," said Cooper. "Survivors come from all communities. They're our neighbors."



Stock image

Special Olympics Delaware

Service Area: New Castle County

Program: Healthy Athletes Program

Grant: \$50,000

"We know that individuals with intellectual disabilities are two times more likely to suffer a heart attack and die before the age of 50. Healthy Athletes helps us reduce those disparities and keep our athletes as healthy as possible for as long as possible."

David Halley, President and CEO of Special Olympics Delaware



Photos courtesy of Special Olympics Delaware

The Healthy Athletes Program began as general health screenings for athletes with intellectual disabilities during the Special Olympics Delaware Summer Games. It has since expanded to provide free screenings, education and referrals for dental care, vision care, audiology, physical therapy, and nutrition and wellness.

The program strives to improve the health and well-being of Special Olympics Delaware athletes by identifying and addressing untreated health conditions, encouraging healthy habits, and reducing health disparities. Athletes receive on-the-spot fittings for glasses and hearing aids, along with referrals for minor procedures such as cavity fillings.

"We once screened a low-verbal athlete from the track team and discovered he was nearly blind, something even his family didn't know," said Halley. "He could only see an arm's length in front of him. After getting glasses and running goggles, he started winning races by a wide margin. Turns out he'd been running just close enough to follow the next athlete he could see!"

In addition to screening athletes, the program promotes best practices and creates a model for other organizations and communities to follow. This example is leading to more widespread improvements in healthcare access and quality for individuals with intellectual disabilities.





BluePrints for the Community Advisory Council

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This annual report is dedicated our wonderful friend and colleague Ted Becker, who was a founding member of the BluePrints for the Community Advisory Council.