



Charity Datebook

2023

Celebrating local philanthropy: the people, the organizations, the causes and the many months of fundraising events in Chester County & beyond.

In partnership with Chester County Community Foundation

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From the Guest Editors



Winnie Moran Sebastian and Karen Simmons



CCCf Annual Meeting



COUNTY LINES
MAGAZINE

The Chester County Community Foundation is thrilled to partner with *County Lines Magazine* to showcase philanthropy in our Fifth Annual Charity Datebook.

Last year we highlighted arts, culture and heritage nonprofits that enrich, entertain and illuminate the community. The year before, we focused on health and human service nonprofits providing essential support throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year we highlight some incredible women leaders in Chester County and the nonprofits they care deeply about. These profiles showcase the impact individuals can have when they devote themselves to community service, social advocacy and charitable giving.

In this Datebook you'll find charity event listings and community leadership profiles. We are confident that you will be inspired as you read about women in our region who have combined successful professional careers with abundant volunteerism at the highest levels. They are our friends and neighbors, our educators, our financial advisors, our counselors, our spiritual leaders and our civic leaders. And they are also community-minded, charitably-inclined social change agents who intentionally and deliberately lead lives of commitment, giving time, talent and treasure to improve our world.

There are innumerable causes that need your time and energy. Something for everyone. If you are looking to get more involved in your community, please *do*.

We invite you to contact us to learn more about volunteer opportunities, committee service, board leadership, ways to donate and means to build a legacy to fulfill your charitable intentions. We have expertise in emerging community issues, and we have connections to local, regional and national charities.

We are here to connect you to causes that matter.

For good. Forever.

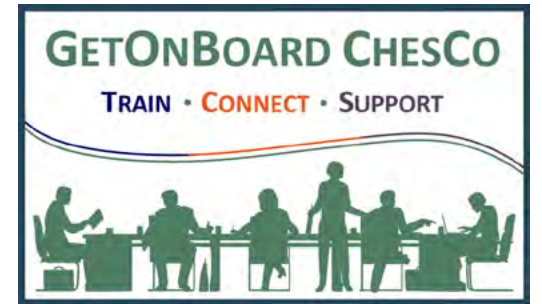
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Chester County Community Foundation
www.ChesCoCF.org

Get On Board Chester County

Chester County Community Foundation



CHESTER COUNTY IS HOME TO OVER 500 NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS trying their best to make our region an even better place to live, work and enjoy. Each nonprofit has a Board of Directors of 10 to 20 people, plus several committees and task forces. This means that at any given moment, Chester County needs 40,000 vibrant leaders volunteering for committee and board service. This includes *you*.

But for many people, board service is an enigma. How do I find the right nonprofit? What are the requirements to serve on a nonprofit board? How much time does it take? How much money? What makes for a good board member? Will my ideas and experience be useful? What if I don't fit in?

To address these types of concerns, this year, the Chester County Community Foundation initiated GetOnBoard ChesCo.

GetOnBoard strengthens nonprofits by preparing emerging board members for leadership service and by increasing overall diversity. There are two key premises of GetOnBoard:

#1: Start by serving on a committee, to get a sense of the nonprofit's core values and priorities, and

#2: Get a coach, to understand the nuances and complexity more quickly, thus expediting the learning curve.

GetOnBoard provides self-paced, online training, monthly Zoom workshops and roundtables, and coaches. The aim is to help emerging community volunteers get equipped for nonprofit committee and board service, connect with nonprofits that are right for them, and be supported the whole way.

Research in all fields — biological, health, social — has time and time again proven the point that diversity strengthens the entire system. Nonprofits, too, are stronger when their leadership is diverse.

Diversity comes in many forms. Many boards do a good job including people of diverse professions and expertise. But as soon as we look deeper, it gets difficult. Too many boards have people of the same age range, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual preference and ability. Having a more diverse network leads to fresh ideas, broader perspectives, better solutions and responsible innovations.

All of the women featured in this Charity Datebook donate their time, talent and treasure to charitable causes. Serving as board leaders, they courageously address societal challenges facing our community. Many times, it is against the odds: women are still largely underrepresented in nonprofit leadership.

All are urged to GetOnBoard. Now is the time to make our world even better.

For more information go to ChesCoCF.org/GetOnBoard; 610-696-8211.



Photos: Community members at GetOnBoard gatherings

Christine Bendinelli

“There is always an opportunity to give and to learn. Look for those opportunities!”

Christine Parsons Bendinelli is a servant leader. She leads her own life with the belief that everyone can bring something to the table for the collective good.

This attitude inspires her to look for ways to serve others in her community — a message learned in her parents' home. Parents Don and Bette Parsons modeled hard work, generosity and the value of giving back to each of their eight children. The youngest in the family, Christine had the added benefit of watching her brothers and sisters build lives doing just that.

With a career that's included roles as a special education and elementary education teacher, human resource manager, and director in her family business (CTDI, a technology company), Christine is also, and most importantly, the mother of three children.

Christine has also served Chester County Hospital in a variety of ways over the years, initially becoming involved with the May Festival Gala and most recently having enjoyed her time as a “cuddler” in the NICU. For the past 19 years, she's provided ongoing leadership to the SHiNE program, which assists patients who are living with cancer and are treated at the Abramson Cancer Center at Chester County Hospital.

Currently, Christine serves as Chair of the Chester County Hospital Foundation Board.

She credits the positive impact of the board to the wealth of diverse experience and talent of her fellow board members. These talents are paired with a strong desire and commitment to support the health and wellbeing of the community.

Like each member of her family, Christine has an ongoing commitment to philanthropic action that supports religious, educational and community services, all in the spirit of giving back. “I encourage my children to always do their best by working hard and respecting themselves, their talents and the talents of the people working with them. There is always an opportunity to give and to learn. Look for those opportunities!”



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Debbie Bookman

“I don't want to be popular; I want to be impactful.”



Debbie Bookman ran for office in 2019 for a very simple reason — she wanted to help people.

Raised in Brooklyn, New York by Caribbean-born parents, Debbie grew up loving music, drama and the

arts. Her father never stopped striving for more knowledge and opportunity, setting a lifelong example for her.

At 22, Debbie had her first daughter. Shortly after becoming pregnant with her second daughter, Debbie moved to Pennsylvania to escape from domestic violence. In 2012, at the encouragement of her daughter, Debbie went back to college.

Around that time, Debbie's current husband lost his son to gun violence in Coatesville. Because Debbie could empathize, in part due to her history in a violent home, the couple came together to heal. “We saw the kids in Coatesville and their struggles, and we wanted to give back to them and the City,” Debbie explains.

In 2017, once again at the encouragement of her daughter, Debbie ran for City Council in Coatesville ... and won! She got involved in local politics and eventually pursued the

office of Chester County Prothonotary (the office responsible for recording all civil procedures before the court, such as divorce, custody, liens and naturalizations). She was instated as prothonotary in January 2020.

Debbie recalls feeling defeated after she sought help from the prothonotary during her move to Pennsylvania. Unable to get legal advice there, Debbie left the office with no answers or support and was later physically attacked by her abuser. “I know what it's like not to be able to pay for certain things and make hard decisions. I've been taken to court unable to pay rent. I understand what it's like to feel lost and alone and not know where to turn.”

When Debbie was young, her father once told her, “Learn as if you'll live forever, and live as if you'll die tomorrow.” At that time, Debbie didn't understand his meaning. Now she does.



Chester County Hospital's SHiNE Program

SHiNE is a volunteer organization focused on lessening the burdens and challenges of cancer. For 25 years, SHiNE has raised awareness and funds to support services offered to patients living with cancer. These services include guidance from a nurse navigator, transportation to and from treatments, emotional support through individual counseling and support groups, wig services, acupuncture, massage therapy from the hands of oncology-certified specialists as well as fitness programs.

Community Youth and Women's Alliance

When Debbie moved herself and her children to Pennsylvania to escape domestic violence, she was provided with a home to rent by the Community Youth and Women's Alliance (CYWA), a group dedicated to assisting women and children in the Coatesville community. Debbie is forever indebted to CYWA and has served on their Board of Directors, aiming to pay it forward and be a beacon of hope for others, like CYWA was for her.



Mayor Lillian L. DeBaptiste

“Advocating for cultural diversity, environmental initiatives and social justice”



Lillian's swearing-in ceremony for mayor with her grandchildren, children and husband ('22)

Inspired by her family's commitment to service and advocacy, Lillian DeBaptiste has always strived to positively impact her community. In fact, in 2000 she updated the family and business motto to “Uplifting life through service” to reflect their desired impact on the community.

Lillian moved to West Chester at an early age with her parents, Clifford and the late Inez E. DeBaptiste. After graduating from Henderson High School, she earned a degree from West Chester State College (now West Chester University). Lillian's strong belief in the power of education was instilled in her by her parents, both first-generation college graduates. In 1973, Lillian

joined the family business as a licensed Funeral Director and remains the President and Director of DeBaptiste Funeral Home and Milestone Events in West Chester.

A steadfast community leader and proven businesswoman, Lillian's commitment to justice and equity compelled her to run

for public office. On January 3, 2022, Lillian was sworn in as the first Black woman mayor of West Chester. She continues her family's legacy of public service, following her father, who served two terms as the first Black mayor of West Chester, starting in 1994.

Taking up her father's civic torch, Lillian also works toward environmental justice and social equity, focusing on historically neglected parts of West Chester. As mayor, Lillian has spent her first year advocating for the Borough and helping create and sponsor new initiatives, such as Porchfest, a local music festival.

Through the years, Lillian has been involved with many community

organizations, including serving on the boards of Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center, Chester County Community Foundation, Planned Parenthood and the Charles A. Melton Arts and Education Center. She's also a founding member of the Valley Forge Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, a historically African American sorority.

Lillian's greatest treasure is spending time with her family. She shares five children and four grandchildren with her husband, Thomas D. Lambert Sr. As Lillian says, “My family, friends and community inspire me to continue advocating for cultural diversity, environmental initiatives and racial and social justice.”



Lillian with her grandchildren



Lillian and her father, the Honorable Dr. Clifford E. DeBaptiste

The DeBaptiste Foundation

The DeBaptiste family's philanthropic giving has been cemented by the formation of the DeBaptiste Foundation, administered through the Chester County Community Foundation. Lillian currently co-chairs the Foundation with her father and awards grants to local charities focused on social justice, civic engagement and education.

Laura Gonzalez, Ph.D.

“Walking with Latinas on self-healing journeys”

Over four decades, Doctora Laura has conducted extensive ethnographic research in Guanajuato, Mexico as well as in Mexican immigrant communities in California, Texas and Pennsylvania. She's a passionate advocate for Latinos and is especially gifted in healing and empowering Latinas to feel loved and motivated.

Born in Mexico City, Laura earned her Licenciatura degree in Social Anthropology at one of Mexico's first highly respected private Jesuit universities and later earned master's and Ph.D. degrees in Cultural Anthropology at U.C. Santa Barbara.

In 2008, Dr. Laura relocated to Kennett Square and became a research associate at the Mid-Atlantic Research & Training Institute, a well-regarded consortium of academic and professional experts. A highly regarded expert on Mexican migration and its impact on families, societies, economies, culture and politics, she's presented her work in the U.S. and internationally.

One of Dr. Laura's research articles focusing on the Guanajuatense Community in Mexico has been used worldwide to document the social networks that Mexicans build and maintain, and the role of women in international networks, enclaves and organizations.

Dr. Laura is an active community volunteer leader. She was an advisor to the new Council of the Institute for Mexicans Living Abroad and helped create the Red de Mujeres Mexicanas en el Exterior, a network promoting the wellbeing of Mexican women in the U.S. Dr. Laura joined LCH Health & Community Services in Kennett Square and was appointed to the Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs for Kennett. Dedicated to helping seniors, she's volunteered with Friends Home in Kennett and the Kennett Area Senior Center, and is active in the Soul Sisters book club and Kennett Community Intergenerational Coffee Klatch. A lover of nature, she lends her energies to Anson B. Nixon Park and Longwood Gardens.



In 2015 Dr. Laura felt the need for another career: bicultural holistic health coach. Attentive to physical and mental health, with mindfulness, positive energy and nutrition at the core, Dr. Laura walks with Latinas on their self-healing journeys, helping achieve a growth mindset, overcome toxic beliefs and experience a happier, healthier world.

Casa Guanajuato de Kennett Square

Dr. Laura has long been involved with Casa Guanajuato, helping nurture its programs, services and people. Casa Guanajuato promotes and conserves Mexican art, culture, customs and traditions, fostering personal and community development. Its events center on the arts as connective tissue that bridges cultures and breaks down barriers.



The Reverend Dr. Richelle Foreman Gunter

"Promoting healing and recovery"

The Reverend Dr. Richelle Foreman Gunter has impacted her community in numerous ways as a minister, consultant, presenter, trainer, author and active volunteer. She embodies the spirit of a community that bands together to support and uplift one another.

Richelle earned degrees from Temple University in Secondary Education and Teaching, from Rutgers University in Clinical Psychology (a master's degree), and from Lancaster Theological Seminary (a Doctor of Ministry). An ordained minister and an ordained missionary, Richelle has decades of experience dating from the 1990s working as a faith-based leader. She is currently an Associate Minister at St. Paul's Baptist Church in West Chester, the area's oldest Baptist Church of African American heritage. She also has 25 years of experience in community

mental health working with children, families and adults with serious mental illness.

Creating trauma-informed environments that promote healing and recovery is a particular passion of Richelle's. Her seminary thesis explored the connections between racism, racialized trauma and faith. "I studied the racial trauma caused by 250 years of slavery and its intergenerational influence among members of the Black community, while also following their journeys of faith," explains Richelle. Her academic interest in this topic complements her many years of advocacy work surrounding racial justice and community healing.

Richelle is largely motivated by her faith and desire to spread goodwill in the community, and she understands the need to engage younger generations. To that end, during the



2022 election season, she worked with African American congregations across Chester County in voter registration activities. And on election day, she transported West Chester University students to voting centers, ensuring their voices would be heard. These projects were run through the West Chester branch of the NAACP, in which Richelle is involved, and St. Paul's Baptist Church.

Sheriff Fredda Maddox

"Breaking barriers in law enforcement"



In 2020, Sheriff Fredda Maddox became the first African American woman elected and sworn in as Chester County Sheriff. As a law enforcement veteran and attorney specializing in domestic violence and family law, Fredda has a lifelong record of serving the community, advocating for people and protecting rights.

Before becoming Sheriff, Fredda was the first African American woman to serve as a Pennsylvania State Trooper in Chester County. She was also a Narcotics Agent for the Pennsylvania Bureau of Narcotics and a federal Special Agent in the Bureau of Criminal Investigations. She earned a Master of Criminal Justice degree from West Chester University and completed training at the Pennsylvania State Police Academy and FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia.

While working full time in law enforcement, Fredda earned a law degree from Widener University School of Law and practiced law for 20 years, representing survivors of domestic violence and child abuse. For more than a decade, she served as a court-appointed guardian ad litem, representing the interests of children.

Fredda has worked with the Domestic Violence Center of Chester County as an attorney, helping to protect abused women and children.

She's spoken at countless programs about human trafficking, senior fraud prevention, safety and protection, and inclusion in policing.

Fredda is committed to making a difference in her community, starting with the Sheriff's Office. Fulfilling her campaign promise of working to restore trust between law enforcement and culturally diverse groups, Fredda began a bridge-building program working with officers and Black teens that led to the groups participating in de-escalation training together. She also initiated a scholarship for Municipal Police Academy/PA Act 120 certification to help diversify Chester County's law enforcement. Fredda is also a supporter of SeniorLAW Center, West Chester Cooperative and Centre County Child Access Center.

Having spent her life breaking barriers in law enforcement, Fredda is an inspiration, mentor and advocate for future generations, particularly young girls of color.



1st Row (L to R): June McLaughlin, Gizelle Jones, Alice Hammond, Renee Washington, Denise Ray. 2nd Row (L to R): Andi Hubbard, Malcolm Johnstone, Sandy Schaal, Khalid Smith, James Jennings, Richelle Foreman Gunter

NAACP, West Chester Branch

As the largest and preeminent civil rights organization in the nation, the NAACP has a mission to ensure a society in which all individuals have equal political, educational, social and economic rights without discrimination based on race. Richelle currently serves as Chair of the Political Action and Religious Affairs Committees of the West Chester branch of the NAACP. She's grateful to all the community members who have joined in and supported the efforts of social justice and promotion of healing and recovery in Chester County.

Domestic Violence Center of Chester County

The mission of the Domestic Violence Center of Chester County (DVCCC) is to reduce, remedy and prevent domestic violence in the County. Fredda's prior experience working with DVCCC as an attorney set her on the path towards advocating for domestic violence and human trafficking survivors in her current role as sheriff. The Chester County Sheriff's Office frequently partners with DVCCC to raise donations and spread awareness.



DVCCC Staff and Board, Light the Night for Hope and Healing

Bronwyn L. Martin

Ph.D., MBA, ChFC, CLU, CRPC, CLTC, CFS, CMFC, LACP, AEP

“Successful people get things done; others find excuses.”



Passionate about the power of positive thinking, Bronwyn embraces challenges, persists despite obstacles, learns from criticism and is inspired by the success of others. She is CEO and Financial Advisor with Martin's Financial Consulting Group, an advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services. “What gets me out of bed

every morning is helping people be financially successful, independent and self-reliant.”

Bronwyn's parents coached her to pursue her best: “My dad was my mentor and role model. He started his own business and taught me that to be successful, surround yourself with other leaders.” The path to her success has not been easy, she admits. “There are a lot of hurdles — personally and professionally — and tough decisions.”

One of Bronwyn's tough decisions: earning a doctorate in biochemistry. “At times, I was overwhelmed and asked myself, ‘Why am I doing this?’ But I answered, ‘Stay focused. Achieve the goal!’” Bronwyn achieved her goal and went on to do post-doctoral research work at Harvard Medical School and then the National Institutes of Health.

By 1998, yearning for a change, Dr. Martin earned her MBA at West Chester University and began a

career in financial services, where only around 15% of the professionals are women. “Sometimes I'd walk into a meeting where I'd be the only woman. But I'd remind myself that I had the right to be there.” She continued to learn and attain new credentials and in 2005 decided to run her own business. “It was a really tough decision, but the right one for me,” she said.

Bronwyn has always combined business achievement with community service. “My charitable passion runs deep for the Alzheimer's Association. My favorite aunt had Alzheimer's when she died, and my doctoral dissertation focused on a protein that's involved in the progression of Alzheimer's disease. When the opportunity arrived to serve on the Alzheimer's Association Board, I jumped at the chance. It's a long-standing personal commitment where I focus on raising money to end this disease.”

Cheryl Miles

“Empowering Black women and girls in Chester County”

Caring for others comes naturally to Cheryl Miles. Devoted to bringing about lasting change, Cheryl has united the community around a number of important issues affecting marginalized groups in Chester County.

Cheryl is a social worker with over 30 years of experience advocating for some of society's most vulnerable populations. After earning her BSW from West Chester University and MSW from the University of Pennsylvania, she is now the Community Housing Development Director for Kennett Area Community Service, providing life-sustaining services to community neighbors in need. Previously, she was Chief Program Officer of Housing Support Services at Good Samaritan Services, devoted to reducing the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Lancaster and Chester Counties.

Cheryl is also active in the annual Chester County Single Mothers' Conference, Chester County Bridges Coalition, MLK Day of Service 365 Planning Committee, the Fund for Women and Girls Board of Directors, the Chester County Partnership to End Homelessness, and the Allies for Housing in Chester County. She has served on the H.U.B. of Hope HIV/AIDS Ministry Advisory Board and chaired the Chester County Housing and Food for All 365 Campaign.

In 2016, Cheryl co-founded Black Women of Chester County in Action (BWCCA) in response to the Chester County Fund for Women and Girls' Blueprint Report's findings related to African American women and girls. She brought together other African American women leaders to discuss the Blueprint's troubling findings and collaborate on ways to improve the wellbeing of women and girls in Chester County. As Cheryl explains,



“After months of lively discussions, the group recognized that our collective knowledge and expertise could add a real voice to African American challenges in the community, as well as an opportunity to highlight Black resiliency. We moved from conversation to action, and BWCCA was born.”



Alzheimer's Association of the Delaware Valley

The Delaware Valley Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association is the premier source of information and support for 490,000+ residents in DE, NJ and PA living with Alzheimer's disease and their 809,000+ caregivers. The Association provides free programs and services, funding for Alzheimer's and dementia research, and advocacy efforts.

Black Women of Chester County in Action

BWCCA creates and enhances collaboration among Black women in leadership roles in Chester County, guided by the vision of ensuring that every Black woman and girl in Chester County is living their best life. Cheryl serves as the Chairwoman for BWCCA and works to impact the economic wellbeing and health of Black women and girls in Chester County through education, advocacy and leadership.



BWCCA at the 2022 Fund for Women and Girls Luncheon

Dr. Tracey Ray Robinson

"The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page."

~Saint Augustine



Dr. Tracey Ray Robinson firmly believes in global citizenship and can often be found sharing the quote above.

Growing up in Charlotte, North Carolina in the 1970s, Tracey says, "I was a really quiet kid, and I wore braces on my legs for the first seven

years of my life. As a result, my second-grade teacher assumed I had disabilities and sent me to a speech therapist. But I was just shy, and I tested as academically gifted." Throughout her early school years, Tracey was bussed across town to schools in white neighborhoods and received what many considered a "better education."

"I'd wake up before sunrise and catch the bus when it was still dark outside, while my white classmates were still in bed because they were a short walk from the school. That was my experience from elementary through high school, which was a constant reminder of the obstacles I faced compared to my peers."

A first-generation college student, Tracey attended North Carolina State University for her undergraduate and graduate studies, where she felt affirmed through mentorship and her minor in African American Studies. From there, she chose to empower students through teaching and her

professional roles in student affairs and academic affairs. As a result of her service and leadership, she received the Old North State Award and the NC State University Award for Excellence.

Since 2018, Tracey has served as West Chester University's first Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and is proud of the University's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice. She's surrounded by outstanding faculty and staff who define diversity broadly.

Tracey has worked with individuals with disabilities, student veterans, underrepresented students, first-generation college students and others, and has led diversity training, interfaith initiatives and anti-racism projects. She has also designed and implemented student success programs that have supported undergraduate and graduate students from all walks of life.



Paige Childs, Class of 1951 Scholar

West Chester University Foundation

The West Chester University Foundation engages donors and other partners to drive student success. The Foundation secures funding to help West Chester University students achieve more. While West Chester University is the sole beneficiary of the WCU Foundation, the Foundation functions independently under its own Board of Directors and pursues its own investment policies and portfolio management.