



HERITAGE HEADLINES

HERITAGE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES IS THE ONLY NONPROFIT DEDICATED TO THREE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF SOCIOECONOMIC MOBILITY: TRANSPORTATION, EDUCATION, AND NUTRITION.



Top Pittsburgh Chefs Showcase Their Skills in Unique Culinary Challenge

On Monday, June 9, Pittsburgh's most celebrated chefs will don their chef's whites and summon their creativity to do what the Heritage Nutrition Services team does every day – create nutritious, largely scratch-cooked meals within a budget of \$4.11 per meal.

The Chefs' Challenge, sponsored by Heritage Community Initiatives, will raise much needed funds to offset rising food and gas costs, and expand its kitchen and staff so that the organization can continue to feed at-risk children and seniors.

"For more than a decade, it has been our privilege to design, prepare, and deliver high-quality meals not only for our students at Heritage 4 Kids Learning Center and Heritage Out of School Time, but also for children and seniors served by like-minded organizations across Allegheny County," remarked Paula G. McWilliams, President and CEO of Heritage Community Initiatives. In 2024, Heritage produced more than 200,000 meals – 60% of which are made from scratch – and recorded a 74% increase in contracts, indicating growing demand



for low cost, high quality, USDA compliant meals. McWilliams explained that expanding the kitchen will allow Heritage to accept more contracts and address hunger even more effectively in the future. The individuals served by Heritage are 150% more likely to face food insecurity.

Esteemed Chefs Step Up to Tackle Hunger

The chefs will cook onsite at 800 Braddock Avenue in mobile kitchens to create a meal that adheres to strict USDA nutritional guidelines and includes four components of a federally reimbursable meal:

- ▶ ½ cup canned, fresh, or fresh to frozen vegetables
- ▶ ¼ cup fruit (fresh, canned, or fresh-to-frozen) without added sugars
- ▶ Whole grain (meal, flour, bran, germ), enriched grain (50% whole grains) 1 oz. equivalent
- ▶ Protein 1.5 oz

"This is no small feat," emphasized McWilliams, "but we are so grateful for the enthusiasm with which the chefs are meeting this challenge. Every chef is a winner at this event because by participating, they will be feeding thousands of hungry children and seniors in our area."

"We are delighted to host this event and are so grateful to our chefs and sponsors that are making this evening possible. Their support is instrumental in reducing the number of hungry children and seniors in our region," concluded McWilliams. If you'd like to learn more about the event, sponsorship opportunities, or purchase individual tickets, please contact McWilliams at pmcwilliams@heritageserves.org or visit heritageserves.org/events



Strategic Partnership Between the Pittsburgh Zoo and Heritage Community Initiatives Unlocks New Opportunities

The newly established partnership between the Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium and Heritage Community Initiatives is already generating valuable opportunities for both organizations. Through its collaboration with Heritage, the Zoo is granting unprecedented access to students while leveraging the expertise of Heritage’s education leaders to enhance its onsite professional educational programming for teachers.

About a year ago, the teams at the Zoo and Heritage began shaping a program that has resulted in a mutually beneficial partnership. “I hadn’t known much about Heritage but was immediately struck by the breadth of services it offers to support individuals in Allegheny County,” said Dr. Jenn Torpie, Vice President of Education and Community Engagement for the Pittsburgh Zoo. “As our partnership evolves, I continue to learn more about the unique and personalized approach Heritage takes regarding education and am excited about how we can learn from each other and potentially create a long-term partnership,” she said. Dr. Torpie explained that rarely does the Zoo have the opportunity to adapt programming



for multiple age groups within the same organization, but through the expertise of Heritage education leaders, it is looking at how that knowledge can be applied to other partnerships with non-profits and schools.

Working together, the teams created a year-long program to create hands-on learning opportunities. In December, the Zoomobile arrived at Heritage, fully equipped with a three-banded armadillo, snake, and an American Kestrel falcon that complemented the Heritage curriculum that month. This spring, the organizations will build out plans to include the following:

Adopt an Animal Program – Heritage Out of School Time students will choose an animal, receive information, complete assignments, and view the animal’s behavior during a virtual animal meet and greet. This program enhances their understanding of biology, ecology, and conservation.

Recycled Art Showcase – Heritage 4 Kids Early Learning Center students will commemorate Earth Day by creating a three-dimensional mural using recycled materials that will be displayed at the Zoo.

Pittsburgh Sea Turtle Second Chance Program – The Zoo will bring a terrestrial turtle to Heritage and teach students about the importance of protecting the endangered

sea turtle. To highlight the significance of sea turtle conservation, the Zoo will also offer a video showing the release of the sea turtles it has cared for back into the ocean while answering student questions. This complements Heritage’s reading curriculum and the folk tale, La Tortuga.

End of School Field Trip – Heritage 4 Kids students will visit the Zoo for a behind-the-scenes tour and scavenger hunt to mark the end of the school year.

“This partnership exemplifies our complementary goals and shared commitment to innovation and collaboration,” remarked Jodi Davenport, Senior Vice President of Heritage’s Education Division. “Our work together not only enriches the lives of young people but supports the vital, continued education of teachers.” Davenport explained that for many Heritage students, this initiative is their first exposure to the Pittsburgh Zoo. Her hope is that this experiential learning will inspire students to pursue careers in science, veterinary medicine, and environmental fields. “It is our distinct honor to collaborate with such a highly regarded community resource as the Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium and we eagerly anticipate building even more mutually beneficial partnerships in the years to come,” Davenport concluded.

We Are Grateful to Our Donors

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Investor Focus: Richard King Mellon Foundation

Heritage Community Initiatives relies on support from a variety of investors to sustain its mission and ensure the efficient operation of its business. In this issue, we spotlight the Richard King Mellon Foundation.



Strategic Investment in Education

Heritage has been the beneficiary of the Foundation’s support for nearly 25 years, receiving 12 gifts totaling nearly \$2.5 million over that time. This investment has enabled Heritage to implement education programs and services that have supported more than 8,000 children in Allegheny County over two decades.

Business Impact and Outcomes

With the Foundation’s investment, Heritage:

- Developed and implemented a quantitative assessment framework that enables it to regularly measure and evaluate student performance against the highest standards for child development. By the end of this school year, Heritage will conduct nearly 2,000 student assessments that to date indicate growth across all subject areas.

- Expanded its partnership with UPMC Western Behavioral Health to provide unprecedented social and emotional support for students and educators as they navigate a post-pandemic world. Forty percent of our early-learning students require specialized support.
- Reimagined professional development and created custom career development plans for each teacher
- Bolstered long-term sustainability, with a particular focus on teachers of infants and toddlers to meet demand and create a foundation for early education

Success Metrics Highlight Prudent Use of Funds

A remarkable 98% of school-age children met or exceeded expectations for fine motor skills, cognitive development, and socio-emotional development. Consider these additional achievements:

- 93% of early learners (birth to 5 years) met or exceeded expectations for physical development, mathematics, socio-emotional development, cognitive development, literacy, and language
- 96% of students exceeded national standards in all areas of child development



Essential Support for Continued Growth

“We are beyond grateful for the Foundation’s investment in Heritage and the pivotal role it plays in our ability to make a significant impact on the lives of the individuals we are privileged to serve,” said Paula G. McWilliams, President and CEO of Heritage Community Initiatives. McWilliams explained that as an organization, Heritage has a fundamental obligation to those it serves – and to those who entrust it with their investment – to operate an efficient, responsive, and fiscally sustainable business. “I cannot adequately express our sincere gratitude or the significant impact the Foundation has on the lives of individuals and their families as they continue to build a promising life for themselves and their families.”

Heritage Expands Transportation Offering to Address Increased Community Demand

Heritage Community Initiatives is pleased to announce the relaunch of its non-public transportation program, now retooled and rebranded as Heritage Transportation Solutions. This innovative program is designed to address the growing transportation needs of businesses and organizations that face challenges moving their people and clients from Point A to Point B.

Prior to COVID, organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania, the United Way of

Southwestern Pennsylvania, and Allegheny Health Network counted on Heritage to provide safe and reliable transportation services. The program was paused due to a shortage of qualified drivers.

Heritage Transportation Solutions looks forward to working with like-minded nonprofits and businesses to design and deliver efficient, cost-effective point-to-point transport.

For more information about this program, please contact Molly Allwein, Vice President of Transportation Services, at **412.329.4339** or mallwein@heritageserves.org.



DID YOU KNOW?

Heritage Community Initiatives is the only human service organization in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania designated as a provider of public transportation. For 25 years, and for just 25¢ per ride, it has been our privilege to deliver more than 1.6 million rides, helping individuals in 16 communities across Allegheny County get to work, medical appointments, and the grocery store.





PLEASE JOIN US!

Heritage Community Initiatives Annual Appeal April 1-May 13, 2025

**Your Gift Supports Individuals from More Than
75 Communities in Allegheny County**

Your gift of \$5 or more enables Heritage to provide services that support three essential areas that positively impact socioeconomic mobility: transportation, education, and nutrition.

Please consider a one-time or monthly donation.

Multiply Your Impact!

\$5 x 5

\$25 will provide 100 rides for those who use Heritage Transportation Services

\$5 x 15

\$75 will cover one tank of gas so our vehicles can deliver meals to at-risk children and seniors

\$5 x 20

\$100 will support one week of behavioral and social support for a student in need

\$5 x 30

\$150 will feed one student breakfast, lunch, and snack for a month

\$5 x 50

\$250 will help send one child to Heritage Out of School Time summer camp for one week

\$5 x 60

\$300 will underwrite the education of one child for one week at Heritage 4 Kids Early Learning Center

Heritage needs you! Please visit heritageserves.org/donate-now to learn more and donate today. We are grateful for your support!



Homemade Meatloaf (Serves about 8)



Ingredients

3½ pounds of 80/20 ground beef

½ cup breadcrumbs

1 egg

½ large onion, chopped

3 parsley sprigs, chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

Savory Topping

½ cup of ketchup

Brown sugar to taste

Chili sauce to taste

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Combine first six ingredients but do not overmix

Place in a loaf pan or on baking sheet if you prefer a crispier exterior

Bake for one hour or until the meat thermometer reads at least 160 degrees

ENJOY!

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Donate Today.



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