

## WEST VIEW HUB 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

2021 was a challenging, but good year for the West View HUB. As schools and businesses slowly resumed operations, we were able to reintroduce on-site programming while developing and implementing a variety of new offerings for the community.



*The West View HUB celebrated its second anniversary in June with an outdoor picnic. In addition, the library featured signups for numerous summer programs and events while promoting opportunities to volunteer. We also invited our partners to come and present details on the work they do.*

We liken ourselves to the hub on a bicycle wheel, hence the name HUB, with numerous spokes connecting the outer wheel. In our case, we view the community as the “wheel” that we support. As needs change, we develop new “spokes” to meet a variety of opportunities and challenges. Some of our key areas of focus in 2021 were familiar with continued demand, while others were new and evolving. In all cases we were very blessed with a wide network of partners, volunteers and contributors.

The West View HUB Pantry continues to be a popular and necessary service in the community. In addition to the folks visiting our pantry throughout each week, we expanded our reach to include the West View Towers, other local pantries and a local Meals on Wheels kitchen. We are very fortunate to receive support from Whole Foods, 412 Food Rescue and the Greater Pittsburgh Community Foodbank. In addition, numerous church and civic groups provide support via food drives and donations.

*Hunters Point Neighborhood Association collected and delivered numerous bags of food donations for the HUB Pantry. In this picture you see the pantry volunteers in the background while our donors model their bright green “HUB Caps”! We receive food donations from many organizations and are very grateful for this support.*



While overall traffic was slightly lighter than last year, we continued to see consistent numbers ranging between 250 and 350 residents per week, with many new families signing up in November and

December. At Thanksgiving, we provided 116 boxes with turkey certificates and all the fixings for a complete Thanksgiving dinner. On November 23rd we provided food for nearly 800 residents. We estimate that we've provided enough food for approximately 400,000 servings of food in 2021.

One of the unique features of our pantry is that we walk the boxes of food to the recipients' cars. In doing so, we get to know our patrons and we learn about the challenges that many of these individuals face. As a result of this practice a new "spoke" has begun to emerge that we refer to as "Situational Assistance."

We view this assistance as helping with individual situational needs and we strive to offer support in very discreet fashion. For example, we have a patron with numerous health issues who indicated that his wife was struggling with the heat, after receiving open heart surgery. We quickly assembled a small team that purchased and installed an air conditioner for this family. In the process, we also observed numerous safety issues with the house and will be addressing these as well.

There are other scenarios as well where we've provided furniture, appliances and clothing for local families. This is done in conjunction with partners and local members of the community. In addition, we now provide on-site counseling via North Hills Community Outreach that helps individuals sign up for a myriad of government-based social assistance programs.



***Eagle Scout Nicholas Tarquinio stands next to the shelf unit he built along with the thirty-six STEAM kits that he researched and built. This is a very welcome addition to the HUB and we congratulate Nicholas on achieving his rank of Eagle Scout!***

The HUB provided a wide variety of youth programs in 2021 including Chess Club, STEAM Club, Dungeons & Dragons, Model Railroad, along with several creative arts programs. In addition, the HUB serves as a meeting place for three scout troops in the area. On the subject of scouts, we had an Eagle Scout build and implement a STEAM kit offering as his final project. The kits were patterned after those that are available in larger libraries within the Pittsburgh area and have proven to be a welcome addition to our offerings.



***The HUB summer morning programs were well attended and provided a wide variety of experiences for the participants. We were very fortunate to have a strong group of dedicated volunteers that developed and delivered the programs and activities over an eight-week period.***

Our summer programs were robust and included eight weeks of morning programs at the HUB for children. Topics included health, sports, engineering, and planets, to name a few. These were well attended and supported by dedicated staff and volunteers. We also continued our “West View Rocks” program for the second year in a row. Children were given large rocks to decorate with positive messages. These were returned to the HUB, numbered and hidden throughout the community by the staff. Nearly 75 children spent the next ten days looking for the rocks and reporting back their finds to the HUB. Prizes were awarded based on number of rocks located, with the grand prize being a new bicycle. We had six grand prize winners and had to scramble to get more bikes! In the end, every participant received a prize.



***“West View Rocks” continues to be a popular event with families. This year we had more participants than ever, with six children winning the grand prize...a new bike!***

The West View HUB celebrated its second anniversary in June and held an event that included partners, patrons, local businesses, politicians and community members. During this time the HUB conducted a book drive, where for a small donation folks could dedicate a new book in honor or memory of a loved

one. We were able to acquire 200 new books as a result of this effort and felt this was a great way for community members to develop a “vested” interest in the HUB. This kicked off our library program.



***Our Book Drive was a huge success and will continue throughout the year. Sponsors are able to dedicate a new book in honor or memory of someone.***

The HUB library was in need of new furniture, improved book stock, automation and technology upgrades. With the help of Community Life Enrichment Foundation, which received funding from several Pittsburgh-based foundations and charities, we were able to acquire and implement a Library Information System which provides online access to our book collection. Patrons now have the ability to search for, and reserve, books from their computer or phone. In addition, the HUB acquired a comprehensive software suite from World Book. This valuable asset provides students with access to a large variety of learning tools, games and research materials.



***Author Corner and writer's presentations were a popular attraction at the HUB.***

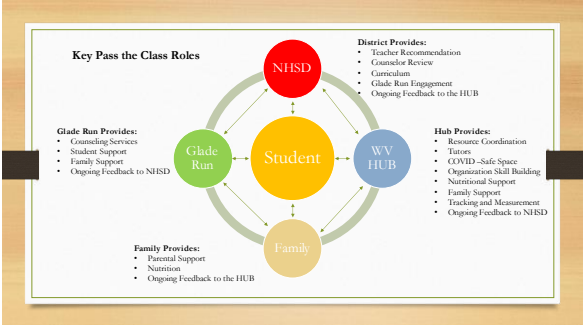


We established an “Author’s Corner” where works by local authors are featured every month. In addition, authors are invited to meet with the community to discuss their book, share readings and take questions. This has become a vibrant part of the library. In December, Mike Funyak, author of “West View Park: The Story of the T.M. Harton Company,” hosted a discussion and book signing with over 50 folks in attendance. Demand was so high that we’re planning to have him back in February.



***Back to School Bingo and “HUB Day” at the Pittsburgh Zoo were both well attended, fun events, for children and their families. The HUB received free tickets to the zoo and are grateful to the Pittsburgh Zoo for their contribution.***

Our summer activities wrapped up with “Back to School Bingo” where, in addition to playing bingo for prizes, every child received their school supplies for the new school year. This is the second time we held this event and we had more participants than ever. We also sent 100 children and their parents to the Pittsburgh Zoo. The zoo provided free tickets to the HUB and we provided bussing via the service that’s used by the school district. Overall, we provided programs and activities for over 300 children during the course of the summer.



***Pass the Class is a collaborative effort designed and implemented by the HUB in order to help struggling students succeed. The program was a success in 2021 and continues in 2022.***

Improving academic outcomes was another primary area of focus for the HUB in 2021. The COVID pandemic forced local schools to work remotely and, as a result, many students struggled. There was an estimate that nearly 40% of remote-learning students were at risk of failing the school year. We developed and implemented a comprehensive program (Pass the Class) which pulled several key elements into focus on behalf of the student. By working closely with the school district, counselors, social workers, educators, parents and tutors, we were able to bring the student’s needs into sharp focus and deliver the holistic support needed to help the student succeed. We also acquired special technology that enabled students and tutors to effectively share workspace when meeting. We had a 96% success rate and continue to offer this program today. This is a great example of several disparate entities coming together to bring about a positive outcome.

Reading and literacy are fundamental cornerstones to learning. We coordinated with the school district and a local business to create and implement a reading program wherein participants received a coupon for a free pizza upon the reading completion of ten books. Over 150 children participated and received a free pizza. That's over 1,500 books read in a four-week period!



***Forty-five children participated in a week-long Shakespeare summer camp provided by the HUB in conjunction with Steel City Shakespeare Center. Immersive art experiences are a key focus area of the HUB and have been shown to greatly improve academic outcomes for participants.***

Participation in creative arts has been linked to improved academic performance with several key studies showing a direct connection between participation in the arts and overall higher levels of achievement. The HUB implemented several key art programs including acting class, Shakespeare summer camp, illustration class and railroad club. These programs were very well attended and we are hopeful that we'll be able to provide these in the new year.



***Yoga in the Park has become a very popular offering from the HUB. Led by board member Natalie Roberson, outdoor classes begin in the spring and run through October before moving to a virtual setting in the winter.***

The West View HUB has a large number of partners that provide support, programming, and direct services to the community. In 2021 we began a partnership with Mission of Mercy, which provides an annual free dental clinic at the Pittsburgh Convention Center. The HUB Pantry provided nourishment for the 1,500+ waiting for dental care. In addition, we began working with Computer Reach, a non-profit dedicated to providing technical literacy to senior citizens. The HUB began a series of classes where each participant, after completing four 2-hour training sessions, receives a free laptop. At this point, over 50 local seniors have signed up for these sessions, which will run throughout 2022. The HUB Library has begun a relationship with neighboring Shaler Library. Shaler has been delivering programming for pre-school and younger elementary students on a weekly basis and we're very thankful.

Several key HUB volunteers and staff received awards this year including Michael DeSensi, West View HUB Program Coordinator. Mike was awarded the first ever North Hills School District Community Service Award. In addition, Kathy Banos and Daniel Johnston received Difference Maker awards from

Allegheny County. These awards were in recognition of the selfless time spent helping others in the community.

### **Michael DeSensi awarded inaugural North Hills Community Service Award**



*Michael DeSensi, the board president and program coordinator at the West View HUB, is the first-ever recipient of the North Hills Community Service Award.*

*Established earlier this year by the NHSD Board of Education, the [Community Service Award](#) recognizes a current resident of the district who has made a significant contribution to the community through their time, talents and dedication.*

*Nominated by their peers, awardees serve as role models for compassion and service, while striving to make the North Hills community a better place.*

*DeSensi has been volunteering his time at the [West View HUB](#) for the last 18 months.*

*He donates no less than 20 hours a week continuously developing community programs for the HUB and working with community partners to stock the HUB's pantry, among other initiatives. He was nominated by West View HUB founder Scott Pavlot.*

*"I'm nominating him because he freely shares the most valuable, and only finite, element in our existence: time," Pavlot said in his nomination.*

*DeSensi lives in the district and his daughter attends North Hills Middle School.*

*Congratulations, Mr. DeSensi. Thank you for your dedication to our community!*

Looking forward to 2022, we anticipate a continued demand for academic support and counseling services and, as a result, will continue with Pass the Class, an initiative that will bring a variety of resources into sharp focus, on a case-by-case basis, to ensure that struggling students receive the support they need in order to pass this school year. These services will include direct tutoring, organizational skill building, counseling (where needed), nutritional support, parental support and close academic guidance. This will be a coordinated effort with schools, service agencies, and students & their families.

We will once again be offering a reward for reading program called "Read-It" where students will receive a coupon for a free pizza upon the completion of reading ten books. This program is coordinated with the school district and a local pizza shop. The HUB will track and manage progress with each participant (Over 150 signed up in the first week).

We also plan to seek acceptance into the Allegheny County Library System. We believe that the improvements we've made in 2021 will enable us to accomplish this goal which will result in increased library services for the community we serve.

We also plan to expand our creative and immersive arts offerings in order to further improve academic outcomes for students. Our offerings will also include art programs for adults, and all of these activities promise to be fun and engaging for the participants and the community.

We continue to explore new opportunities to serve the community and are excited with the prospect of taking on the additional challenges 2022 will bring. We are also incredibly blessed with a very strong and dedicated group of staff, volunteers, and partners that work tirelessly in a variety of areas ranging from pantry support to program development and implementation to ongoing maintenance and buildout. We have a community board that leads and defines the course that the HUB takes. In short, the West View HUB is delivering tangible, impactful value to the community and will continue to evolve as the “wheel” of the community moves forward into the new year. We’re thankful and excited with the prospect of doing more in 2022.

If you’d like to get involved with the HUB, you can email me at [westviewhub@gmail.com](mailto:westviewhub@gmail.com). I thank all of our partners, patrons, volunteers, staff and donors. May we all have a happy and healthy 2022!

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Pavlot', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Scott Pavlot