



2016-17
ANNUAL
REPORT

EMPOWERING CHESTER COUNTY'S CHILDREN THROUGH
ARTS, LITERACY AND MINDFULNESS



**“I AM THE
DAUGHTER OF A
TEENAGE MOTHER,
WHO IS THE
DAUGHTER OF A
TEENAGE MOTHER,
WHO IS THE
DAUGHTER OF A
TEENAGE MOTHER
WITH NO FATHER
IN SIGHT.”**

SERENA

AHHAH's story began in 2013 at Chester County Youth Detention Center (CCYC) with this poem written by a 16 year old girl and with one passionate leader, Jan Michener, who saw firsthand what happens when children in Chester County are denied access to tools and opportunities they need to achieve at their highest capacity. Since then, over 13,500 youth and adults in Chester County have participated in AHHAH's programs and have been creating new futures for themselves filled with opportunity based on AHHAH's trauma-informed, collective impact plan which offsets the stressful effects of long-term poverty.

AHHAH by the numbers

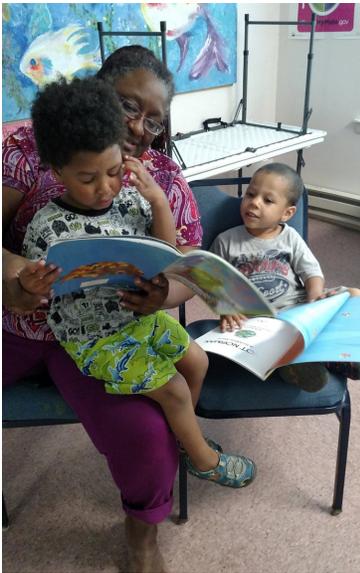
- 3,686** children, youth, parents/caregivers and seniors attended our programs/classes in 2016-17.
- 100+** classes and programs offered in 2016-17
- 173** volunteers
- 70+** Pop Up Lending Libraries (P.U.L.L.) were attended to across Coatesville
- 5,000** books collected for P.U.L.L. Stations
- 273** on average 6 young adults attended 49 Mindfulness and Creative Arts classes at Chester County Youth Center

Awards and Recognitions

- Donte, 16 year-old, won the 2016 JDCAP National Poetry Contest for "A Diamond in the Ruff" written in our CCYC Creative Writing Workshop
- 2nd edition published "Justice Restored: A Series of Writings and Poems from Incarcerated Youth," a collection of poems and writings written in AHHAH workshops at CCYC in partnership with ADC Kid.
- 2016 "Heart with Service" award from the Kingdom Wives of New Life in Christ Church, Coatesville
- 2017 "Celebrate Literacy Award" Chester County Reading Association for PULL Campaign

**"ON BEHALF OF THE BOROUGH OF SOUTH COATESVILLE WE THANK YOU FOR THE DONATION OF THE PULL STATIONS THROUGHOUT COATESVILLE...
...THE BOROUGH IS GRATEFUL TO YOUR CONTINUED VISION TO MAKE SURE THAT BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FOR EVERY CHILD TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ AND SHARE BOOKS WITH OTHER CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY. MAY YOU ALSO CONTINUE YOUR PROGRAM, AND EXPAND TO OTHER COMMUNITIES WHO BENEFIT FROM THE SAME."**

- SYLVIA WASHINGTON, PRESIDENT OF THE BOROUGH OF SOUTH COATESVILLE





AS THE YEAR COMES TO A CLOSE, WE PRESENT OUR ANNUAL REPORT

As a leading nonprofit organization in Chester County, this past year's accomplishments demonstrate our continued value and contribution to the state. Through arts, literacy, and mindfulness, we provide rich and meaningful experiences for learning about ourselves, for educating children as well as contributing significantly to the lives of the people who live in Coatesville and Kennett Square.

AHHAH is a non-profit 501c3 organization that serves the most vulnerable youth in Chester County, with its primary focus on Coatesville, PA. Since 2013, we have been guided by our vision that every child in Chester County will have the tools and opportunities they need to achieve their highest capacity. We accomplish this through a trauma-informed, comprehensive, collective impact plan that addresses the whole child and engages the full community to empower youth and break the cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and low expectations. The plan involves all who touch the lives of children – families, schools, and community – because we know that we cannot address the many challenges alone, that it takes a village.

"AS A MEMBER OF THE COATESVILLE COMMUNITY AND THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE GORDON EARLY LITERACY CENTER, I AM CONSISTENTLY IMPRESSED BY THE DEDICATION OF AHHAH TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY. THE DEDICATION TO LITERACY, MINDFULNESS, AND EXPRESSIVE ARTS DEMONSTRATED BY AHHAH IS A VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CITY OF COATESVILLE." - TAMARA ACUNA SUPERVISOR OF HEAD START AND RELATED SERVICES, GORDON EARLY LITERACY CENTER ADMINISTRATOR

OUR METHODS

We work through multiple intentional strategies (C.A.L.M.) to offset the stressful effects of long-term poverty. Our programs are designed to engage youth in mindful, artistic initiatives, building resiliency and establishing positive pathways for a productive and fulfilling future.

Community Partnerships and Programs

connect and engage youth, families, and seniors - creating lasting change in their lives and their communities.

Arts Programming

encourages youth to explore and discover their authentic voice.

Literacy Initiatives

enable youth to succeed in life by becoming powerful readers, writers and thinkers.

Mindfulness Instruction

improves attention, self-awareness, self-control, and emotional resilience to offset prolonged exposure to childhood toxic stress.

OUR YEAR IN SERVING COATESVILLE

AHHAH's programming is broken down into developmental stages to represent our vision of long-term social and emotional health for youth and the communities where they live. The following is a summary of 2016-17 activities:

Pre-K (Families, Caregivers & Children up to age 5)

1. FAMILY STORY TIME YOGA- Caregivers and children 5 and younger learn mind/body/breathing skills through songs, movement, storytelling and yoga that empower families to connect with each other while learning positive and productive skills for managing stress and development of healthier, happier, and more resilient children while instilling the habit of reading together. This program has grown each year. We averaged 15 children and seven caregivers each week. This program was offered during Fall and Winter Sessions once a week for 8 weeks.

"I APPRECIATED HOW YOU SHARED LITTLE IDEAS THROUGHOUT FOR THE PARENTS. THIS CLASS WAS CREATIVE AND FUN." [TODAY I POINTED OUT WAYS THEY CAN JOIN THE CHILD AND THEN THE CHILD WILL BE MORE LIKELY TO LISTEN AND CALM DOWN. WE ALSO DISCUSSED THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT AND CHILD AND HOW THE CHILDREN NOTICE SO MUCH MORE THAN WE THINK.]





2. COATESVILLE HEADSTART - Every Wednesday AHHAH offers creative movement, music, yoga, mindfulness or story time programs to 300+ children. Project leaders & partners include: Amanda Daley, Laura Boyer, Build-A-Band & AHHAH's Senior Reading Ambassadors.

3. KICK-OFF TO KINDERGARTEN- Summer 5 week program that provides transitional support for children entering kindergarten and their guardians. The curriculum for this program incorporated the CASD checklist for school readiness of children entering kindergarten. AHHAH received a CCRES grant in 2015, 2016 and 2017 and was able to offer this program at the Coatesville Area Library, the Regency Park Apartments Community Center (Section 8 housing in Coatesville), Gordon Early Literacy Center and Community Youth and Women's Alliance (CYWA).

**TODAY ASKED THE CHILDREN, "IF YOU COULD BE FILLED WITH ANYTHING WHAT WOULD IT BE?"
RESPONSES: LOVE, JOY, PEACE, CUCUMBERS, APPLES, AND TOYS**

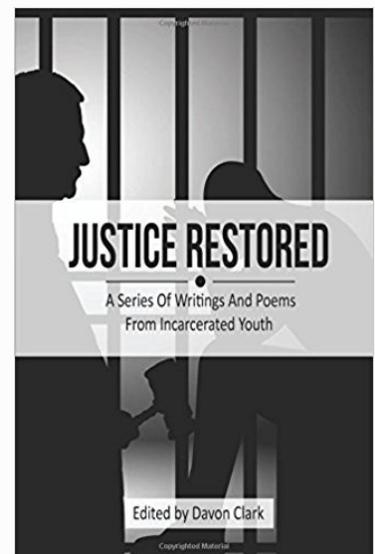
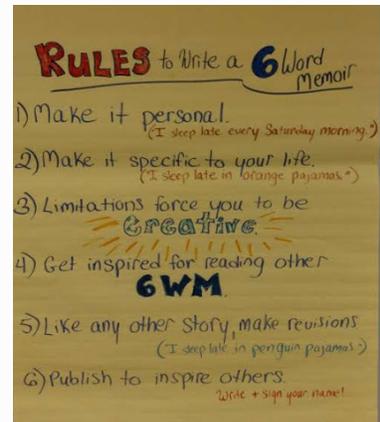
School Aged Youth

1. YOGA AND MINDFULNESS CLASSES AT THE CHESTER COUNTY YOUTH CENTER - For girls in the Shelter, boys in the Evening Report Center, and youth in the Detention Center once a week. These classes help youth build physical and emotional awareness and develop self-regulation skills.

2. CREATIVE WRITING AND EXPRESSIVE ARTS WORKSHOPS AT THE CHESTER COUNTY YOUTH CENTER - Twice a month workshops focused on releasing of trauma through writing, dance, song, and poetry. These programs develop inter and intrapersonal skills and foster healthy relationships through the sharing of stories and giving an avenue for each voice to be heard. AHHAH won the National 2015 Award from Detention Centers and Alternative Programs for our work at the Chester County Youth Center and in 2016 one of the youth in Detention at CCYC won the 2016 National Poetry Award for his piece, "Diamond In the Ruff" that he wrote in an AHHAH expressive writing workshop. In 2016 ADC Kid published the 2nd edition of "Justice Restored: A Series of Writings and Poems from Incarcerated Youth," which is a collection of poems and writings written in AHHAH workshops at CCYC.

**I'LL BE YOUR NORTH STAR.
I'LL GUIDE YOU TO YOUR DESTINATION.
I'LL NEVER LEAVE YOU.
I WILL ALWAYS BE THERE FOR YOU.
NOT AN ASTEROID OR ROCKET
CAN MOVE ME
WHERE YOU CAN'T FIND ME.**

-CCYC SHELTER FOR GIRLS (AGE 14)



3. THEATER INITIATIVES that transform great literature into great theater and inspire children to read, learn, and discuss through the creative arts.

AHHAH partnered with Enchantment Theatre Company and brought a regional touring production to Reeceville Elementary School. Over 400 children attended **THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS**.

AHHAH also partnered with People's Light & Theatre with their 2017 Spring production of **THE MIRACULOUS JOURNEY OF EDWARD TULANE**, an adaptation of Kate DiCamillo's book of the same name. AHHAH arranged for over 250 youth from Coatesville to see the play and receive a copy of the book.



"MY STUDENTS WERE SINGING AND DANCING ALL THE WAY BACK TO THEIR CLASSROOMS... 'IT'S BETTER WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER' STILL ECHOS THROUGH THE HALLWAYS A WEEK AFTER THE PERFORMANCE!"

Community Engagement

1. INTERGENERATIONAL EXPRESSIVE ARTS WORKSHOPS - Youth and adults collaborated and explored their unique voices through workshops focused on creative writing and other expressive arts. These workshops were led by various guest artists and generated community dialogue around issues affecting the youth and the community. CCYC youth attended these events for a positive reintegration into the community where they were seen for their assets. These events were held at the Coatesville Public Library and at Lincoln University - Coatesville, average 25-30 youth and adults attended every other month. These workshops were made possible through a grant from the PA Council of the Arts and Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance.

2. P.U.L.L. (Pop Up Lending Library) Campaign: AHHAH initiated and spearheaded a campaign in 2015 to celebrate Coatesville's Centennial Anniversary with the goal of installing 100 free pop up lending libraries everywhere children gathered making books accessible to all children 24/7. To date, there are over 100 indoor and outdoor PULL stations in neighborhoods, businesses and in front of elementary and middle schools in Coatesville and Kennett Square combined. 2016-17 partners include Arts Partners Studio, Coatesville Rotary, GoodWorks, CYWA, Coatesville Savings Bank, Fuel Coffee Shop, Coatesville Public Library, Coatesville Salvation Army, Partners in Out Reach, Girl Scout Troops and the Laundromat Library League. AHHAH held 4 community events where over 125 people from the community came to help build, design and paint PULL stations.

"ON AVERAGE A CHILD IN A LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLD IS EXPOSED TO 30 MILLION LESS WORDS BY THE TIME THEY ARE 5 THAN A CHILD IN AN AFFLUENT HOUSEHOLD." - READ BY 4

3. WOMEN'S GENTLE YOGA CLASS - offered once a week. The focus is on breath-work, relaxation, stress management, mindfulness, and restorative poses. The class also fosters relationships between women in the community, building bonds made of respect, love, and unity. This is a donation based class at the Coatesville Public Library with an average attendance of 15 women.

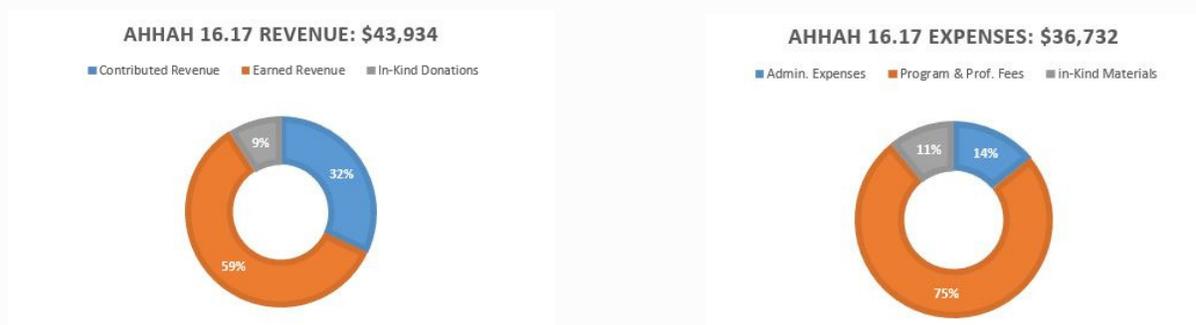
4. PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT - led trauma-informed, self-care workshops for the Educating Hearts Conference for early childhood educators, CCYC, CCIU, and Bridge of Hope staff and support teams. In total, 125 teachers/educators/counselors/administrators were given tools to manage stress and create more caring and compassionate work environments.

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Our community partners include: ADC Kid, Bridge of Hope, Chester County Intermediate Unit, Chester County Youth Center, Coatesville Area School District, Coatesville Community Health Center, Coatesville Head Start, Coatesville Public Library, Coatesville Rotary Club, Coatesville Senior Center, Enchantment Theatre Company, Goodworks, Kennett Area Senior Center, Library Laundry League, Lincoln University- Coatesville Campus, Maternal Child and Health Consortium, People's Light, Regency Parks Apartments Community Center and Coatesville Y Early Literacy Center - Gordon Building.

OUR YEAR IN FINANCE

AHHAH believes in maintaining fiscal responsibility by making wise and efficient use of all resources entrusted to us. AHHAH continues to balance its budget and finish in the black since the Company was created in 2013. In June of 2016, AHHAH made the decision to file for its own 501c3 and break away from Culture Trust of Greater Philadelphia, its fiduciary sponsor since 2014. AHHAH was granted its 501c3 designation from the IRS in November 2016.



AHHAH stands at an exciting crossroads. Thanks to the wonderful support of our community, we have survived and even thrived in some of the most difficult times in recent memory. The challenge now is to shift focus and strive towards sustainability so that we can have an even bigger impact on the communities we serve. So we are pleased to announce that AHHAH is exploring an alliance with Art Partners Studio in Coatesville. Thank you for your continued support of AHHAH's vision for the future! Without you, we would not be where we are today.

RUNNING

BY S. A 14 YEAR OLD FEMALE IN DETENTION AT CCYC

**I AM ALWAYS RUNNING.
IT STARTED WITH RUNNING TOWARDS SCHOOL.
THEN I WAS RUNNING FROM THE BULLYS.
THEN I WAS RUNNING TOWARDS A FIGHT.
WHEN I TURNED 14 I STARTED RUNNING TOWARDS FRIENDS.
I WAS RUNNING FROM COPS AND BULLETS AND EVEN OPS.
I WAS RUNNING FROM MY THOUGHTS EVERYDAY I OPENED MY EYES.
I USED TO BE ALWAYS SAD AND DEPRESSED.
I STARTED USING DRUGS.
I POPPED PERKS WITH MY DEALERS,
EVEN DRANK AND SMOKED WEED.
WHEN I WAS UPSET
MY HAPPY PLACE WAS THE WEED AND CODEINE.
I WAS RUNNING FROM MY FEELINGS
HOLDING THEM INSIDE.
TRYING TO MAKE SURE I DIDN'T SHOW MY SADNESS,
I HID IT WITH A SMILE.
NOW I'M HERE.
WHEN I GO HOME
I'M GOING TO RUN TO MY DREAMS.
MY FUTURE IS BRIGHT.
I DON'T BELONG SURROUNDED WITH FOUR WALLS AND A METAL DOOR.
I'M GOING TO RUN TO MY FREEDOM.**