



Beyond 2020

*“Those who look only to the past
or the present are certain
to miss the future.”*

—John F. Kennedy

2020 Community Awards

QUARTERS ONLY

Quality Builder since 1951



Mistick Construction is proud to partner with Mon Valley Initiative on the upcoming Clairton Inn renovations project.



MISTICK CONSTRUCTION
1300 Brighton Road | Pittsburgh, PA | 15233
412.322.1121
www.mistickconstruction.com

The board and staff of Mon Valley Initiative thank the people of Mistick Construction Co. for being a presenting sponsor of our 2020 Community Awards.

- Emergency Restoration Services
- Fire Damage • Water Damage • Smoke Damage
- Wind Damage • Vandalism Damage
- Mold Mitigation • Disaster Relief Services



Call Our
EMERGENCY HOTLINE
1-800-878-3770

Locally owned and operated, Disaster Restoration Services of Greater Pittsburgh is the largest full-service restoration contractor in the Pittsburgh area.

We have the staff, equipment and facilities to handle the restoration of any residential or commercial property, including structure cleaning, contents cleaning and complete construction services. We offer 24-hour emergency service and can respond immediately to any property claim in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

www.drspittsburgh.com
412-362-7000



The board and staff of Mon Valley Initiative thank the people of DRS Pittsburgh for being a presenting sponsor of our 2020 Community Awards.



Beyond 2020



President John F. Kennedy speaks to a crowd later estimated at 25,000 people along Donner Avenue in Monessen, Oct. 13, 1962.

*“Those who look only to the past
or the present are certain
to miss the future.”*

—John F. Kennedy

Table of contents

About Mon Valley Initiative	4
Mission statement	5
Advisory groups	5
CEO’s message	6
List of officers and directors	7
List of MVI staff	8
Sen. H. John Heinz III Award	10
Regional Partnership Award	12
<i>Community Partner Awards</i>	
Braddock	14
Downtown West Newton	15
East Pittsburgh	16
Monessen	17
Pitcairn	18
Swissvale	19
Turtle Creek	20
Institutional Donors, 2019–20	21
Individual Donors, 2019–20	23

About Mon Valley Initiative

The Mon Valley's communities, located along the Monongahela and Youghiogheny rivers in Allegheny, Washington and Westmoreland counties, south of Pittsburgh, were deeply damaged more than 30 years ago when the driving forces of the region's industrial economy moved away or closed.

Although parts of the Pittsburgh area have recovered, the effects of that rapid, unprecedented decline are still felt in many communities in the form of blighted and abandoned buildings, substandard housing and higher-than-average unemployment and poverty rates. People living in the Mon Valley still need better-quality housing, financial and life coaching, job skills development and community planning and organizing.

Mon Valley Initiative, founded in 1988, works to improve the lives of people in the Mon Valley area by helping to rebuild community infrastructure and connecting employers to people seeking new jobs and careers.

We do this by delivering quality services to the people of the Mon Valley, including housing counseling, real estate and community development and workforce and business development.

We also partner with other local advisory groups and community development corporations that together engage more than 100 local volunteers to think about, and find solutions to, our common and connected problems. In addition, since its 2004 merger with Housing Opportunities Inc., MVI has served as a national intermediary for other housing counseling agencies that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

As conditions in the Mon Valley have changed and evolved, MVI has shifted its strategic goals. Today, MVI serves as both a support network for other community development corporations and local advisory groups, as well as a CDC and service provider of its own.

From its offices in the heart of the Mon Valley, MVI continues—in the words of its vision statement—“working together to unite the communities and restore the economic vitality of the Mon Valley.”

Our mission

Mon Valley Initiative strengthens the Mon Valley region by responsibly investing in our people and places.

We are carrying out our mission by:

- Working together with local residents and stakeholders
- Providing career and financial coaching to individuals
- Developing residential and commercial properties
- Delivering technical assistance services to our partners

Our partners and local advisory groups

Local advisory groups and community development corporations have been indispensable to Mon Valley Initiative since its foundation in 1988.

Volunteer-led, grassroots organizations such as these serve as key contacts for MVI staff in the communities that Mon Valley Initiative serves:

Braddock Economic Development Corp.
Downtown West Newton, Inc.
East Pittsburgh Economic Development Corp.
Greater Charleroi Community Development Corp.
Monessen Community Development Corp.
North Braddock Cares, Inc.
Pitcairn Community Renaissance, Inc.
Swissvale Economic Development Corp.
Turtle Creek Development Corp.

A message from the chief executive officer



Mon Valley Initiative was born out of crisis, so we're used to being resilient, but 2020 has tested everyone at levels few of us could have imagined.

I am grateful to our staff, who so quickly adapted to collaborating remotely and providing services over the Internet, as well as to our board members, who became

fast experts in the use of Zoom and other technologies. We were extremely fortunate to have platforms in place that made remote collaboration possible this year.

"Going remote" was especially challenging for our workforce coaches and housing counselor, who are used to delivering face-to-face services to our program participants. Their flexibility and determination to keep working enabled MVI to continue providing vital, personalized support at a time when it has been especially needed.

I'm also grateful for our funders and donors, who were willing to work with us as our timelines and goals shifted during the course of 2020. That was especially helpful when the COVID-19 lockdown forced us to delay activity on a number of construction projects, including the new Holland Avenue Homes and the upcoming Clairton Inn project.

Finally, I'm grateful to the communities where we work and to the participants who access our services for telling us what they needed. I'm glad that over three decades, we've developed trusting relationships that allow us to help shoulder each other's burdens.

I am also encouraged by a renewed willingness to engage in the difficult conversations we've been having about racism in our country—and in the Mon Valley in particular. Our board and staff have agreed to be explicit in our support of the Black Lives Matter movement. We have undertaken more education and exploration of ways that MVI can work proactively to address racism in ourselves and in our institutions during the months and years ahead.

In a year of challenges unlike any of us have ever faced, we're happy to be celebrating the hard work of so many of our neighbors in the Mon Valley.

Like you, I'm looking beyond 2020 to the days—hopefully not far away—when we can again gather safely in person. Until then, we're happy to recognize our volunteers and partners with this booklet, and please make sure to see the video interviews with each of our award-winners on our website at www.monvalleyinitiative.com/2020awards.

Thank you so much for your support, encouragement and advice this year. Here's to a better 2021.

Laura R. Zinski
Chief Executive Officer

2020 MVI officers

Chair: Mary Carol Kennedy Secretary: Dale J. Bizub
Vice-Chair: Joseph P. Flynn Jr. Treasurer: Jane Flaherty

2020 MVI board of directors

Sharon Alberts, *regional*
Barata Bey, *regional*
Dale J. Bizub, *Turtle Creek Development Corp.*
Jeb Feldman, *Braddock Economic Development Corp.*
Jane Flaherty, *regional*
Joseph P. Flynn Jr., *regional*
Mary Carol Kennedy,
East Pittsburgh Economic Development Corp.
Barbara LaFace, *Downtown West Newton, Inc.*
Michael Tobias, *Pitcairn Community Renaissance, Inc.*
Richard Wallace, *regional*
Terry Ward, *Swissvale Economic Development Corp.*

Audit Committee

Dale J. Bizub, Jane Flaherty, Harold Hribal,
Mary Carol Kennedy, Ricardo Savido

Community Investment Fund

Joseph P. Flynn Jr., Ted Harhai, Harold Hribal,
Jennifer Kiley, Charles G. Peterson, Lisa Petrosky,
David Serafini, F. Charles Spence

Governance Committee

Sharon Alberts, Dale J. Bizub, Jane Flaherty,
Joseph P. Flynn Jr., Mary Carol Kennedy, Richard Wallace

Real Estate Advisory Committee

Joseph P. Flynn Jr., Macy Kisilinsky,
Joshua Lavrinc, Tyler Reeder

Regional Development Committee

Barata Bey, Dale J. Bizub, Mark Bowers,
Mary Carol Kennedy, Mary Miller, Dan Norman,
Matt Shorraw, Nicole Tichon, Richard Wallace

Workforce Advisory Board

Neil Ackerman, Bill Backa, Clair Bramble,
Trish Brickner, Richard Cobbs, Renee Conte,
Tessa Ellison, Dorenda Hamarlund, Peter Harvey,
Andrew Johnson, Michelle Lavelle, Lowry Merkeya,
Erica Patterson, Marcus Roberson, Samantha Schwartz,
Cheryl Seele, Paulette Skillman, Kevin Solomon,
Deidra Washington, Darlene West

2020 MVI staff

Administration

- Laura R. Zinski, *Chief Executive Officer*
- Sarah Altomari, *Program Operations Coordinator*
- April Hoover, *Chief Financial Officer*
- Jason Togyer, *Communications Manager*

Housing Counseling

- Jonathan Weaver, *Housing Counselor*

HUD Intermediary

- Dana Hodge II, *HUD Intermediary Manager*

Real Estate & Community Development

- John Bachetti, *Senior Construction Manager*
- Grant Cole, *Community Outreach Specialist*
- Douglas Kody, *Maintenance Technician*
- Nate Nypaver, *Maintenance Technician*
- Andrew Ritchie, *Senior Real Estate Developer*
- Clark Webb, *Real Estate Portfolio Manager*
- Dave Yargeau, *Real Estate Developer*

Workforce & Business Development

- Rikki Anderson, *Senior Employment & Financial Coach*
- Jane Black, *Employment & Financial Coach*
- T. Charles Howell IV, *Director*
- Shannon Lawhorn, *Senior Employment & Financial Coach*
- Deborah Mattie, *Employment & Financial Coach*
- Eva Simpson, *Intake Coordinator*
- Joyce Evans, *Computer & Resume Class Teacher*



Enscoe Long Insurance Group is an employee benefits and property/casualty firm located in Western Pennsylvania, providing insurance products, risk management and consulting services.

We welcome the opportunity to work together with confidence, credibility and shared commitment to service your organization.

Proud sponsor of the MVI Annual Dinner & Community Awards Ceremony

80 Emerson Lane, Suite 1301, Bridgeville, PA 15017
412-206-0360 | www.enscoelong.com

We proudly support
Mon Valley Initiative
and the 2020 Community Awards Ceremony.
You lead. You deliver. You improve.



Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Experienced, reliable, electrical work
Commercial • Industrial • Residential
Serving the Greater Pittsburgh area



412-673-5735
www.pjkellar.com

Pa. Lic. 016289
pete@pjkellar.com

Fire and Water Damage Repairs • Home Wiring Upgrades
New Construction • Maintenance

Sen. H. John Heinz III Award for Community Service

Given to an individual for outstanding service and diligent efforts to promote and further the resurgence of the Mon Valley throughout our region and state.

Macy Kisilinsky

Vice President of Originations, Alliant Capital



Macy Kisilinsky calls himself “an affordable housing champion.” A life-long resident of Pittsburgh’s Squirrel Hill South neighborhood, Kisilinsky has more than 20 years’ experience developing high-quality residential and mixed-use properties, often in blighted or struggling neighborhoods bypassed by other developers. He is vice president of originations at Alliant Capital, where he has been responsible for leveraging low-income housing tax credits to create

new development on brownfield sites in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Michigan and New Jersey. Prior to joining Alliant, he worked with the National Equity Fund and at PNC Bank.

A graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, Kisilinsky planned to go into social work until an internship with the Bloomfield-Garfield Corp. convinced him that he had a passion for community development. Following graduation, he worked for the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, where he was part of a team that revitalized decaying public housing in the city’s Manchester neighborhood using the federal government’s HOPE IV program. He later worked for the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh in a similar capacity.

In 2018, Laura R. Zinski, MVI’s chief executive officer, reached out to Kisilinsky to get advice for financing the Clairton Inn project and other residential properties in the MVI portfolio. That first meeting grew into regular weekly calls with MVI’s real-estate team, where Kisilinsky has generously shared his experience and provided hundreds of hours of free expert advice and guidance, Zinski says.

Kisilinsky has been able to offer his perspective from the investor side of a tax-credit transaction, which has been invaluable to MVI, especially during a year when financing for construction was complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic and a depressed economy. “His guidance is helping to ensure that MVI’s real estate portfolio remains an important community asset across the Mon Valley,” Zinski says.

Kisilinsky and his wife Maxine have four daughters, including two who currently attend Hillel Academy of Pittsburgh, where he has volunteered and been an active board member for over 18 years. He also serves as a board member of JAA of Pittsburgh, Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh, Family Services of Western Pennsylvania, Oakland Planning & Development Corp., Riverview Apartments and Teach PA.

STRUCTURAL MODULARES, INC.
www.smihomes.com

- Custom Modulares
- Off-Site Construction
- Controlled Environment
- Shorter Construction Times
- Over 30 Years of Experience

Awarded
2020 Best
Custom Modular
Homes
Mid-Atlantic USA

modular homes & professional buildings
BUILDING A BETTER WAY
INNOVATION FOR TODAY'S
HOMEOWNERS

(814) 764-5555
info@smihomes.com

smihomes.com 101 Southern Ave, P.O. Box 315
Strattanville, PA 16258

Regional Partnership Award

Given to an organization working in partnership with Mon Valley Initiative on a project, program or issue for the betterment of the valley.

Neighborhood Legal Services Association



For more than 50 years, Neighborhood Legal Services Association of Pittsburgh has provided free assistance to residents of Western Pennsylvania

who require free legal help to navigate employment law, real-estate law, bankruptcies, landlord-tenant disputes, elder law, veterans' benefits, consumer disputes and many other problems.

Founded in 1966 by 14 local attorneys, NLS now has offices in Pittsburgh as well as Beaver, Butler and Lawrence counties. Since its founding NLS has served more than 1.1 million clients. Edward Van Stevenson Jr. currently serves as executive director of NLS. Stevenson was hired by the founding executive director, R. Stanton Wettick Jr., who later became an Allegheny County judge, and is only the fifth executive director of NLS in its history. Of more than two dozen attorneys at NLS, the average length of service is more than 25 years.

In the early 1970s, government support for civil legal aid societies such as NLS diminished, forcing the agency to begin fundraising and asking local attorneys to donate their time and serve clients on a pro bono basis. NLS created a toll-free telephone helpline to provide free service and advice by phone, and in recent years, has launched a number of innovative programs, including its Medical-Legal Collaborative for Patients, Veterans Justice Project and Legal Literacy community outreach effort.

For two decades, NLS has partnered with MVI's Workforce Development & Financial Coaching program to teach classes on employment law and expungement of minor criminal offenses that can present a barrier to people attempting to re-enter the workforce and rebuild their careers.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Stevenson has continued teaching and assisting MVI program participants, using remote and virtual tools when necessary. The bulk of his interaction with workforce program participants involves negotiating employment law and the expungement process, Stevenson says. "No one wants to not work," he says. "People want to work and be taxpaying, productive citizens. That's basically the biggest thing we see and the most consistent requests we have—what can I do to improve my chances of getting a job. Because everyone wants to work."



McGee Maruca & Associates, P.C.
3111 Banksville Road
Suite 200
Pittsburgh, PA 15216
Phone: 412.344.9006
Fax: 412.344.9475

McGee Maruca & Associates, P.C.

Certified Public Accountants

Leslie A. McGee, CPA
Lisa Maruca DiPardo, CPA

Email: office@mcgeemaruca.com
Website: mcgeemaruca.com

Standard Bank, the Standard Charitable Foundation, and associates Jane Flaherty and Harold Hribal, are proud to support Mon Valley Initiative!

A COMMUNITY BANK derives funds and lends to the communities in which it operates. Community banking takes the customer experience to another level with added benefits such as one-on-one customer service, products that focus on the customer, and active initiatives to promote community growth. As a community bank, we're about more than numbers, we're about relationships with our customers, and being a resource in our hometowns.

 **Standard Bank** PaSB
www.standardbankPA.com



Member
FDIC

Greater Valley Community Services

Nominated by Braddock Economic Development Corp.



Greater Valley Community Services was founded in North Braddock in 2009 to provide supportive services to families and children, especially those in foster care, but also including in-home crisis intervention for parents and

children who face trauma, conflict and other challenges.

Since its move to the former Salvation Army space on Holland Avenue in Braddock, Greater Valley has added new community-based programs aimed at health, wellness and education of a broader group of people in the surrounding Woodland Hills area.

“Our team of staff members and collaborative programs are ready to help meet the needs of the community, no matter what the age or background,” says Jacqueline Smith, Greater Valley executive director. “When it comes to community services, we believe that includes children and the elderly. We value quality programs and service above anything else.”

The group’s mission is to strengthen, educate and empower children and families through collaboration and resources while promoting safety, growth and strong community.

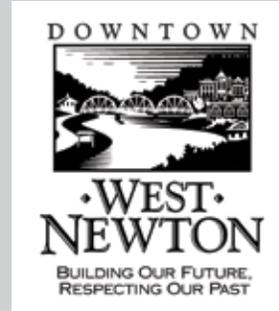
With the move to Holland Avenue, Greater Valley is now providing additional community outreach programming it calls “SPACE” — “Supportive Programs Affording Collaborative Engagement.”

SPACE includes a food pantry, a fitness center, a “Golden Living” program for older adults, internship and mentoring for children and teens, as well as a summer-writing camp for kids, a technology lab and workforce development assistance. During the summer, Greater Valley helped young adults in the neighborhood start a herb garden next to the building, and then helped them harvest fresh greens.

“With their relocation to Braddock, they made a major commitment and renovations to a beloved building,” says Tina Doose, BEDCO president. “They have established programs and support services for children and families. They are committed to being a community partner and helping to meet the needs of Braddock and the surrounding communities.”

Jeff Bloom, founder, Bloom Brew

Nominated by Downtown West Newton Inc.



Jeff Bloom came to West Newton in 2013 with a dream of starting his own microbrewery. That dream blossomed and grew into Bloom Brew.

Today, Bloom Brew has become a thriving regional attraction of its own. The family owned microbrewery on the banks of the Youghiogheny River offers 24 beers on tap and regularly hosts food trucks, live music and

outdoor events under a 50-seat pavilion.

In 2014, shortly after creating Bloom Brew, Bloom discovered Downtown West Newton Inc. and felt he could be of help. As time went by, Bloom began attending DWNI’s monthly meetings to get a feel for the organization.

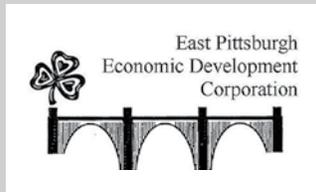
It was the start of a great relationship between a small business and the group, says DWNI’s Aaron Nelson. Bloom eventually joined DWNI and soon became a board member. In 2016, he proposed hosting a small beer festival at Simeral Square, a park owned by DWNI. Bloom felt it would be a good way for Downtown West Newton Inc. to both raise some funds and network with younger people in the West Newton area.

The event was a success and evolved into a much larger event now called Forged on the Yough. The expanded festival brings together breweries, wineries and distilleries and pairs their offerings with live music, food and artists. Bloom’s formula put West Newton on the regional beer festival map.

“Jeff Bloom is one of our local business owners who has gone above and beyond in establishing a successful business in the community, developing our own beer festival and donating his time and talent to help DWNI grow and improve the community,” Nelson says. “His idea pushed DWNI out of our comfort zone and made it possible to bring the organization to a whole new generation.”

East Pittsburgh Basketball Clinic

Nominated by East Pittsburgh Economic Development Corp.



The 2018 fatal shooting of 17-year-old Antwon Rose II by an East Pittsburgh police officer exposed divisions in the community and left residents grieving, angry and frustrated.

It also galvanized a response from several East Pittsburgh-area residents who wanted to reach out to younger people, provide them with a constructive outlet and a voice, and begin the healing process.

In February 2019, Tamara Boyd, Deacon Thomas Moore and Bishop Arthur Brown presented a proposal to East Pittsburgh borough council for the creation of a basketball clinic at the recreation center. Their goal was to give young people ages 6 to 17 a safe place to interact with one another and with older adults. Following their presentation, Council Member Earnest Frazier joined their cause.

Beginning that summer, the basketball clinic met every Saturday for two sessions lasting 45 minutes each at the courts behind the rec center. More than 30 kids joined the clinic that first year, including some who had never played basketball before. Practices included mentoring from coaches. Each session concluded with a chance for participants to reflect on the day's activities and often with a meal provided by one of the families.

"In order for the clinic to support the suppression of crime we have to not only provide an alternative for youth to avoid criminal activity, but must also instill in them virtues that support life," Boyd says.

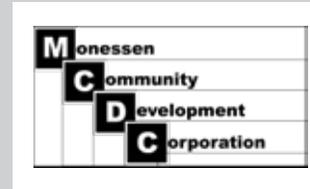
The clinic expanded into activities off the court, conducting two community clean-up days and hosting a presentation by the FamilyLinks Prevention Team on respect. These events also provided an opportunity for the participants' families to also get involved.

At the end of 2019, members and their families received a motivational message from Ciara Turner who spoke on behalf of her mother, community activist Cathy Jo Welsh, and East Pittsburgh Mayor Louis Payne presented each participant with an award for their service.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many formal activities were curtailed during the 2020 season, but the clinic is expected to resume in June 2021.

Friends of the Monessen Library

Nominated by Monessen Community Development Corp.



For more than 30 years, the Friends of the Monessen Library have been helping to support the Monessen Public Library and its board of directors to fill gaps in fundraising and programming.

Their mission is to "encourage the interest in, and the expansion of, the resources, equipment and physical facilities of the Monessen library, and to allow for participation by interested parties in library-related events such as programs and fundraising projects."

The group's signature event—and one of Monessen's most-anticipated activities each year—is the annual Friends of the Library Luncheon. The luncheon includes a guest speaker and a buffet meal. Attendees decorate their tables based on a theme and then sell tickets to the seats at their tables. This unique event is well-attended and enjoyed by people from throughout the Mid-Mon Valley. Last year's luncheon was called "Down Memory Lane" and featured a 1970s disco-music theme, with attendees sporting vintage clothing and Monessen memorabilia.

The luncheon would have celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was canceled. The Friends of the Library are looking forward to its return in 2021.

"The Friends of the Library are a selfless organization full of dedicated members who are striving to support and keep our library operating at its fullest potential," Monessen Mayor Matt Shorraw says. "They see the benefit a library brings to a community and know we can use a strong library to promote Monessen and its progress."

The organization is currently recruiting new members. Volunteers do not have to reside within the city of Monessen and a spokesperson says they would be "thrilled" to have new members with fresh ideas: "Many of our members are getting older and we want to keep our mission alive." The Friends of the Library are looking for help from anyone with a sincere interest in the well-being of Monessen and its community resources.

Gabriele D'Annunzio Society (Pitcairn Italian Club)

Nominated by Pitcairn Community Renaissance, Inc.

The Gabriele D'Annunzio Society (Pitcairn Italian Club) celebrated its 100th anniversary in June 2020 and has been an important part of life in the borough since its founding.

Named for an Italian poet, playwright, journalist and soldier, the society has always given back to the borough by sponsoring local sports teams, donating time to worthy causes and raising money for area charities.

The current officers of the society are third- and fourth-generation members who are bringing new energy to the club's activities and have brought back some old traditions, such as having Santa Claus present each Christmas to provide toys to local children.

Although some in-person events have had to be curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the society has persevered and in the spring, just after the lockdown left many people unemployed, officers sent a letter to each of the society's members, thanking them for their support, wishing them well and including a Giant Eagle grocery gift card to help those families who were struggling.

The society's clubhouse on Eighth Street has recently been renovated and updated. For its years of dedication to the borough of Pitcairn and their dedication to the community's future, Pitcairn Community Renaissance voted to recognize the Gabriele D'Annunzio Society (Pitcairn Italian Club) and officers Anthony Pizzuto, Nick Pizzuto, Brandon Gajdos, John Michael Dominick and Justin Preece.

Leland Scales

Nominated by Swissvale Economic Development Corp.



Leland Scales was born in Swissvale and moved away for several years as he attended the University of Central Florida.

When he returned, he was discouraged to find what he calls a "negative energy" in his old neighborhood.

Scales decided to try to create something positive to counteract the bad news and launched the Swissvale Community Action Committee as a Facebook group. The group had one main rule: You can discuss any problem you want, but make sure you follow up your complaint with a positive solution.

While earning his master's degree in food studies at Chatham University, Scales decided to put his research into action in Swissvale. In 2014, he created the Swissvale Community Garden to both beautify one neighborhood and provide free, healthy fresh produce to his neighbors.

The garden is now managed and operated by community volunteers, who grow various flowers, herbs and vegetables. Produce is donated to local food pantries and sold at the Swissvale farmer's market. An "edible garden tour" in Swissvale raised money to support the community garden and attracted hundreds of visitors to the borough.

In 2016, members of the SCAC Facebook group began meeting in real-life, holding monthly in-person meetings to discuss and tackle specific projects and concerns. The COVID-19 pandemic stalled some of SCAC's plans for 2020, but the group was able to facilitate a community conversation about air-quality and hold a socially distanced Easter egg hunt. The second "edible garden tour" was re-routed so that all gardens were visible from public sidewalks, and a mutual aid support network was created to help Swissvale residents who were unable to get groceries, medication and other essentials during the pandemic.

Scales is actively involved with several food ministries at Union Baptist Church in Swissvale as well as Reach Up Pittsburgh, and recently joined 412 Food Rescue as a food recovery and field operations associate.



Paul Gamrat

Nominated by Turtle Creek Development Corp.



Paul Gamrat is a life-long resident of the Mon Valley who grew up in North Braddock and taught in Wilkesburg Public Schools for 34 years, retiring in 2010.

Following his retirement, Gamrat became increasingly involved in local events, volunteering to pick up litter in the Blackridge area of Wilkesburg

and Churchill, working with the borough's recreation board to plan an annual community day and helping at polling places during elections.

"My wife and I have been committed to community service since we moved to Churchill," Gamrat says. "We began by taking litter walks with our children, then started taking care of the entrance signs in our neighborhood. I started organizing different community projects in the borough. We conduct monthly litter pickups at the parkway entrances and exits, and other high-traffic areas."

One of Gamrat's biggest projects to-date has been reorganization and maintenance of Churchill's "Common Garden," located at the corner of Beulah and Churchill roads. "I've also undertaken a project to plant trees throughout the borough."

In 2017, Gamrat was appointed acting mayor of Churchill and was elected to a full term later that year. Last year, he joined with more than 60 other elected officials in Allegheny County to urge local, state and federal authorities to do more to enforce air quality rules.

During his time as a Churchill volunteer and now mayor, he has been a friend and partner with neighboring Turtle Creek Borough, says Dale J. Bizub, a member of Turtle Creek Development Corp.

"I've known Paul for several decades," Bizub says. "Knowing someone from a young age until a not-so-young age is very telling. One of our CDC members also has worked with him on community projects as he lives in Churchill. Paul has demonstrated he has a similar commitment to our community as TCDC does. He leads by example. TCDC unanimously voted to recognize him and his efforts."

An active member of St. Maurice Church in Forest Hills, Gamrat also belongs to the Churchill-Wilkins Rotary, which he has served as membership chair, and the Churchill Garden Club, serving as program planner and president beginning in 2018. A graduate of Duquesne University and the University of Pittsburgh, Gamrat and his wife of 40 years, Patricia, have two children and two grandchildren.

The board of directors and staff of Mon Valley Initiative are grateful to the following corporations, foundations and agencies whose contributions made our programs possible this year.

Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Allegheny County Economic Development
Allegheny County Housing Authority
Allegheny Health Network
Anonymous
BNY Mellon
C.W. Benedum Foundation
Citizens Bank
City of Clairton
Disaster Restoration Services
Dollar Bank
Economic Development South
Enscoe Long Insurance Group
First National Bank Corp.
G.C. Murphy Company Foundation
Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania
Highmark Health
Hillman Foundation
Huntington Bank
Jay Costa for State Senate
Jefferson Regional Foundation
Kellar Electric
Krupp Foundation
LGA Partners LLC
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
MacLachlan, Cornelius & Filoni, Inc.
McGee, Maruca & Associates
Mistick Construction
Neighborhood Allies
Norman Alan Company LLC
Pennsylvania Dept. of Community & Economic Development
Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency
Pitcairn Community Renaissance, Inc.
PNC Bank
PNC Foundation
Redevelopment Authority of Washington County
Standard Bank
Structural Modulars, Inc.
The Pittsburgh Foundation
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania
Washington Financial Bank

2020 Individual Donors

Wells Fargo Bank
WesBanco Bank
Westmoreland County Planning and Development

The board of directors and staff of Mon Valley Initiative are grateful to the following individuals whose generous contributions helped to make our programs possible.

Edith Abeyta and Robert Tower
Sharon and Skip Alberts
Sarah Altomari
Rikki Anderson
Silvia Bessonart
Dale Bizub
David Boodman
Daniel and Deborah Booker
Richard and Annette Capp
Grant Cole
Richard and Lorraine Conley
Virginia and Doug Crothers
Dennis and Patricia Damico
Charles and Deborah Drummond
Martin and Madeline Dudas
Rick and Mary Dunn
Michael Eichler
Janet Elder
Stephanie Eson
Jonathan Eson
George Fausold
Colleen and Michael Fedor
Mark Feldman
Jane and James Flaherty
Joe and Ann Flynn
Alexandra Garlitz
Lora Gasiewski
David and Tricia Gibson
David and Nancy Green
James Gutowski
Jamie and John Hammer
Elizabeth and Adam Hannold
Kathleen Harhai
John Harhai
Ronald and Leslie Hartman
April and Josh Hoover
Priscilla and Thomas Jackman
Marie and Tom Jaffe
Joel Jenkins
David Keller
Mary Carol Kennedy
Ellen Kight
Von Kim-Do Trinh
Sara Mae Kruzan



**CONGRATULATIONS TO
THE HONOREES!**

Thank you for your time
and dedication to our
community.

 **WashingtonSM
Financial Bank**

Member
FDIC

Ken and Dorothea Kulak
 Barbara LaFace
 Suzan Lami and Robert Grubb
 Walter Malich
 Mary and Gilbert Miller
 Suzan and Jay Mohny
 Janice Muto
 Geraldine Pergola
 Lisa Petrosky
 William Pfoff
 Tracey and Curtis Reaves
 Tyler Reeder
 Donald and Sherlyn Richeson
 Kirk Rys
 Lindsey Santora
 Ricardo Savido
 Dave and Victoria Serafini
 Francis Simko
 Gwendolyn Simmons
 F. Charles Spence
 Michael Tobias
 Jason Togyer and Denise L. Ritter
 John Vahosky
 Vicki Vargo
 Gina Velar
 Richard and Susan Wallace
 Terry and Tim Ward
 Jonathan Weaver
 Clark Webb
 Benjamin Williams
 Dave Yargeau
 Laura and Ron Zinski

Acknowledgements

Cover photo: “Pittsburgh” by Peter Miller, via Flickr. Licensed under Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Pages 2–3: “Binoculars and Susquehanna” by Gerry Dincher, via Flickr. Licensed under Creative Commons CC BY-SA 2.0.

Page 2: Official White House photo by Cecil Stoughton, courtesy John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

MVI Vision Statement

“Working together to unite the communities and restore the economic vitality of the Mon Valley.”

—adopted March 2000

Beyond 2020

2020 Community Awards

Index to sponsors

Mistick Construction Co.*	inside front cover
DRS Pittsburgh*	1
Enscoe Long Insurance Group	9
FNB Corporation	18
Highmark Health	9
Kellar Electric	9
LGA Partners	13
MacLachlan, Cornelius & Filoni, Inc.	22
Standard Bank	13
Structural Modulars Inc.	11
Washington Financial Bank	22

*—presenting sponsor



Booklet designed by Jason Togyer, Communications Manager
 Printed in U.S.A. by H.B. South Printing, McKeesport, Pa.

TM: The MVI logo is a trademark of Mon Valley Initiative



MON VALLEY INITIATIVE

Working together

305 East Eighth Ave.
Homestead, PA 15120-1517
412-464-4000

435 McKean Ave.
Charleroi, PA 15022-1585
724-565-8040

www.monvalleyinitiative.com
www.facebook.com/monvalleyinitiative
www.twitter.com/MVInitiative