

2022

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# Community Report



HIGHMARK

**BrightBlueFutures**

community · health · resilience

# A Year in Review

In 2022, Highmark Health and its affiliates and subsidiaries allocated more than \$58 million in corporate and foundation giving in Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, and New York. We have supported these communities within our footprint and beyond for more than 80 years. With a focus on dedicating our efforts to make a positive impact and plan for the future, we introduced the Highmark Bright Blue Futures charitable giving and community involvement program. We are also excited about the opportunity to team up with other nonprofit organizations in new regions as Highmark Health continues to expand.

The initiatives that are part of the Highmark Bright Blue Futures program — no matter the region — directly reflect our key Community Affairs pillars: community health and community and economic resilience. Our focus is on improving equitable access to care and quality of life in the communities we serve.

Simply put, Highmark Bright Blue Futures amplifies our regions' giving and volunteering efforts, making our commitment to community, health, and resilience even more impactful.

We've already experienced great things since we introduced Highmark Bright Blue Futures, and we're honored to stand alongside our nonprofit partners for one goal: to build stronger, brighter, healthier communities for all — together.

We are proud to tell the story of Highmark Bright Blue Futures in action in this inaugural report.



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Executive Vice President  
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# Highmark Bright Blue Futures Overview

If we take the name literally, Highmark Bright Blue Futures, our charitable giving and community involvement program, speaks to a goal of ensuring healthier, brighter futures for all. But what about a little deeper analysis? It's about creating opportunities for individuals and families to thrive, building the ladders to allow people to reach their goals, and bringing people together to realize support and care is never out of reach.

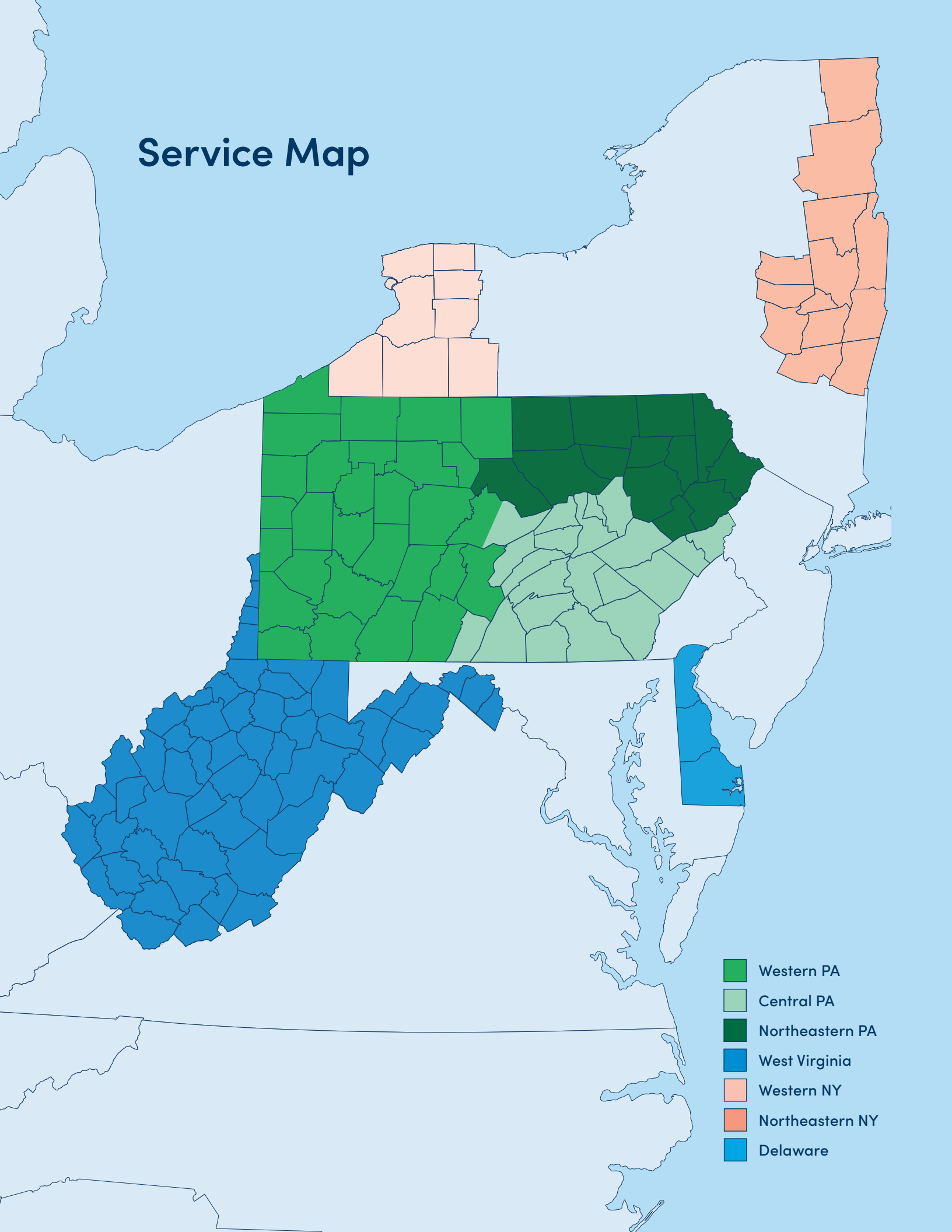
“Highmark Bright Blue Futures is about improving the health and strength of everyone in our communities. We strive to be an active and engaged community partner in many ways – from providing resources and expertise to offering helping hands in volunteer efforts within the communities we serve. This is how, together, we are building a brighter future.”



**David L. Holmberg**

President and CEO  
Highmark Health

# Service Map



- Western PA
- Central PA
- Northeastern PA
- West Virginia
- Western NY
- Northeastern NY
- Delaware

With a footprint that includes Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia, Delaware, and beyond, Highmark Bright Blue Futures has the potential to impact millions in our pillars of Community Health and Community and Economic Resilience.

We believe working in partnership with communities and providers within our footprint is critical to achieving lasting positive outcomes. We value being an active, engaged community partner, creating and maintaining meaningful relationships within our service area. Our commitment goes beyond simply providing grants; it includes leveraging our team members' expertise and passion through volunteerism and convening community groups to drive efficiency and innovation.

The past year was proof of that, with community partners, health care providers, and volunteers providing wide-ranging services that changed lives and programs that highlighted compassionate collaboration.

### About Highmark

As the fourth-largest overall Blue Cross Blue Shield-affiliated organization, Highmark Inc. and its Blue-branded affiliates proudly cover the insurance needs of approximately 6.8 million members in Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York, and West Virginia. Its diversified businesses serve group customer and individual needs across the United States through dental insurance and other related businesses, offering high-quality, accessible, understandable and affordable experiences, outcomes, and solutions. For more information, visit [highmark.com](https://www.highmark.com).







# Community Health

Highmark Bright Blue Futures' community health efforts go well beyond clinical services. Reducing health inequities and disparities among our targeted populations, through novel solutions and strong partnerships, go a long way toward improving health outcomes and lifting up those in need.

Our strategy on community health is supported by five focus areas that each play an important role in promoting the well-being of all:

- **Access to care**
- **Economic stability for individuals and families**
- **Social and community context**
- **Education access**
- **Neighborhood and built environment**

When we advance each of these areas in a given community, health care outcomes improve in kind.

# Access to Care: Healing for Everyone, Everywhere

There are many communities across the nation that lack access to quality health care. People in rural areas or low-income communities, particularly, face a combination of infrastructural, financial, and geographic challenges. Therefore, ensuring targeted populations have equitable access to preventive care, disease-specific support, and health literacy programs helps to achieve our overall community health goal of improving health outcomes.



## Hazleton Integration Project NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Regular well-child checkups with a provider are a vital part in maintaining a young person's overall health, both in preventive care and identifying any potentially undiagnosed issues. However, recent National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) data show the percentage of children under 18 who had a well-check in the previous 12 months dropped from 93.8% in 2019 to 89% in 2021, and doctor visits dropped from 95.6% in 2019 to 91% in 2021. Even accounting for the pandemic, those numbers are trending in the wrong direction.

The Hazleton Integration Project (HIP), centered in the Luzerne County town of the same name, was designed to provide educational, cultural, and athletic opportunities for economically underserved children and their families, but there is a significant health component that Highmark has supported over the past two years.

With Highmark's funding, in conjunction with partners at the Wright Center, Lehigh Valley Health, and the Greater Hazleton Area School District, HIP ensures that children from the area's most underserved families can afford necessary medical examinations. Due in large part to Highmark's support, program leaders said HIP fulfilled every expectation by providing necessary medical exams to over 100 of the region's neediest children in 2022, as well as accompanying vaccines when necessary.

The program's need will continue to be great in years to come, as many immigrants are relocating or settling into the Hazleton area, but HIP's foundation is strong, making it a reliable resource for children and their families.

## Saint Francis Hospital DELAWARE

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Our work with provider partner Saint Francis Hospital has long been a success, as we sponsored various events in the Wilmington area in recent years, and through Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware's BluePrints for the Community,\* invested in a mobile health program, purchased an ambulance in 2021, and supported their Backpack Weekend Meal Program in 2022. And the best, most certainly, is yet to come.

The hospital announced last year that it would reimagine health care in its community by developing Healthy Village® at Saint Francis, adopting an increasingly popular development model that provides neighborhoods with emergency and acute health needs, behavioral health, long-term services and support, education and skills development, social determinants of health investments, and economic revitalization.

With the help of the hospital's many partners, including Highmark, the goal is to create the ultimate one-stop care setting that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Healthy Village concept and design, trademarked and implemented by Dynamis Advisors, is the gateway to connecting patients and neighborhood residents with other services and support in the community, encouraging modern cross-disciplinary approaches critical to whole-person care: equitable access to health care, treatment for substance use and mental health, career training, education, and affordable housing. This approach equally strengthens critically needed traditional health care services and addresses social determinants of health through trusted partners, woven into a single plan and system of care. Healthy Village at Saint Francis is a snapshot of what the future of health care holds — as it continues to expand access to essential services.

### Community Affairs Fast Facts

In 2022, Highmark supported the **Light of Life Rescue Mission's Thanksgiving Dinner Box Outreach** event, which featured 150 volunteers and staff packing and distribution of 1,750 food packages to families in need.

\*BluePrints for the Community is Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware's donor-advised fund at the Delaware Community Foundation.



# **Economic Stability for Individuals and Families: Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges**

Social determinants of health – social and environmental factors that influence overall health – are being recognized more and more as areas where our efforts can truly lift people to wellness and into positions where they can meet their goals. Reducing unemployment, food insecurity, and housing instability undeniably improves health and economic stability.

## Sisters of Saint Joseph Neighborhood Network NORTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Sisters of Saint Joseph (SSJ) provides leadership and advocacy for Erie region residents and builds partnerships to develop opportunities for personal growth and revitalization in the community. Their Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP) initiative, supported by Highmark, creates and supports affordable housing in some of Erie’s most disadvantaged neighborhoods, which historically suffer from decay, lack of community organization, low educational attainment, high poverty rates, and high crime rates or the perception of high crime. The program was a natural fit for Highmark, which has a long history of supporting efforts to reduce housing instability.

As part of a group of NPP funding partners, Highmark made a six-year commitment to improve housing stability and beautification in areas

surrounding Allegheny Health Network’s Saint Vincent Hospital, which was founded by the Sisters of Saint Joseph. With Highmark’s support, SSJ purchased and renovated six blighted homes for use in the Genesis Homeownership Development Project (three single-family and three multi-family homes) to create and support affordable housing. Additionally, they purchased and removed 12 blighted properties — replacing them with green spaces — and added 29 public art installations and implemented a complete neighborhood facade improvement project, resulting in updated appearances to 69 properties.

The goal was to improve housing stability in Erie’s historic Little Italy, and to make it a more attractive place for current and new residents, businesses, and visitors.



## Central Pennsylvania Food Bank

### CENTRAL AND NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Our veterans dedicate years of their lives through their service, but their sacrifice often extends far beyond the base. Among the many obstacles America's veterans face is hunger. A recent USDA report found greater than 1 in 10 veterans aged 18 to 64 live in households facing food insecurity, and the risk of food insecurity is 7.4% higher among veterans than nonveterans. The figures, unsurprisingly, increase in low-income households.

It is our duty to ensure that those who give so much of themselves can live healthy lives upon completing their service.

Highmark supported Central Pennsylvania Food Bank MilitaryShare and senior programs in late 2022, building on a long history of support for the organization through senior food boxes, backpack programs, and other efforts.

Not unlike a well-organized armed forces operation, MilitaryShare is an efficient mobile pantry, bringing food for distribution to armories, VFWs, American Legions, and other veteran- and military-affiliated locations across the region. The locations create a welcoming culture of respect, inclusion and belonging, as veterans serve veterans. At the monthly distributions, families receive approximately 60 pounds of food items, including fresh produce, fresh milk, eggs, cheese and shelf-stable pantry items, such as soup, pasta sauce, and cereal. When available, families also receive fresh meat, fish, and poultry products.

Our latest donation came just ahead of the holiday season, underwriting the cost for two distributions. Even better, Highmark employees participated in a Lycoming County distribution where 500 veterans and families received meals.

“To receive a gift like this for having served is a wonderful, wonderful thing, and I greatly appreciate it,” said William, a retired veteran, in a video posted by the food bank. “It certainly does supplement our weekly food allotment that we have to purchase, and thereby decreases the amount of expenses that we have in our home.”

### Community Affairs Fast Facts

Highmark supported and volunteered with **Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania** so that their mobile distribution could serve about 330 unique households in the Erie area each month, providing 25 to 50 pounds of food per household.

# Social and Community Context: Empowering Through Health, Wellness, and Education

Health care is a complex journey, one that requires the right resources and programs for addressing individuals' mental and physical health, as well as enriching their social lives and ties to their community.

Mental health care, the first focus area of Highmark Bright Blue Futures' work in this area, involves programs that improve one's mental health and overall well-being. Additionally, our programs related to physical activity and social connections encourage individuals to improve their health and quality of life through regular physical activity, and to seek out relationships that nurture their emotional, psychological, and physical wellness and growth.



## Gwen's Girls Teen Mental Health Initiative

### SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

When providing lasting mental and physical health resources and social outlets for the community, it's critical to start with some of the youngest community members and introduce formative behaviors and lifestyle tools they can carry with them into adulthood.

The mission of Gwen's Girls, a program in Southwestern Pennsylvania founded in 2002, and supported by Highmark Wholecare, is to empower girls and young women to lead productive lives through holistic, gender-specific programs, education, and experiences.

The organization was founded by late Pittsburgh Police Commander Gwen Elliott, one of the first African American female police officers in 1976, and the first woman promoted to Sergeant, and ultimately, Commander. Gwen was inspired to work with women and girls from early on in her career. She witnessed the struggles of young women and girls who interacted with law enforcement and decided to

start her own agency to improve the quality of life of girls and women, and of their children and future generations.

Gwen's Girls Teen Mental Health Initiative engages teen girls in a youth mental health curriculum and exposes them to fun, artistic, and creative ways to express themselves and support others in their community. In addition to attending two-hour sessions each week, girls are given the opportunity to use the skills they've gained to "pay it forward" by becoming ambassadors around teen mental health issues. The program consists of three cohort groups of up to 10 teen girl participants, with a total of 30 girls participating annually.

Not everyone receives the same amount of encouragement, guidance, and resources in academic and community spaces. The Teen Mental Health Initiative program ensures that Black girls and young women are given the confidence and tools to succeed in school, at home, and out in the world.

## Ks for Kids

### WEST VIRGINIA

Highmark recognizes the tremendous value that local nonprofits and charities hold for the communities they serve. To continue honoring the impact of local charities, every year, Highmark West Virginia supports a different nonprofit benefiting West Virginia children and youth.

Last year, through the Ks for Kids program, Highmark West Virginia teamed up with West Virginia-based minor league baseball teams, the Charleston Dirty Birds and the West Virginia Black Bears, for the eighth year in a row to support WV KIDS COUNT and Variety the Children's Charity.

WV KIDS COUNT is the leading source for data on child and family well-being in the state. It has been championing the needs of kids and families for more than 30 years through funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, state-level foundations, government grants, corporations, and individuals.

Another organization addressing the needs of youth and families, Variety the Children's Charity delivers vital medical equipment and services to children around the world who are sick, disadvantaged, or living with disabilities.



## Fitness on the Field

### WESTERN NEW YORK

Last year, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York hosted the second annual Fitness on the Field program, providing community members with free health and wellness classes and initiatives. The program's theme was 'Workout Like a Pro,' and six fitness instructors participated, each holding their own 30-minute workout classes on the field of Highmark Stadium, home of the Buffalo Bills.

In 2022, 811 people participated in the classes, many of whom registered for more than one class, contributing to a total of 1,939 workouts over the course of the day.

In addition to free fitness classes, participants were able to hear from a major fitness influencer and Peloton instructor about her personal mental health journey and challenges.

Through partnerships with fitness instructors, the Buffalo Bills and several vendors, Highmark was able to maximize our engagement with community members and advance the program's mission of making health and fitness accessible and enjoyable for as many people as possible.

### Community Affairs Fast Facts

Highmark provided a high level of support to **Keystone Human Services'** Susquehanna Service Dogs program the past four years as they built a new facility in Central Pennsylvania to raise, train, and place dogs with children and adults with disabilities.

## Fitness at the Plaza

### NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK

Another free fitness program, Fitness at the Plaza, hosted by Highmark Blue Shield of Northeastern New York in partnership with the Office of General Services, provided free classes to communities in Albany, New York. The classes are offered twice a week and geared toward individuals of all fitness levels and backgrounds.

Over the course of the program, more than 11,000 people have participated in Fitness at the Plaza's winter and summer classes. Many participants have shared positive feedback about their experiences with the program, expressing how the ease of accessibility enabled them to kick off their weight loss journey and take active steps in prioritizing their physical health and wellness.

# Education Access: Equitable Support for Students and Families

Thousands of students throughout the U.S. lack the resources and financial support needed to build professional and life skills to advance in their chosen careers. Highmark works with organizations across the enterprise to increase access to educational opportunities through training for specific career fields, advancing skillsets in educational areas like health care and medical training, and providing scholarships to higher education programs that help individuals achieve their goals and continue to successful and fulfilling career paths.



## Say Yes

### WESTERN NEW YORK

In its commitment to improving racial, health, and education equity in under-resourced communities, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York has offered significant support for Say Yes, an organization in Buffalo, NY that provides scholarships and other student supports to further the educational opportunities of Buffalo Public School students. The organization was founded in 2011 by a diverse group of community leaders aiming to strengthen the economy by investing in the education of Buffalo's future workforce.

When reflecting on the organization's work with Highmark, Say Yes Buffalo CEO David Rust has said, "I'm grateful to Highmark for helping improve racial and health equity in Buffalo communities, and trusting and supporting the organization's delivery of scholarships, apprenticeships and critical services to young people in the city."

Say Yes continues to grow its impact each year through school-based comprehensive care coordination, health promotion, patient and family support, and service referrals to local students in need. Say Yes Buffalo's Career Pathway Program has employed dozens of interns to gain experience in fields such as technology, software, and corporate banking since 2015, a testament to its commitment to enhancing the educational and career attainment of young people in Buffalo, and fostering opportunities for continued learning, success, and community growth.

### Community Affairs Fast Facts

Highmark Health received the **Pittsburgh Public Schools Career and Technical Education Division Industry Partner Award** in 2022.







## NEED

### SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Many Pennsylvanians experience disparity due to the state's educational opportunity gaps related to race and income levels. The Negro Educational Emergency Drive (NEED), a Pittsburgh organization that helps students learn about, plan for, and enroll in higher education, has helped over 32,000 students access the resources they need to achieve their educational and career goals since its founding in 1963.

NEED works to transform outcomes for underserved youth in the Greater Pittsburgh region by providing enrichment programs, mentorship, career development, educational trips, scholarship assistance, and socially impactful activities, all with the goal of creating safe and inclusive learning environments and nurturing college-bound, civic-minded leaders.

Since 2010, with support from Highmark, NEED has made strides in eradicating factors that lead

to systemic poverty by creating optimal learning environments and giving students and their families the tools they need to succeed, both in and out of the classroom.

The program has also received ongoing support from families, churches, alumni, corporations, and in-kind donations, which have enabled them to invest in a strong, successful, and sustainable future for Pittsburgh youth and the Pittsburgh region's economy.

With support from Highmark, NEED held tours and lectures at 20 Historically Black Colleges and Universities and historical sites. The organization provided dorm room supplies to students, including bedding, toiletries, and towels, to relieve some of the emotional and financial stress associated with obtaining essential resources.



# **Neighborhood and Built Environment: Improvements for Healthier, Safer Living for Students and Families**

The impact of the built environment on community health and safety goes beyond just having physical spaces available for community use (although that's a large part of it). It also involves creating programs and resources that provide tangible solutions to common obstacles influencing community members' physical, mental, and emotional health. These solutions include programs that enhance one's sense of well-being and encourage healthy interpersonal living conditions; address access (or lack of access) to transportation; mitigate environmental risk factors such as poor air quality, water, and sanitation; and build infrastructure, such as trails and bike programs, for community recreation and exercise.





## Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation

### SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Since opening its doors in 2021 as Pittsburgh's first indoor community ice rink in 25 years, the Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Hunt Armory Ice Rink has cemented its reputation as a pillar of the community by championing youth, both on and off the ice, through the power of hockey.

The Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Hunt Armory has provided opportunities to community members who previously did not have access to public rinks. The facility is now the headquarters for the Penguins' diversity and community programming, advancing its mission to increase community access to the game of ice hockey across Pittsburgh and beyond, and to house several programs targeting increased diversity within the sport.

After the success of the seasonal rink in 2021, programming expanded in 2022. Highmark's support focused on programs with increased diversity and

community accessibility, including Learn to Skate; Little Penguins Learn to Play; Try Hockey for Free; after-school instructional hockey programs and free community skate parties.

The rink also launched a hockey league in partnership with the Pittsburgh Warriors, with a focus on physical and mental healing for veterans. The league is the first of its kind in North America, comprised entirely of veterans with service-connected disabilities.

Through its work with the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation and support from Highmark and other founding partners, the Armory has become a hub for league-leading diversity, community programming, and affordable public skating and hockey.





# Community and Economic Resilience

Last year was unique and challenging in many ways. However, the myriad and diverse regions in Highmark's footprint overcame their trials and made us proud to be part of their story. In our efforts to support their communities and economic resilience, we invested resources in moving diversity, equity, and inclusion forward in a transformative way; provided a network of direct services to those in need; helped students and jobseekers prepare for success; improved the standards of living and fostered well-being; and brought joy to and built bridges between cultures. It's a large task, but one well worth doing.

# Triumphing Over Tragedy: Jefferson Avenue Community Support

## WESTERN NEW YORK

On May 14, 2022, a supermarket on Jefferson Avenue in Buffalo's East Side became the setting for hate and violence, as 10 lives were lost in a shooting. Out of the tragedy, however, we and the nation saw the perseverance of a community determined to not give in to hate, but to band together for the victims, their families, and their neighbors.

Highmark is proud to play a role in the healing, joining great organizations such as Resource Council of WNY, FeedMore WNY, Peacemakers, Buffalo Urban League, Buffalo NAACP, and many more. Indeed, since that tragic day, Highmark's commitment to the neighborhood, team members, and partners remains strong as we work toward a more equitable future.

The supermarket was closed immediately following the shooting, shutting off a vital link to food and supplies for the neighborhood, so within 24 hours, Highmark associates came together to collect and distribute food, diapers, and baby formula to residents in need. We continue to provide ongoing support today, including financial assistance for mental health services, food security, diaper and formula drives, and volunteer events.

Not the least of these measures are those that honor Katherine "Kat" Massey, a victim of the shooting who worked for Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York for 40 years before retiring in 2011. She also spoke out against gun violence and was a well-known East Buffalo resident. In her honor, Highmark awarded a grant to We Are Women Warriors, a nonprofit she co-founded to aid inner-city residents in socioeconomic, educational, environmental, and criminal justice matters. Additionally, Highmark established a scholarship fund in her name to benefit students from Buffalo Public Schools, recognizing her lifelong contributions to the school district.

“Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York is a champion of health and hunger relief, and we value its longstanding partnership with FeedMore WNY. In the wake of the horrific mass shooting in Buffalo on May 14, 2022, the team at Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York immediately mobilized to support our East Buffalo neighbors with donations of food and household necessities. For weeks, dedicated Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York employees volunteered in FeedMore WNY’s warehouse and at our emergency food distribution sites, providing critical resources and spreading hope. Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York’s commitment to the region continues to improve the quality of life in our community.”

**Tara A. Ellis**

President and CEO,  
FeedMore WNY



# Celebrating Juneteenth

## ENTERPRISE-WIDE

Highmark works with patients, families, and communities from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, and we're lucky to have employees of different identities at all levels of our organization who offer unique perspectives around health care and community needs.

It's not enough to simply work with diverse populations, though — in order to uphold our promise of being open, inclusive, and supportive to all, and welcoming and valuing new ideas, experiences, and fresh perspectives, Highmark is committed to continually educating ourselves and our communities about the history and daily experiences of all demographics we work with and serve.

Equipping the Highmark team with knowledge of diverse identities and experiences not only allows us to be better, more compassionate community members, but it also enables us to improve our outreach and services to meet the needs of all Highmark customers and communities more effectively.

As of June 17, 2021, Juneteenth (June 19), the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the end of slavery in the United States, is now an official federal holiday observed in cities and states across the country.

Highmark supports Juneteenth celebrations across our footprint. In 2022, Highmark sponsored several Juneteenth celebrations in Bethlehem, Harrisburg, York, Pittsburgh, Johnstown, and State College, Pa.

As an official Western Pennsylvania Juneteenth health care partner, Highmark Wholecare, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, and Allegheny Health Network provided health screenings and educational opportunities to members on-site at our locations.

BOLD (Black Organization for Leadership and Development), one of Highmark's BRGs (Business Resource Groups) that is supported by the Enterprise Equitable Health Institute (EEHI) Center for Health and Racial Equity, has played a significant role in Highmark's support of a diverse and inclusive workforce, and of its celebration of holidays like Juneteenth, which uphold those values. Through its empowerment of Black employees in achieving great business results for the workplace, marketplace and community, and its activities and leadership perspective, BOLD continues to strengthen Highmark's environment and celebration of diversity within the organization and throughout the community. Highmark's other BRGs, Abilities, EAST (Exploring Asian Societies and Traditions), Next!, PRIDE (People Respecting Inclusion Diversity & Equity), SALUD (Strengthening Awareness of Latino culture Using and understanding Diversity;



Latino/Hispanic), V.E.T.S. (Voices of Employees That have Served; Military/Veterans) and Women of Highmark served as allies to BOLD in these efforts because Juneteenth celebrates all of us.

In 2021, Highmark began a day of celebrations with a parade of 100 Highmark employees led by BOLD, honoring the African American Emancipation Day and embracing the holiday as a time for reflection, improvement, action, and change.

In addition, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware sponsored the Delaware Juneteenth Freedom Festival at Tubman Garret Park. Throughout Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Schenectady, New York, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of

Western and Northeastern New York contributed to several regional Juneteenth programs, including Juneteenth of Buffalo: We Are Black History...Since 1976 at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, Juneteenth Scholarship Banquet in Niagara Falls, and Juneteenth at Schenectady Central Park.

Highmark was able to introduce more programming in 2022 to shine a light on the diverse identities, stories, and lives of our membership and employees spanning across each of the regions we serve, and we look forward to creating even more opportunities to celebrate Juneteenth and other culturally significant holidays this year and in future years.





# The Experiences That Unite Us: Arts and Culture

## ENTERPRISE-WIDE

Research findings from the World Health Organization demonstrate the powerful, undeniable health benefits of exposure to arts and cultural activities. Not only can art help us to emotionally navigate the challenges that come with illnesses or injuries, but it can also help us process difficult emotions in times of crisis, communicate valuable messages across cultural and political divides, and help certain populations process and learn from their individual and collective experiences to improve their overall well-being.

The arts and cultural experiences Highmark invests in provide more than just museum trips and plays for communities — they encourage social and emotional well-being; build human connection, curiosity, and understanding; introduce community members to new voices and perspectives; and help support the growing economies of the regions we serve.

Just like partnering with children and family organizations helps us strengthen our relationships with the many communities we work with and optimize the care and resources we provide them, supporting vibrant art and culture also empowers the diverse communities we serve, and enhances their quality of life.

### **Highmark's support of creative expression and community experiences stretches across our entire footprint, including:**

- Attractions in Southwestern Pennsylvania such as the Carnegie Museums, Highmark Sportsworks at the Carnegie Science Center, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and Highmark First Night, and the Highmark Blues and Heritage Festival.
- Highmark has played an active role in ensuring the success of the August Wilson African American Cultural Center's mission of celebrating the African American journey and highlighting its unique role in the creation of popular culture in America and beyond.
- In Central Pennsylvania, Highmark has sponsored the Fulton Festival of New Works' Stories of Diversity Education Program, a festival showcasing theater from a spectrum of diverse perspectives, including the voices of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQ+ artists, and individuals with diverse religious and economic backgrounds. It has also supported the Harrisburg Symphony Association, which draws musicians from around the region and country.
- Through Highmark's ongoing support and sponsorship, the Mid-Ohio Valley Multi-Cultural Festival in West Virginia has continued to offer the public a diverse mix of music, dance, and food that is reflective of the country's cultural melting pot.
- In 2022, as part of its outreach in New York, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York was a presenting sponsor for a performance by the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and Tony and Grammy award-winning singer Leslie Odom Jr. Highmark also supported Buffalo's AKG Art Museum: Art Truck, a mobile center for hands-on artmaking that offers activities, classes, and workshops for individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and ability levels.





Arts and cultural events serve a valued role in bringing people from all walks of life together to understand and appreciate lived experiences outside of their own. For the best interest of its employees, members and the communities it serves, Highmark will continue to invest in the inspiring creativity and expression that is born out of and surrounds each location across its footprint.





# Community Health and Employee Engagement Programs

Highmark Bright Blue Futures' efforts are not only centered on financial support. Our team is on the ground level, hosting and offering helping hands in volunteer efforts within the communities we serve. These experiences are among the most fulfilling and important we have, allowing us to meet individuals face-to-face and see the difference we strive to make.

# How Our Leaders Help Change Lives: Executive Profiles

Leading by example is not a cliché, but a key tenet driving Highmark's service efforts. Our executives live up to that mission and our values, personally and professionally. These are just some of their stories.





## Tom Doran

President,  
Highmark Health Plan

Since childhood, Tom Doran has been dedicated to serving others — and the newly named Highmark Health Plan president shows no signs of slowing down.

“You consider what you can do for the community,” said Doran, who has been with Highmark since 2017 and took on his current role in January 2023. “That’s something I’ve been doing my entire life.”

Doran’s devotion to service became even stronger and far more personal when his now 27-year-old son was diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome, a condition on the autism spectrum. Now, he serves on the board of directors with the Western Pennsylvania chapter of Autism Speaks, helping families and individuals become educated on the condition and dispel stigma surrounding it.

“One of the lessons someone taught me is that when you have folks with disabilities who are ‘mainstreamed,’ it doesn’t just impact the person with disabilities, it impacts everybody. You get a better community,” said Doran, a member of the Knights of Columbus who also is on the board for the Children’s Institute of Pittsburgh and new to the Light of Life Rescue Mission’s board. “I think, ultimately, that’s why I’m on some of these boards. I want to improve health outcomes and quality of life for everyone in the community.”

That dovetails with the mission of Highmark Bright Blue Futures, which has initiatives across a wide area, from large cities with diverse populations to rural towns that are often disconnected from vital health services. The nature of and need for those services varies by the region, but they perhaps have never

been more necessary, following multiple years of the pandemic, economic anxieties stemming from inflation, and more ongoing crises.

“There’s more urgency, but there’s always a need, and there’s always been a need for organizations like Highmark to do something for the community,” Doran said. “We know what the issue of the year has been for the past few years, but the reality is there will be something next year. It’ll be a sad event, a weather event — we’ll all need to rally to solve it.”

Certainly, Highmark Bright Blue Futures will be on the forefront in those moments. Going forward, Doran foresees the initiatives continuing to improve more lives in its focus areas of community health and improving the economic well-being and quality of life in those same communities. That expansion will include the Philadelphia area beginning in 2024. And beyond geography, Doran is expanding his own efforts.

He recently joined the board for Light of Life, which provides nourishing meals, as well as a place to sleep and heal, to Pittsburgh’s homeless population. After an impactful tour of the organization’s North Side facility in the fall, “I was drawn to serve. They have a great mission, and I like the connection to the community.”

It’s another opportunity for Highmark’s leader to add to his lifelong commitment to service, too.

“You set examples for your kids, your peers and coworkers — and that’s really important, because that’s the kind of world where we all want to live, where we’re all trying to help each other as best we can.”





## Ellen Duffield

President and CEO,  
Highmark Wholecare

Leading one of Pennsylvania’s foremost managed care organizations, Ellen Duffield recognizes health goes well beyond physical needs. As president and CEO of Highmark Wholecare, she sets the operational and strategic course to deliver high-quality Medicaid and Medicare dual-eligible plans focused on whole person care to more than 400,000 members

It’s a calling that was ingrained at a young age.

“I’ve always been involved in government programs, and I have a strong affinity for the populations we serve,” she said. “I grew up in a multi-generational household, and I saw firsthand the impact of fragmented care, what happens when people don’t engage with the system, and what happens when someone doesn’t have the best outcome.”

That background also goes a long way to explaining Duffield’s focus on improving community health, having worked recently with Habitat for Humanity and Thrive 18, as well as currently serving on boards for Literacy Pittsburgh and the March of Dimes’ local chapter. These organizations each play a vital role in building resilient communities where people can flourish, no matter their circumstances.

Literacy Pittsburgh, for instance, offers free educational programs for adults and families, helping nearly 5,000 people annually. The link between literacy and health is indisputable, and when people can understand and act on their health information — strong “health literacy,” that is — we see better outcomes.

“It’s about addressing the most fundamental needs of the community,” Duffield said, “and what we’re

doing at Highmark and Highmark Wholecare is highly aligned with what these organizations are doing. We’re in the community where our members are — where they live, where they work — and these organizations beside us are building stronger communities.”

Duffield takes deep pride in Highmark’s long history of services and volunteerism, but she also understands the work is never finished. She recalled a visit to a food pantry in Central Pennsylvania over the summer, where she asked how many meals were served each year. The answer was staggering and humbling — more than a half million meals and services provided.

“I grew up in Pennsylvania, I was educated in Pennsylvania, I live in Pennsylvania — and you think you know the state and have an appreciation for what people are going through,” she said. “But when you get out there and work with the individuals who are using the services or providing the services, you realize how critical the work that we do, the work these organizations do, is as a safety net in their communities. The need is significant and has been growing.”

To meet that need, Duffield looks forward to deepening partnerships with community organizations to match Highmark Wholecare’s mission and establishing new relationships throughout the company’s wide footprint — not to mention getting involved at a personal level.

“I always tell people that you get more from volunteering than you give,” she said. “So to me, it’s a tremendous way to connect with and understand our members.”



### **Dr. Roosevelt Allen**

Chief Dental Officer,  
United Concordia Dental

For more than three decades, Dr. Roosevelt Allen both participated in and had a front-row seat to that most unique and solemn brand of service. By serving as a dentist in the U.S. Air Force, including four deployments before retiring as a major general, he absorbed lessons that he carries with him today as United Concordia Dental's chief dental officer.

"It helps you to have a better appreciation of not only the sacrifices the service members make, but also the sacrifices of the family members they leave behind while on deployment," said Dr. Allen, who retired in 2018. "The military is about service to others, and after 32 years, I wanted to continue that service."

Years ago, Dr. Allen's values, based around education and religion, were instilled by his parents and many others, him being the youngest of seven children. And growing up with limited means in rural Virginia, at a time when that part of the country was only beginning to break free of segregation, the support was invaluable.

Now in civilian life, Dr. Allen is dedicated to paying forward his success and supporting others as a leading figure with Highmark's dental solutions partner. His previous experiences emphasized how important access to health care and education are to a patient's well-being. Not to mention, he knows better than most the vital link between oral and systemic health.

"Research shows a large percentage of these chronic conditions — such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, emphysema, glaucoma — are all related to bacteria that occur in the oral cavity," Dr. Allen said.

That's what makes the various charitable, volunteer, and community efforts United Concordia participates in so valuable. Mobile dental clinics, for one, can be found across the organization's service area, bringing the dentist's office to rural areas or neighborhoods where Medicaid members lack easy access to care or transportation.

"It makes a difference to be sensitive to the needs of the families," Dr. Allen said.

It all shows in Dr. Allen's volunteer work, as well, which includes serving on multiple dental school and industry boards and supporting causes for veterans. He's also deeply involved in Lincoln University's (Pa.) alumni association, and along with his wife and the help of Highmark, he is establishing an endowment that will eventually provide scholarships to two new students — one focused on education and another on science.

Dr. Allen also serves on the board for the United Concordia Dental Charitable Fund, which focuses on the pillars of workforce development, providing dental care for the uninsured or underinsured, and diversity and inclusion initiatives, including oral health equity.

"The Fund has provided scholarships to students who are underrepresented in our profession, and we've helped programs to offer free care to the community and veterans, as well," he said.

"If you look at our mission, it's all about ensuring remarkable experiences for our members and they're able to reach their best. It's about eliminating barriers to care, and I think what we're doing is going to eliminate some of those barriers."

# Making a Difference, One Step at a Time: Highmark Walk

The Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community, founded in 2003, is an annual fundraising walk that benefits local health and human service agencies, making a difference, one step at a time. The primary goal of the walk is to provide local health and human service agencies in the communities of Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Erie, Lehigh Valley (Allentown), Laurel Highlands (Johnstown/Altoona), northeastern Pennsylvania (Scranton/Wilkes-Barre), and Wilmington, Delaware, with opportunities to fundraise for their individual missions. Since its inception, more than 500 health and human service nonprofit organizations have raised more than \$17 million through the Walk for a Healthy Community. Highmark coordinates the events and underwrites all costs. One hundred percent of the funds raised go directly to the participating organizations.

**The following pages highlight some of the organizations we assisted in 2022.**







## Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank

2022 Funds Raised: \$22k

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An alarming number of families across Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank’s 11-county service area spend time worrying about where their next meal is coming from, and struggle to get access to nutritious, affordable items that will sustain them. The region has a food insecurity rate of 11.2%, with a food-insecure population of over 267,870 people.

The Food Bank makes a significant impact on the communities it serves by providing people with the foods they want and need most and reducing food insecurity through local outreach and partnerships.

The Food Bank participates annually in the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community to create an opportunity for our partner food pantries to

share their impact with a broader group, and raise much-needed funds to support their work on the neighborhood level. All funds raised go toward purchasing food items to serve families who seek food assistance from local organizations.

Highmark employees lend a hand each year to represent the Food Bank’s mission at the Highmark Walk because they know that to foster happy, healthy, and successful communities, families need the essential, everyday resources to survive and thrive. The Food Bank is also a partner of the AHN Healthy Food Centers and receives significant corporate support from Highmark.

**St. Martin Center, Inc.**  
**NORTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA**  
**2022 Funds Raised: \$7k**

Community members of all ages and walks of life — from senior citizens to students, veterans and families — need support systems to help them pursue their long-term goals, and St. Martin Center, Inc. is a crisis center in Erie, Pennsylvania. that provides emergency services and resources for skill building and goal achievement.

The Center offers solutions to meet families' basic emergency needs, including food and assistance with rent, utilities, life-sustaining prescriptions, transportation, and clothing. Financial literacy counseling, basic budget counseling, and home buying education are additional services the Center provides to help community members build skills in critical areas and accomplish their personal and professional goals.

Additionally, St. Martin's PA WORKWEAR program provides clothing to men for job interviews and employment opportunities, so they can dress for success and feel confident in their professional pursuits.

Last year, with the support of its resources and services, St. Martin Center, Inc. provided financial assistance to 286 people, educated 276 children, and served nearly 3,730 individuals through its food pantry.

As a participant of the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community, the Center has been able to enhance regional awareness of its mission, expand its resources, and grow in its work with the communities it serves.

**Community Affairs  
 Fast Facts**

Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York received the **Stewart Partnership Award** from the YMCA Buffalo Niagara in 2022.



**Caitlin's Smiles**  
**CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA AND LEHIGH VALLEY**  
**2022 Funds Raised: \$20k**

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Caitlin's Smiles, based out of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, another participating organization in the Highmark Walk, was founded as a tribute to Caitlin Mary Hornung, who was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor at the age of 4. Caitlin found joy in creating and sharing art with others, despite her long and painful battle with cancer.

Caitlin's Smiles is dedicated to spreading joy and cultivating confidence and feelings of self-worth in pediatric patients experiencing serious health challenges. Through participating in arts and crafts activities, including Bags of Smiles, individual craft kits, coping kits, and Camp-in-a-Bag, children not only smile more and have something to look forward to outside of the daily struggles they endure in the hospital, but they're also given the opportunity to

explore creative outlets and express themselves and their emotions through art.

Arts and crafts packages are created by the organization's volunteers and shipped or personally delivered to medical facilities to be distributed to staff and children, bringing joy to the medical staff and children's families and contributing to reduced anxiety and feelings of gratitude for all community members working to make a difference in the lives of the patients and their families.

A testament to its reach in hospitals across the region, in 2022, Caitlin's Smiles delivered 11,902 bags of smiles to children, 83,900 craft kits, 19,393 coping kits, and 10,671 toys. Through continued support from passionate volunteers and partners, the organization will bring more smiles to the faces of children and families for years to come.





## Friendship House

### DELAWARE

2022 Funds Raised: \$77K

At Friendship House, everyone has a place to call home. This Delaware organization, which has participated in the Highmark Walk for the past seven years, provides loving, supportive communities to people facing homelessness.

An annual point-in-time count of people experiencing homelessness in Delaware in 2022 revealed that twice as many people were unhoused in the state last year compared to 2020. This reality is due in large part to the impact of COVID-19 on socioeconomic outcomes, and on the accessibility of health care and housing support for vulnerable populations.

Friendship House's clothing banks, empowerment centers, and transitional housing programs have filled

gaps across the state for individuals who are houseless, homeless, and searching for community supports and resources to get back on their feet.

For over 35 years, Friendship House has served individuals and families in Delaware with the support of its volunteers, donors, and community partners like Highmark.

In the past three years, over 1,500 people have participated in the Highmark Walk to support Friendship House's lifesaving and life-changing programs. Highmark is honored to work with such an impactful organization to continue growing its charitable footprint in Delaware and beyond.



# In Alignment With Our Values: Supporting United Way

## ENTERPRISE-WIDE

Highmark's employees care about the communities in which they live, and their contributions to local United Way agencies reflect this. Highmark Health hosts an employee led and driven annual campaign across all regions to support local United Way agencies. United Way's goal of boosting education, economic mobility, and health resources aligns with Highmark's mission and our employees are deeply involved in United Way campaigns and volunteer efforts. In 2022, our employee United Way Campaign raised and contributed more than \$1.1 million for communities across our company's footprint.

**The following reflects some of the employees who were able to make an impact for organizations and causes they care about through the United Way, due to Highmark's support.**



## Miles Urban

Manager, Solution Activation,  
Product and Health Experience  
(Pittsburgh)

Giving back to the community looks different for every person. Some choose to make monetary donations to charities that are important to them, while others lend their time and skills to programs that provide services to people in need.

Miles Urban, a Highmark employee working in solution activation, has been an active volunteer with the United Way Campaign for years, donating to different organizations annually, mentoring a young man through the Big Brothers Big Sisters program several years ago, and serving on the Board of Directors of Ursuline Support Services — an organization that caters to the needs of adults, seniors, and families suffering from abuse, neglect, or financial and emotional distress — for seven years.

“When you donate your time, you’re adding so much capacity to these organizations to be able to get things done that they normally wouldn’t be able to,” said Urban. “You’re freeing them up to do the work that they do best.”

In his current role as vice chair of the Board, Miles leads Ursuline’s development committee and fundraising efforts. He spends a lot of his time searching for unrestricted fundraising opportunities that allow the organization to set aside money and resources for emergency needs that may pop up at any time for senior community members, like flooding in people’s homes, or a heater breaking in the middle of winter.

Over the years, Miles has been impressed with the diverse range of organizations and populations that United Way and its volunteers have impacted. “From A to Z, there’s no gap that United Way can’t fill as far as finding ways to donate money and time to people that need it,” said Urban.

Miles spends at least one day each year participating in a volunteer opportunity through United Way. These often coincide with Highmark workdays that are reserved for employees to spend time giving back to the community. In 2022, he spent a day with over two dozen colleagues to rake leaves to make the grounds accessible and beautify the land at The Woodlands in Wexford, Pennsylvania, a retreat designed to enrich the lives of adults and children with disabilities or chronic illnesses.

There are several ways that United Way’s mission, and the missions of the organizations it supports, align with the mission and values of Highmark.

“So much of Highmark’s focus in recent years has been on improving the health of individuals in the community. If everyone in the community gets stronger and healthier, then from United Way’s mission perspective, the self-reliance of the community also becomes stronger. If you strengthen every link in the chain, then the entire chain becomes stronger and is able to support itself.”



### Maisha Sturdivant

Vice President, Operations  
Health Plan Operations  
(Southwestern Pennsylvania)

Maisha Sturdivant, a Highmark employee, has expanded her support of United Way since joining Highmark in 2018. She is a donor, volunteer, and advocate for awareness of United Way's annual giving campaign.

Maisha reflected on her first opportunity to volunteer for one of United Way's strategic initiatives, refreshing the United for Children five-year strategy to address children's needs in the region, and what resources are needed to support children's futures.

United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania's United for Children initiative, developed in 2020, is one of the Campaign's many programs dedicated to providing children and youth with equitable opportunities and resources needed to succeed in school and life.

"When you think about a child's future, you have to evaluate all the barriers to being successful that exist today, and it comes down to everything from access to literacy, to teaching children differently based on individual needs," said Sturdivant.

"One of the things we talked a lot about was technology and focusing more on equity when it comes to technology. It's very difficult to be successful in life when you don't have basic access to Wi-Fi. There's also literacy as it relates to technology, and the availability of resources for developing that literacy."

Maisha also donates to several community organizations through her United Way contributions, including Best of the Batch Foundation, Sarah Heinz House, Junior Achievement, and Amachi Pittsburgh

— all organizations that enable her to observe and influence United Way's impact on children and their needs and achievements. Maisha also serves on the board of directors of Amachi Pittsburgh, an agency that serves children and families who are adversely impacted by parental incarceration; and Junior Achievement, an agency that inspires and prepares young people to succeed.

Recently, Maisha assisted with grant application processes at United Way. Through this work, as well as her board service and volunteer efforts, Maisha has noticed the strong parallels between Highmark's commitment to addressing social determinants of health, and the values of the human services agencies that United Way supports.

"United Way is an aggregator. It promotes and fosters giving to smaller agencies that are providing vital services to the most vulnerable members in our communities."

In Maisha's experience, being able to donate through payroll deductions to agencies or impact funds has been an easy and efficient way to get involved with United Way and the causes it supports.

"United Way values their donors' opinions," said Sturdivant. "By having the opportunity to participate in how resources are allocated and their regular outreach to identify opportunities for involvement, the whole process is made easy. I really enjoy that."



## **Rob Jordan**

Senior Sales Executive  
Delaware New Sales  
(Delaware)

Through hands-on involvement with United Way and charities like Family Promise, a nationwide organization that houses families in shelter facilities, Rob Jordan, senior sales executive for Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware, has become more aware of the tremendous need for health, housing, and financial assistance in the communities around him.

“We all know the need is out there, but it’s not until you deal with the families one on one, that you see how desperate and dire some of that need is,” said Jordan.

During his time volunteering with Family Promise, he has brought in food and clothing donations for families, as well as cleaned shelters. Over the years, he was inspired to become even more involved with the organization, eventually becoming a member of the board of directors, and now, the president of the local board chapter in Delaware County.

“Supporting the United Way Campaign and its various missions has always been important to me because it dovetails into what we do at Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield,” said Jordan.

He’s been able to lend expertise from his work at Highmark to his role with Family Promise through engagement with mental health agencies, health care agencies, and local entities that service low-income community members.

Rob likes that United Way has a local phone number and office, so he’s able to ask questions and learn more about specific charities he’s interested in. He’s partial to Delaware 211, a local service where the state of Delaware and its hospital systems and nonprofits

share resources community members or volunteers may need to address concerns about housing, financial assistance, or other essential needs.

Other charities Rob has been involved with over the years include Early Education Success, Pride United, the Delaware Boys and Girls Club, and Food Bank of Delaware. Each of these organizations targets causes that Rob is passionate about, like helping children and families, and instilling confidence in young people.

Rob believes United Way makes it very easy to contribute to the variety of charities it supports. Interested community members may select any charities United Way works with and decide what resonates with them, and the kind of impact they want to make on the community.

“For so many years at Highmark, we’ve worked on our mission to help the health of families and communities, so working with United Way has been a nice way to put boots on the ground to the mission we espouse at Highmark and learn about various charities and needs in our area.”



# Hands-On Help: Employee Volunteer Projects

## ENTERPRISE-WIDE

As the world began to open once again in 2022, our team members were inspired to interact and work with our communities at a more personal level. From building places to play to beautifying our neighborhoods, our employee volunteer projects and events meant a great deal to everyone involved. Employees recorded a total of more than 28,000 hours of volunteer time in our enterprise volunteer and giving platform, YourCause, equating to \$852,676 in in-kind donations.

## Playground build

### SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The neighborhood playground is more than just a place for kids to unleash pent-up energy and for parents to take a breather. During play, children learn social skills, develop their fitness, and uniquely explore their world.

Highmark joined a group of business leaders and organizations to support a collaboration between the city, Pennsylvania Municipal League, and KABOOM! — a nonprofit that helps to build kid-designed play spaces in underserved areas. The months-long partnership culminated in October’s three-day “Build Week” installation at the West Penn Park in Pittsburgh’s Polish Hill neighborhood.

Now, neighborhood children have a safe place to play that they literally inspired with drawings of their ideas for the playground.

“Encouraging play and physical activity is vital to the overall health of the youth of our community, and what better way to do so than to provide a new, vibrant playground in the heart of Pittsburgh,” Dan Onorato, executive vice president and chief corporate affairs officer for Highmark Health, said in a release. “Highmark Bright Blue Futures is proud to be a part of the annual Pennsylvania Municipal League playground build. We believe this new community asset will contribute to healthier, brighter and stronger futures for the visitors of West Penn Park.”

### Community Affairs Fast Facts

Highmark partnered with **Allegheny County Parks** in Western Pennsylvania, providing signage to highlight the relationship between nature and health and exercise options in South Park and North Park.



## Mountaineer Food Bank Volunteer Project

### WEST VIRGINIA

Serving over 460 programs and distributing over 23 million pounds of food in 48 West Virginia counties annually, the Mountaineer Food Bank is the state's largest emergency food provider — and one that Highmark is proud to support.

In 2022, through the Highmark West Virginia Charitable Fund for Health, we provided a \$100,000 grant to the food bank's Veterans Table program. The program uses a mobile drive-thru to distribute food and supply boxes, including fresh produce, dairy and proteins, to a monthly average of 1,200 veterans who identify as food insecure. In a state where 7.6% of veterans are unemployed, 8.3% live in poverty, or even just live paycheck-to-paycheck, one box can make an enormous difference.

"A lot of veterans are in need," said James S., a veteran who was interviewed by Mountaineer Food Bank. "Some of us that have 100% disability are still in need, because of the way cost-of-living is, the gas and all that stuff. We've got several on my hill where I live that won't come because they're too proud to ask for help."

In addition to our financial contribution, a group of 50+ Highmark employees, along with Highmark West Virginia President Jim Fawcett, Senior Vice President, Market Executive Steve Seftchick, and Vice President and Executive Medical Director Dr. Caesar DeLeo participated in a November volunteer event in Parkersburg, where they helped assemble 1,500 hygiene kits to be included in the monthly veterans' boxes.

### Community Affairs Fast Facts

Highmark supports and provides volunteers at Elmwood Village Farmer's Market, connecting 107,000 visitors with local farmers over the season.

## Boys and Girls Club

### SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK

With more than a century of experience as a national organization focused on building children's character and helping them reach their potential, Boys and Girls Clubs of America overwhelmingly achieves its goals. The group reports that 97% of Club teens expect to graduate high school and 80% are applying to a post-secondary institution; 75% volunteer in their community; and 89% of members say they "can stand up for what is right."

In September 2022, Highmark employees came together for a busy — and exciting — day of volunteering at a Schenectady, New York Club location. Team members cleared and tidied landscaping, ordered storage closets, cleaned up playrooms, and organized gymnasium equipment. Beautifying and organizing the Club helped to make the space more attractive for kids and parents seeking a safe after-school option for fun and socialization. Team members felt a sense of pride and knew they boosted a group that matched their own values.

## Employee Volunteer Day

### WESTERN NEW YORK

If you were driving through the Buffalo area on the last day of summer last year, you might have seen more than a few members from our team making a difference in the community. Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York held its Employee Volunteer Day on Sept. 21, 2022, with more than 50 team members spread across three locations.

Helping to spruce up some of the city's green spaces, 20 volunteers performed outdoor landscaping and cleanup for Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy. Another volunteer group also spent time outdoors, with 18 team members cleaning and landscaping,

as well as performing some light indoor cleaning at Gerard Place, which provides housing and support programs for unhoused people, single-parent families, and community members in need. Meanwhile, the Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center kept 15 more volunteers busy, as they assisted with indoor/outdoor cleaning, landscaping, greeting patients, and the retail shop.

Altogether, the team volunteered for 102 hours, and they enjoyed the time spent together supporting the communities they love.





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# BrightBlueFutures

community · health · resilience

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