

# 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

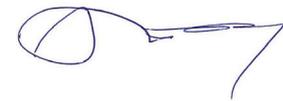
**In 2023 alone, BluePrints grants totaled nearly \$4 million, reflecting Highmark Delaware's commitment to making a substantial impact.**

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



*“Highmark’s support of Family Promise has been instrumental in carrying out our goals. Without Highmark’s support, our project certainly would not be as far along as it is today.”*

**Tyler Shade**  
Executive Director, Family Promise of Northern New Castle County, Inc.

# Family Promise of Northern New Castle County, Inc.

**Service Area:** New Castle County  
**Program:** Hospitality Center Expansion  
**Grant:** \$100,000

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.



## Reducing Unemployment, Food Insecurity and Housing Instability

### 2023 Grantees

- \$35,000  
Bringing Hope Home
- \$45,000  
Delaware Regional Dream Center
- \$100,000  
Family Promise of Northern New Castle County, Inc.
- \$150,000  
Lutheran Community Services, Inc.
- \$35,000  
Odyssey Charter School
- \$20,000  
St. Patrick’s Center, Inc.
- \$75,000  
West End Neighborhood House, Inc.



*“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

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.

## Advancing Equitable Access to Quality Healthcare

### 2023 Grantees

\$15,000 AltruVision	\$25,000 Ingleside Homes, Inc.
\$20,000 Black Mothers In Power	\$211,365 Jewish Family Services of Delaware
\$44,000 Catholic Charities – Diocese of Wilmington	\$542,769 Nemours Children’s Health Delaware
\$25,000 Central Delaware Housing Collaborative	\$100,000 The Rosa Health Center
\$80,000 ChristianaCare Health Services	\$50,000 SL24 UnLocke the Light Foundation
\$142,700 Community Education Building	\$100,000 The Springboard Collaborative
\$45,400 Delaware Adolescent Program, Inc.	\$18,600 St. John’s Community Services
\$113,925 Delaware Pharmacists Educational Center, Inc.	\$100,000 Unite for HER
\$25,000 Down Syndrome Association of Delaware	\$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

## 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





*“Highmark’s investment has allowed us to actualize the future that western Sussex County must see to continue to provide healthcare to the community.”*

**Jessica Hales**  
President  
TidalHealth Foundation

## TidalHealth Foundation

**Service Area:** Sussex County

**Program:** Graduate Medical Education

**Grant:** \$1,000,000

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.”



## Recruiting and Training Healthcare Professionals

### 2023 Grantees

\$38,800

Aetna Hose Hook and Ladder of Newark

\$60,000

Delaware Prosperity Partnership

\$35,661

Mental Health Association in Delaware

\$25,000

Sussex Economic Development Action Committee

\$1,000,000

TidalHealth Foundation



*“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

## 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.

## Connecting People to Social and Community Resources

### 2023 Grantees

\$16,750

The Challenge Program

\$100,000

Easterseals Delaware & Maryland’s Eastern Shore, Inc.

\$200,000

Endless Possibilities in the Community, Inc.

\$65,000

First State Squash

\$10,000

Girls on the Run Delaware

\$50,000

Lori’s Hands, Inc.

\$61,000

Make-A-Wish Philadelphia, Delaware & Susquehanna Valley

\$10,000

Strive: How You Lead Matters

# BluePrints Five Focus Areas of Impact 2023 Grants

**Total:** \$3.7 million

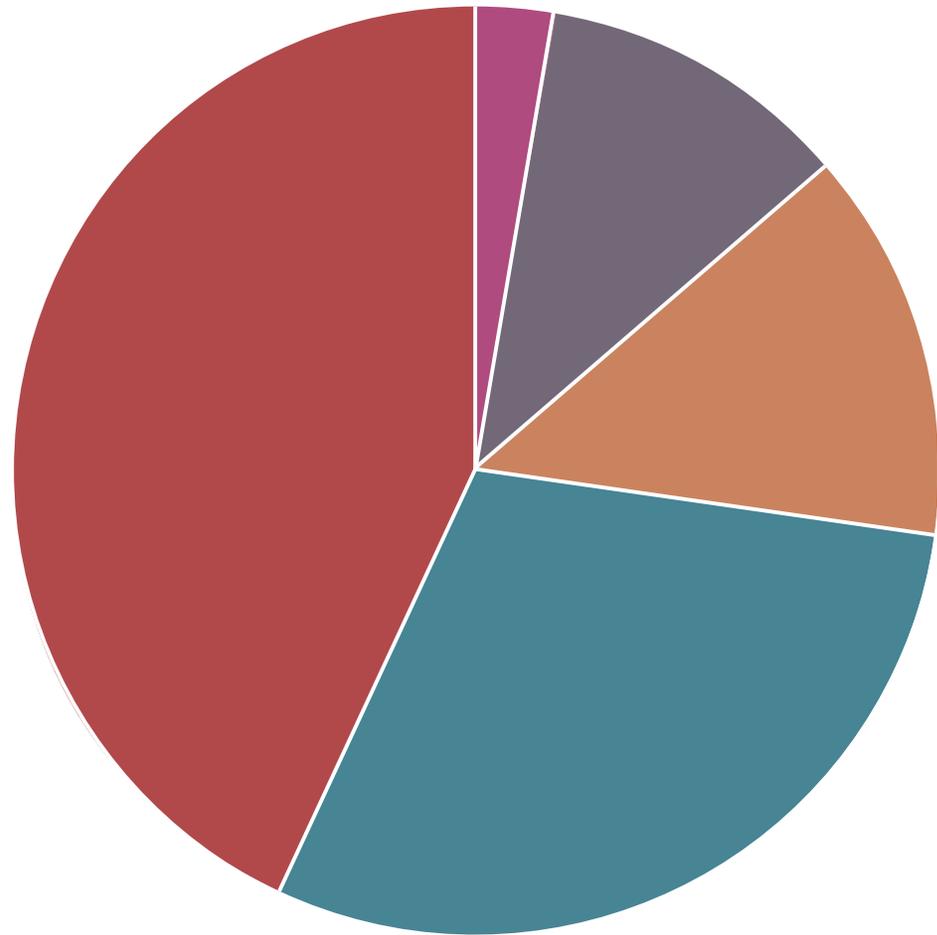
**\$460,000**  
Reducing Unemployment, Food  
Insecurity and Housing Instability

**\$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

Hon. Gregory Sleet

Zaida Guajardo

Janice Tildon-Burton, M.D.

Richard Heffron

Fred A. Townsend, Esq.

Rita Landgraf

Terry Wiley

Kim Markiewicz

Bill Willis, Jr.

Vita Pickrum

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.

