

LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR OUR FUTURE

In 2009, at the height of the recession, we gathered some friends the Saturday after Christmas with a simple concept: let's create a new experience we can laugh about one day, and while we're at it, let's raise a little money for a cause close to the heart of our community.

In our wildest dreams, we never imagined that idea would become For The Cause. Yet, here we are – 30 events, thousands of participants, 200,000 meals, a 3,500 square foot teen center, and a full decade later – saying “thank you” for all you've done to support us. Our success has been the very definition of community effort – from the generous contributions of various social clubs and the commitment of volunteers, to the collaborations with community organizations and partnerships with the faculty, staff, and administration of the Berwick Area School District.

As we reflect on 2018, this has been a year of laying the foundation for our future. Over a six-month period, we revamped our mission and vision and developed a new strategic plan to guide us through the next five years. We completed our first full year of operations at the Teen Center and far exceeded even our loftiest ambitions for student leadership and participation. In September alone, we had more than 700 student engagements at the center. In the fall, we successfully transitioned the weekend food program's operations to the Teen Center, where the students will

eventually be trained to manage the process.

As we enter 2019, we're just getting started. Our food programs will deliver 5,300 snacks and meals on a monthly basis. Our new events committee is full of energy and fresh ideas for a revamped Speedo Run experience that will be unveiled for its 11th year in November. Our Teen Center has been so successful that we're dedicating our 10 Year Anniversary to ensuring its long term sustainability with a \$200,000 fundraising campaign in 2019, aimed at satisfying our mortgage and making the center operationally self-sufficient.

Our plans are ambitious, but know we will succeed because our community understands why our work is important. In 2019, we invite you to engage with us again. Come visit us for a tour of the Teen Center, and help us brainstorm how your talents can guide students to become leaders in our community.



TEEN CENTER YEAR IN REVIEW



I am thrilled to be part of an organization that aligns my inner purpose to my outer purpose.

One of my greatest achievements is believing in the power of youth and having an authentic passion for helping youth succeed. When I came on board in February of 2017 I realized if I were going to help run a successful teen center, youth needed to be at the forefront of the organization. In our first year we were able to accomplish the following:

1. Creating a governing Youth Action Board; youth-led and youth-driven center
2. Fostering YAB members' character, personal growth and leadership qualities
3. Successfully building awareness—going from only YAB members utilizing the center, to 18-30 unique members visiting the center daily
4. Growing and increasing membership from 20 members to over 130 members currently; creating a successful extension of home and school.
5. Successfully partnering with 11 various local organizations
6. Partnering with several businesses and organizations within a 60-mile radius
7. Building a positive relationship between the center and our local school district
8. Created, developed and implemented quality youth programming, which consists of over 20 creative, educational, social, emotional, recreational, prevention/intervention, life skills programs/workshops
9. Built a positive relationship between teens and community; community service is at the forefront of our Youth Action Board—Partnering with ThinkBig which raised over \$6,000
10. Created special events to provide unique experiences for members as well as partnering organizations. We truly value the power of “thinking outside the box” for example: Inclusive Sports day, Teen Chopped, and Cause-a-Thon, etc.
11. Successful in grant writing; created over \$30,000 of additional funding to be used for quality youth programming—media lab, cooking classes, counseling, yoga & meditation, etc.
12. Creating and fostering healthy intern partnerships with three different local universities—Bloomsburg University, Wilkes University and Marywood University

Teresa Peters, Teen Center Director

Teen Center Programs



Be the Change - Education and Peer Leadership group offered by The Women's Center. A combination of open discussions and activities as well as movies that discuss Teen Dating Violence, healthy and unhealthy relationships and being an active bystander.

Book Club - we host a once-a-month book club in collaboration with McBride Memorial Library. Our "Teen" book club helps boost self-confidence and reduce stress.

Cooking Around the World - hands-on food literacy education that highlights healthy nutrition, food safety, preparation, and cooking skills with a cultural aspect intertwined in the class

Drop-in Counseling - we offer individual and group counseling twice a week with a youth counselor through our partnership with Beyond Violence

Expressive Arts Studio - allows teens to create something meaningful, and to explore, develop, and extend their skills through expressive art. All projects with this program focus on the fun and exploration of the creative process and are not overly based on an end-product—giving the opportunity for teens to improve their self-esteem, confidence, and overall quality of life.

Kids Café - providing nutritious meals and snacks daily to our teens through a partnership with the Central PA Food Bank.

Guitar Lessons - classes for many skill and interest levels, set in a group or individual setting

Piano Lessons - classes for many skill and interest levels, set in a group setting

Tutoring/Homework Club - is an after-school educational enrichment program. Members build skills in reading and math, get help with homework, which fosters a love for learning as well as increases self-confidence

Wyldlife Club - faith-based middle school program that focuses on relationship building and teamwork

Youth Action Board (YAB) - is a hands-on leadership program that helps develop teens to become exemplary leaders and advocates for change in their community.

The Teen Center's mission is to nurture the social, emotional and intellectual well-being of each and every teen.



teen center
lead. serve. inspire.

FORMER TEEN CENTER YOUTH LEADER HELPING HOMELESS VET



BERWICK, PA – An area veteran will no longer be homeless, thanks to a local teenager's Eagle Scout Project. Tim Maron, 17, of Hobbie, broke ground on a small house for a veteran in July.

Maron was one of the members of the first Youth Action Board (YAB) for the Teen Center during the 2017-2018 school year. A Life Scout, he is working with local contractors to construct the 550-square foot home at 350 Monroe Street in Berwick.

"There are veterans all around who need help," Maron said. "Combine that with the popularity of 'tiny houses' and I thought this could be a neat project."

With the help of local contractors and volunteers, the frame was built, and the plywood was put on the roof. The anticipated date of completion is Spring 2019.

Maron brainstormed the idea with Josh Nespoli, Deputy Director at Community Strategies Group of Bloomsburg, a non-profit that focuses on community and economic development. Nespoli is also a founding member of For the Cause, the nonprofit that oversees the Teen Center, where Maron previously served as a YAB member.

"Tim's effort on this project has been an important reminder that our youth have an unparalleled power to inspire communities to come together for something bigger than ourselves," said Nespoli.

The project comes at a cost – more than \$50,000. Wells Fargo stepped in to provide more than \$45,000 toward the house, including a \$25,000 VeteranWINS grant. Plus, company employees volunteered their time to help build the frame.

"Everyone deserves a safe and secure place to live, especially our veterans, who have already sacrificed so much for our country," said Mike Pany, Wells Fargo's Community Relations Senior Consultant for Greater Pennsylvania.

"The VeteranWINS program is just one way Wells Fargo is doing our part to ensure veterans are being taken care of." The Veterans Affairs department will work to identify a veteran who is from the area and is in need of a permanent home as the project nears completion.



Volunteers help frame the house at 350 Monroe St., Berwick



Framing was completed in November 2018



FOR THE CAUSE REVAMPS WEEKEND FOOD PROGRAM

Imagine a nonprofit group sending nearly 1,700 snacks and meals home to students in need every Friday. That's exactly what For the Cause's Weekend Food Program is doing!

For the Cause began partnering with local volunteer Tim Hutton in 2014. Hutton established a nonprofit group and wanted to help those facing food insecurities. For years, that partnership helped serve tens of thousands of meals. This year, For the Cause formally moved all operations for the Weekend Food Program into the Teen Center.

"The Weekend Food Program provides food to students to help supplement their food needs for the weekend," said Scott Hook, For the Cause board member and Food Committee Chairman. "We currently provide cereal, protein bars, granola bars, and miscellaneous snack items."

As of last month, the program is providing food for about 300 students from Berwick Area schools, as well as 90 students from Northwest School District and another 30 students from New Story. That means every Friday, For the Cause is sending food home with 420 students. Each student gets four meals worth of food, which totals 1,680 meals provided every week.

Mrs. Jennifer Hestor is the guidance counselor at West Berwick Elementary School, where 85 students take part in the Weekend Food Program. She said research continues to show the positive correlation between proper nutrition and learning, and area students benefit from the local program.

"Teachers tell me they've seen an emotional change in participating students when the food gets delivered – lots of smiles," said Hestor. She added that the students who participate in the program demonstrate responsibility. "We never found food forgotten at school or on buses."

Hestor also said students involved in the program have good attendance and make fewer visits to the nurse.

The Weekend Food Program is able to purchase food at a discounted rate through the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank. Just \$25 provides 320 snacks/meals for students in need and their families.

FTC Board of Directors

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Will you make it your mission to provide current and future teens of our region with a guaranteed space for aspiring and inspiring?

It costs \$33 to provide 20 teenagers with one hour of access to tutoring, social engagement, art, and music. We ask you to support For the Cause's Capital Campaign for a self-sustainable Teen Center.

To make your donation by mail to support the Teen Center please complete the following information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Special Instructions: _____

MY COMMITMENT

- I am making a one time monetary gift of \$ _____
- I am pledging to give a recurring monetary gift of \$ _____ per month over a period of _____ months
- I would like to volunteer with the Teen Center. Mail us this completed card or go to ftcteencenter.org/volunteer
- I would like to give to the Teen Center by means of a gift other than cash. Description _____

One time or recurring monetary gifts can be given two ways:

1. Make checks payable to For the Cause. Mail your pledge to: For the Cause • P.O. Box 816 • Berwick, PA 18603
2. Use our online giving at forthecause.org/donate to make a donation using a credit card.

Thank you!