



HERITAGE HEADLINES

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Serving the Foundation of Economic Development – People

Pragmatic Programs Address Access and Basic Needs



At the core of economic development are individuals who have access to essential resources and who are driven to build a better life for themselves and their families. And while the burgeoning growth of technology, medicine and esteemed academic institutions is a boon to our Region’s continued evolution, Heritage Community Initiatives has dedicated over 40 years to becoming the only human service nonprofit expert in providing

the foundation necessary for that growth – access to the fundamentals of Transportation, Education and Nutrition.

- **TRANSPORTATION**
- **EDUCATION**
- **NUTRITION**

We are privileged to serve thousands of under-resourced individuals from more than 80 communities in

Southwestern Pennsylvania through our innovative programs that directly target socioeconomic mobility. Due to the increasing needs in our Region, Heritage Community Initiatives has doubled in growth over the last five years and now drives \$33.3 million in economic and societal impact into the Regional economy each year.

We ask you to consider investing in our work. Please learn more by visiting heritageserves.org.

THOSE WE ARE PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

OVER
90%

of student households hold at least one job

NEARLY
50%

report an annual household income less than \$25,000

OVER
78%

of riders do not have access to a vehicle

ON AVERAGE,
28%

have experienced food insecurity in the last year

NEARLY
56%

of households are female headed



Removing Transportation Barriers for Just 25¢ a Ride



For twenty-five years, Heritage Community Initiatives has played a key role in the Region’s transportation sector, offering two unique types of transportation services.

Public Transportation Service – In 2013, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania made a ground-breaking decision to name a human service nonprofit a provider of public transportation – required to follow all operational and compliance regulations as any other transit agency in the state. Heritage Community Transportation was honored to take up that mantle and has been offering a fixed-route service to 16 communities in eastern Allegheny County that complements the routes of Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT). Our

riders - more than 54% of whom have an average annual household income that falls below Federal Poverty Guidelines - reflect the proud diversity of our Region. To date, over 1.6 million rides have been provided for the cost of a quarter (25¢).

61% of riders connect to PRT routes.

Non-Public Transportation Service – The needs of our fellow nonprofits to ensure their constituents have access to their services has never been more urgent. Heritage’s Non-Public Transportation division has established collaborations with multiple organizations to remove barriers to mobility. We are pleased

to welcome Young Black Motivated Kings and Queens, a community-based organization in Penn Hills, to this program.

ON AVERAGE **50%** of riders use our service to get to work.

“ I think it is a wonderful service for so many reasons. Heritage provides safe, dependable much needed service to communities in the area that really need transportation that they can afford. ”
Anonymous rider from Monroeville

Thinking Outside the Box to Expand Transportation Access

The lack of transportation is often a barrier to people accessing community services and prevents individuals from getting and keeping jobs. To help address that need, Heritage Community Transportation introduced our Courtesy Card program in 2021.

The program provides service-based organizations with the ability to distribute rider cards to their constituents, affording them free, unlimited rides on Heritage Community Transportation for three months.

We have been honored to work with the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank and WIC in the past. Heritage is now collaborating with three new organizations – Auberle, Catholic Charities and PA CareerLink. Here is how they are using the cards:



Auberle is distributing the cards to recipients who are part of their Workforce Development, Housing, Young Adult Services, Foster Care, and Behavioral Health programs. These cards are crucial for homeless mothers to access housing and unemployed people to reduce barriers to meaningful employment.



Catholic Charities is using the cards to support three programs: Crisis Case Management, Pregnancy and Parenting Support, and Housing and Shelter programs. Clients will use our transportation service to connect with community services as well as travel to work, school, childcare, grocery stores, and medical appointments.



PA CareerLink is using the cards to facilitate transportation to and from their location at Penn Center in Wilkins township. Once at PA CareerLink, clients can participate in job fairs, resume assistance, career counseling, employer screenings, and online job search. Courtesy cards will also help individuals get to interviews and workplaces.



New Education Infrastructure Invests in Students and Teachers

Our human-centric approach supports workforce development and academic excellence

Heritage Community Initiatives understands the need to be flexible and regularly review how we deliver our services. We course correct based on feedback so that we can meet the ever-changing needs of those whom we are privileged to serve. This concept is clearly evidenced by the introduction of a new infrastructure in our Education Department – a department that has benefited more than 8,000 children residing in over 70 communities through our nationally-recognized Heritage 4 Kids Early Learning Center and Heritage Out of School Time (HOST) programs.

In the current school year, we changed our framework in Education to include two divisions – Operations, to ensure the efficient and effective running of the business and a division of Child and Professional Development to focus

on the myriad of challenges facing our educators and students. This latter division reflects the organization’s willingness to make an investment now and for the future.

Our Child and Professional Development team now concentrates on three key areas – the professional development of our educators, ongoing measurement and assessment of our curricula to enhance student academic achievement, and behavioral support. This infrastructure speaks to the systemic challenge of recruiting and retaining educators in the early learning sector as well as the impact of the pandemic on the academic, social, and emotional growth of our students. Our approach is human-centric – professionals in the classroom working daily with teachers and students to provide coaching, mentoring, and customized plans to

maximize their growth. To address the equally important social and emotional health of our students, Heritage also expanded its long-time partnership with UPMC Western Behavioral Health. Under this agreement, experts at UPMC offer customized, on-demand, live support in our classrooms. This approach is not only unprecedented for an organization the size of Heritage, but it also demonstrates Heritage’s understanding that behavioral and socialization needs vary from person to person and that there is tremendous value in a hands-on approach in development of adults and children alike.

96% of our students exceed national standards in all areas of child development

Addressing Food Insecurity in Southwestern Pennsylvania

Rising costs and limited space are challenges to feeding hungry children

Heritage Community Initiatives is honored to lead with action and collaboration to reduce food insecurity in our area. In 2024, Heritage experienced a 74% increase in contracts to design, prepare, and transport meals for at-risk children. And while we are privileged to feed those in need, addressing food insecurity is not without challenge. Consider these statistics:

- Food costs have increased by 25.8% in the last three years
- The cost to prepare scratch cooked meals for children far outpaces the reimbursement rate (\$4.25/lunch) paid by the USDA and does not address the significant delta of Heritage’s actual costs
- We serve over 200,000 meals annually to at-risk children
- 60% of our meals are made from scratch in a 619 square foot kitchen

A Plan to Feed Even More

To ensure our nutrition program has the capacity to not only continue its current level of service but to address increasing demand as well as face the reality that our current lease expires in 2027, Heritage must relocate our kitchen. A larger kitchen with appropriate equipment will enable Heritage to serve 50% more youth while providing consistent, continuous service to current programs and partners such as the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.

Help us meet rising food and gas costs, purchase new equipment, increase our workforce, and expand our kitchen so that we can feed even more children.

Heritage Community Initiatives is an excellent partner in the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank’s journey to end childhood hunger. We have worked together for many years to feed kids in Allegheny County year-round.

Kelsey Gross, director of Child Nutrition Programs, Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank

Partnering to Crush Child Hunger

Partners and providers turn to Heritage Nutrition Services for counsel and support when it comes to tackling hunger in our area. For example, while the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank supplies food, it needs organizations like Heritage Community Initiatives to prepare and deliver meals.



This summer, Heritage prepared and delivered on average 2,790 meals per day, making it one of, if not the largest summer feeding program in the region. Working out of our small, bare-bones kitchen, the team began their day at 4:45 a.m. and traveled 153 miles round trip delivering food to 26 sites across Allegheny County. And when the food bank needed additional support, Heritage stepped up and agreed to feed children in Greene County by delivering food to an additional six sites twice a week.

Please Support Heritage. Donate Today.





Test Your Heritage Knowledge

- The economic and societal impact of Heritage results in more than \$33.3 million infused into the regional economy each year.
T or F
- What percentage of Heritage's staff have been with the organization for more than a decade?
a. 2%
b. 17%
c. 10%
- How much of every dollar donated does Heritage reinvest in programs?
a. \$.80
b. \$.62
c. \$.90
- In the last five years, Heritage Community Initiatives has doubled in growth.
T or F

Answer key: 1 - True, 2 - b, 3 - c, 4 - True



Yummo! A Recipe You're Sure to Love

Our smallest chefs and biggest culinary critics agree that this recipe is one you'll want to try at home:



Crispy Chicken Thighs (Serves 4)

Ingredients

3 pounds of fresh chicken thighs (approximately 5-6 thighs)

Seasoning:

2 TBSP Italian seasoning (may use dry seasoning for a rub OR fresh snipped basil, thyme, rosemary and garlic – your preference)

2 tsp of salt

2 tsp black pepper

2 tsp garlic salt

2 tsp onion powder

1 tsp paprika

Preheat oven to 400 degrees

Wash and clean chicken thighs. Pat them dry and arrange on a baking sheet.

Drizzle 4 TBSP of olive oil over chicken and rub to coat

In a small bowl mix all dry seasonings and sprinkle evenly over all chicken thighs.

Bake chicken in a preheated oven for 35-40 minutes or until internal temperature of the chicken thighs reaches 165 degrees and holds for 30 seconds.

ENJOY!

Please Support Heritage. Donate Today.



IF YOU BELIEVE...

- › Exceptional early learning and out of school time should be attainable for all children regardless of their zip code...
- › Affordable transportation should be accessible for individuals, allowing them to work and reach health care...
- › Healthy, scratch-made meals should be available for children who need them...

...then please help Heritage Community Initiatives by giving at heritageserves.org/donate-now



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