



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

*Serving our neighbors,  
of all ages, in all  
stages, through our  
two locations.*



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Dear Friends,

Welcome to our 2023-2024 Annual Report! This has been quite a year of change for The Open Link. I was welcomed as the new Executive Director in December, 2023 after about four months of transitional leadership with retired Executive Director, Stu Bush, coming back while a search was conducted. Taking over at the holidays was wonderful and a little crazy at the same time! I was able to get a glimpse of the incredible generosity that is present in the Upper Perkiomen Valley.

Winter became spring, and with it, we hosted the annual Garden Party, honoring long-time supporters the Cunningham Family. Without their help, there would be no annual event and certainly not the level of success it experienced this year, raising more than \$70,000! The Open Link also bid farewell to its most seasoned employee, Linda Connell. Linda was a steady presence as Head Counselor and Associate Director for more than 38 years. Her presence can still be felt in our offices, and her legacy will continue to live on with the help that we provide our community.

This year also brought expansion of other critical programming including Center activities such as Tuesday Chats and grief counseling, high school equivalency instruction and testing as well as employment counseling and job placement. As we look at the new year, we will continue our offerings in these areas to address the needs of this growing community.

Finally, The Open Link moved into the housing arena this year through collaboration with the Upper Perk Homelessness Coalition. Since February, we've been working toward opening a Code Blue shelter for the unhoused and I am pleased to say it has become a reality this year.

As we look to the future, there are so many things to be excited about moving forward! We are in the process of reimagining the pantry to accommodate more food so that we can help additional households more frequently. We've expanded the number of senior grocery deliveries through the Food Pantry Without Walls and senior lunches served each weekday at The Center. We're seeing more families coming to us in need of support with food, rent and utilities and will continue to try to meet the need by expanding hours, accessibility and food offerings.

However, none of the work of The Open Link would be possible without the support of the community, through things like the community garden, food drives for the pantry, the sponsorship program, and the individual supporters who believe in our work and the power of community. Thank you for all you do for The Open Link!

With gratitude,



Marianne G. Lynch



# Celebrating 50 years of service to the Upper Perkiomen Valley in 2025!

*Our impact this year...*

Fiscal year '23-'24



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## FEED PEOPLE

In the food pantry, 271,080 pounds of food were distributed; an average of 502 people served monthly (30% increase from '23)

## MEALS ON WHEELS

We served 12,777 hot and cold nutritious meals to seniors each weekday with a friendly visit



## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Backpacks and supplies distributed to 214 kids; 480 kids woke up to presents under the tree for the holidays

## HOUSING/UTILITY ASSISTANCE

166 people helped with housing and utility costs



## REQUESTS FOR HELP

We responded to 13,186 phone calls, emails, visits and social media requests for assistance

## COMMUNITY LUNCH

At the senior center, 4,472 nutritious lunches were served



## GED/EMPLOYMENT

11 students enrolled to earn a high school diploma; 31 people helped with resumes and job placement

## VOLUNTEERS

Close to 200 volunteers shared their time and talents for 6,104 hours of service.



## THANKSGIVING MEALS

476 people supplied with a holiday meal and all the fixings



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

29 people got counseling, court accompaniment and/or help with abusive relationships



## BENEFITS ASSISTANCE

181 households helped with applying for benefits and programs



## KIDS SUMMER MEALS

No child goes hungry! 17,668 breakfasts and lunches for kids; a 31% increase over last year



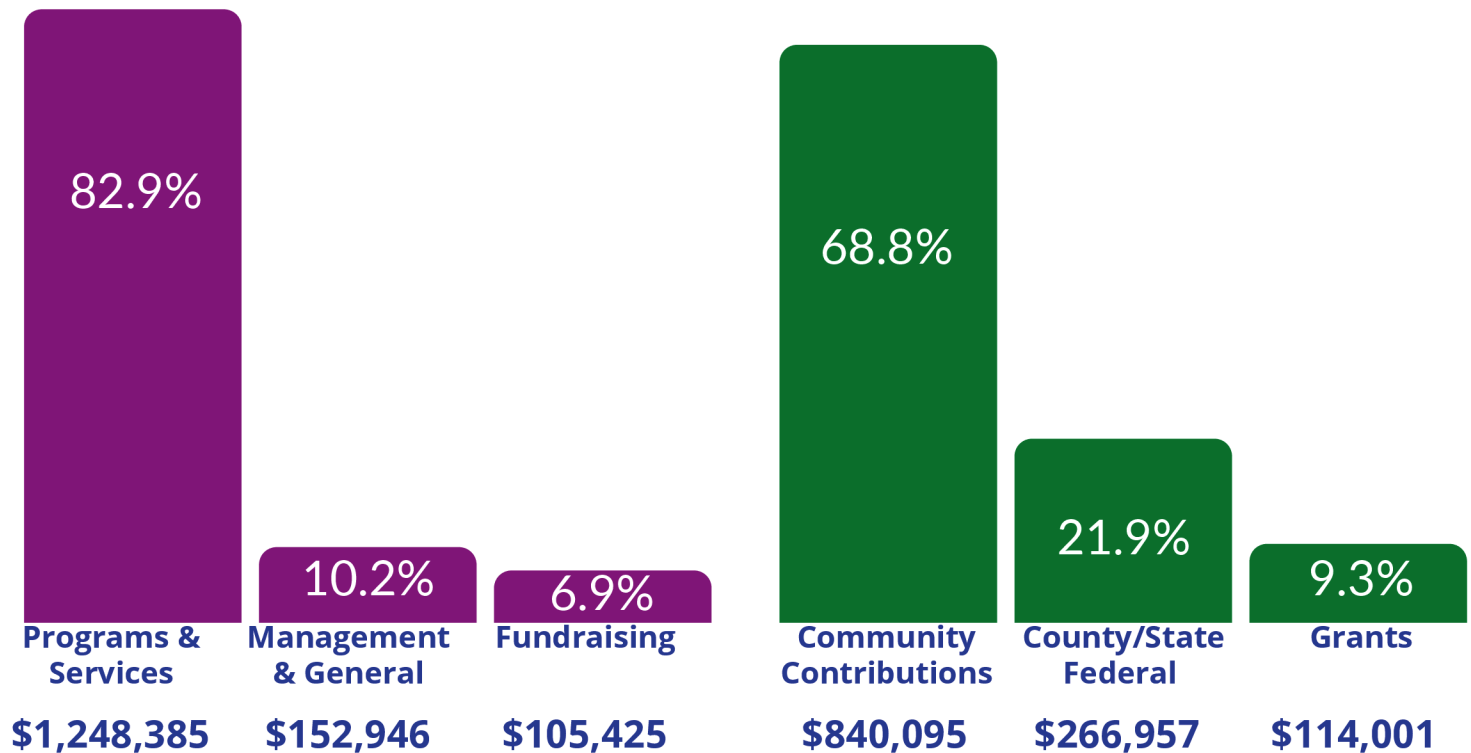
# OUR FISCAL HEALTH

## Expense Allocation

\$1,506,756

## Revenue Allocation

\$1,221,053



## OUR FISCAL HEALTH **continued**

We'd like to start by saying thank you! You, our community, has again shown your generous support of our work and we grateful. Fiscal year 2023-2024 was a year of transition and was not without its challenges. The organization had filed for and expected an Employee Retention Tax Credit, making the decision to include the anticipated revenue from it in the yearly budget. Unfortunately, it did not arrive and is still tied up in a bit of red tape, so the absence of it is reflected in the deficit that is present in the yearly financials. At the same time, The Open Link received some welcomed funding from other sources, so the impact was not as significant as it could have been.

Some examples of additional funding included the annual Garden Party raising \$71,000 to support the programs and services of The Open Link. This was a \$22,000 increase from the previous year. The Center participated in a collaborative grant with Generations of Souderton to bring additional supports to our seniors through the Tuesday Chats series.

At the same time, just as we saw in our personal budgets, The Open Link's programs and services cost more to run, due to increased need as well as increased pricing for food. While the Summer Kids meal program provided a record number of meals at 17,668, it cost about \$6,000 more to operate this year. That said, our commitment to the community remains unwavering and we will continue to innovate in a fiscally responsible way to best serve the needs of our growing community.

## From the People we Serve...

"I just had our fourth baby a few months ago. She was a surprise. So with me being out of work right now, this has been a huge help. I didn't expect to be out this long.

I have a lot of things going on with my parents and hospitalizations and this takes the burden off...It's incredible, there's a lot of stuff to choose from. Thank you!"

- A Hereford mom on being able to pick out gifts for her children through Operation Holiday Cheer



Seniors participate in an Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program led by Tracey Flynn of the Montgomery County Office of Adult Services at The Center.



Scan to find  
out more info on  
our website,  
[www.theopenlink.org](http://www.theopenlink.org)

*Dear Open Link Staff,*

*Our community is blessed to have you!! Thank you so very much for giving my children a Christmas they'll be able to remember. Thanks, too, for the help with food.*

*We were so happy you were here when we needed it. There needs to be more people like you in this world!*

*A Palm Family*

## OUR BOARD

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**Vice President:** Matt Tomlin • Owner/CEO, American Rock Mechanics

**Secretary:** Carol Kress, CIC, CISR • Vice President, Lechner & Stauffer, Inc.

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Sarah Dandridge • Retirement Plan Administrator, Paragon Alliance

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Michelle Forsell • Attorney, Wolf, Baldwin & Associates, P.C.

Larry Frankenfield • Community Volunteer, Retired Operations Manager, FiberMark North America, Inc.

Philip Johnson • Community Volunteer, Retired from state and local government service

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Stephanie Rubilla • Manager, QNB Bank

John Sheeran • Community Volunteer, Retired Director of Facilities and Operations, Upper Perkiomen School District

Deb Willey, Ph.D. • Director of Development, St. Luke's University Health Network

Kyle Zimmerman • Senior Director of Human Resources, AmeriGas

*Thank you to Christe Konopitski and Bob Vogel (retired, June 2024) for your many years of service to the community!*



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