

Center for  
**COMMUNITY**  
**SOLUTIONS**

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WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

2018 - 2019

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CONNECTING WCU & THE COMMUNITY

## Center for Community Solutions

In 2013, West Chester University announced its plans for the next decade in a document entitled, "Building on Excellence" to strengthen campus understanding of the meaning and value of external engagement and its impact on student learning and academic excellence. In setting forth its goals, the University cited a number of strategic commitments including outreach to, and engagement with, regional and global partners "through which intellectual and material resources can be leveraged for mutual benefit." As a leader in engagement by building relationships with both our local and global partners, West Chester University sought to formalize and expand upon the positive impact already existing between the University and community by creating the Center for Community Solutions (CCS) in 2016.

This community-university partnership provides a single point of contact to facilitate University and community connections, to promote the expertise and capabilities of the University's students, faculty and staff to the community-at-large and to provide opportunities for students to develop and apply their in-classroom knowledge while enhancing their educational experience.

Since 2016, the Center for Community Solutions has connected over 150 local businesses, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, municipalities and government agencies with West Chester University resources. This past year, 40 students, through the Center for Community Solutions and with guidance from faculty and CCS staff, interned and/or worked together with organizations assisting in:

- 3D mapping and other GIS services
- App development
- Business development and marketing
- Coding
- Community health initiatives
- Data archival
- Economic impact study
- Graphic design
- Research
- Social media and digital marketing
- Survey creation and compilation
- Technical support
- Video production and editing
- Volunteering
- Web site creation and development
- Writing and blogging
- and many others

In addition to the Liaison and the Graduate Assistant positions, the CCS added a part time staff member during this program year to assist with managing projects and providing administrative support. This expansion will significantly improve the Center for Community Solutions' capability to respond to the increase in requests for assistance received from the community.

During this year, the CCS Liaison served on the University's Task Force for re-classification of the Carnegie Foundation Elective Community Engagement designation which was awarded to the University in 2010, and co-chaired the Partnerships and Program Sub-Committee. This is an elective classification involving data collection and documentation of important aspects of institutional mission, identity and commitments. It is an institutional classification, not an award and is an evidence-based documentation of institutional practice to be used in a process of self-assessment and improvement. The University's documentation is reviewed by a National Review Panel to determine whether the institution qualifies for recognition as a community engaged institution. The results of the self-assessment generated action items for the Task Force to focus on in the coming year.

In the coming year, the Center for Community Solutions will continue to support the University's Strategic Plan and actively participate in the University's community engagement outreach efforts by building on its accomplishments since its establishment in 2016.

## LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

From July 2018 to June 2019, the Center for Community Solutions at West Chester University has worked with 51 organizations! These connections are crucial in order to involve the University as part of the West Chester community. We would like to thank local organizations for providing students with opportunities to learn and practice what they have studied at WCU. We hope to continue to build our relationship with surrounding businesses and make the WCU Center for Community Solutions a go-to resource for West Chester businesses and non-profit organizations.

**ACT in Faith**

**Action Potential**

**Align Fitness**

**BioTelemetry, Inc.**

**Black Women of Chester County in Action**

**Cedarville Engineering Group**

**Chester County 2020**

**Chester County ACEs Coalition**

**Chester County Chamber for Business & Industry**

**Chester County Community Collaborative**

**Chester County Drug and Alcohol Services**

**Chester County Economic Development Council**

**Chester County Health Department**

**Chester County Infant & Toddler Early**

**Intervention Program**

**Chester County Managers Consortium**

**Community Warehouse Project of Chester County**

**Compendium Boutique**

**East Fallowfield Township**

**Entourage Music**

**Friends of Chester Valley Trails**

**Friends of Everhart Park**

**Growth Dynamics**

**Home of the Sparrow**

**iSwitch Gourmet**

**Kennett Township**

**Kinetic Physical Therapy**

**Local Yoga Café**

**Localized App**

**Meet Hook**

**My West Chester**

**Natural Lands**

**Renew Laser & Aesthetic Medicine**

**Richard Allen Preparatory Charter School**

**Senior Moves by Robyn Jewitt**

**Sierra Club**

**St. Maximilian Kolbe School**

**The Knight School**

**Therapeutic Articulations LLC**

**Think3 Marketing**

**Transportation Management Assoc. of  
Chester County**

**Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center**

**Vitali Workshops & Coaching**

**WCU Diabetes Prevention Program**

**WCU Economics and Finance Department**

**WCU Geography and Planning Department/  
GIS**

**WCU Women's Commission**

**West Bradford Township**

**West Chester Borough Planning Commission**

**West Chester Film Festival**

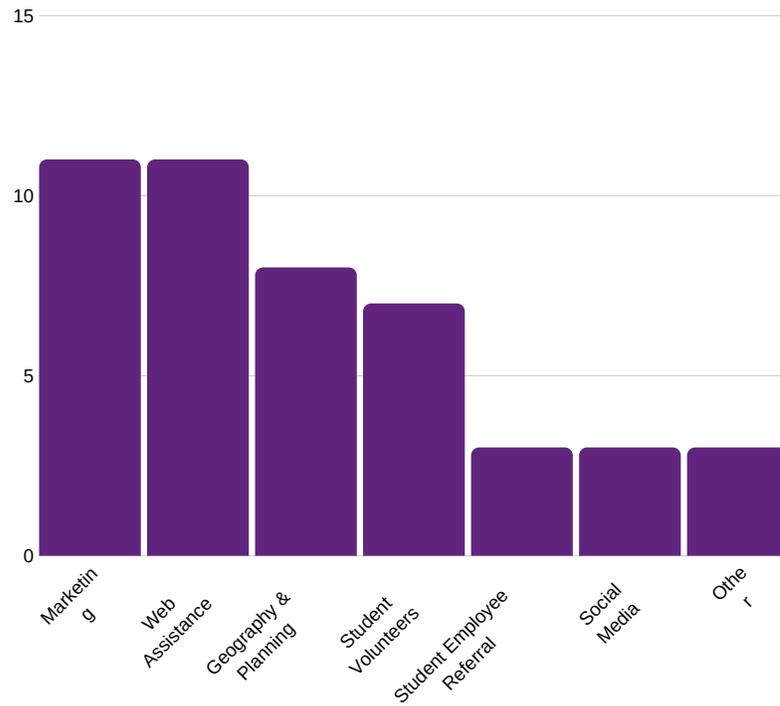
**West Chester Historic Commission**

**Westminster Presbyterian Church**

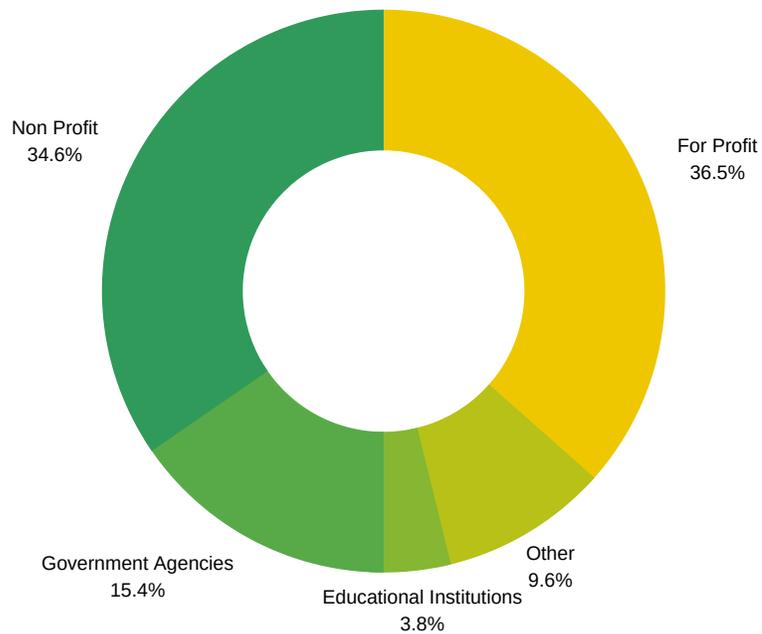
**YMWIC Foundation, Inc.**



## TYPES OF REQUESTS



## TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS



## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

### Localized App



Students who worked on this project were Jordan Lopez and Nke Yapo.

#### A WCU Alumni working with WCU Students on an app promoting businesses in West Chester!

Dan Balmer is from Downingtown, PA and was a marketing major at West Chester University. He is currently the founder/owner of Localized App. The app is a place for local business owners to post their business's events in real time. The app can also use the user's location to find real time events nearby.

Dan started Localized when he was trying to promote his own business by posting it on social media. He noticed that social media did not always allow users to see posts in real time, often they will see the post afterwards and the post is no longer relevant. It can also be difficult to find events specifically in your area. With Localized App, Dan found a way to promote nearby businesses in real time.

Dan became a marketing major specifically because he was really interested in psychology – the way people perceive things, how they think, etc. Marketing is similar in that way because it analyzes how people make their purchasing decisions and why they would like one brand over another.

"Working with the Center for Community Solutions helped breathe life back into our project. The Students that West Chester University provided were extremely talented and hard working. It was incredibly useful to have CCS's help and funding to get our project back on track with the use of West Chester University's students."

Dan Balmer

"I'm happy that we're able to get these resources from the University and I'm not sure we'd be able to continue if it wasn't for the Center for Community Solutions. So, for that thank you!"

Dan Balmer

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS

### Saint Maximilian Kolbe School

"Each week since fall 2018, West Chester University Honors College students, Jesse Krensel, Kristen Loughlin, Grace Piznar, and Madeleine L. Robinson have worked with our student writers. The WCU students made this publication possible. They helped our authors hone their writing skills. They conferred with students in small groups or one-on-one to edit pieces assigned in class or written on their own. St. Max teachers and students are grateful for their support and assistance. Their service has been invaluable."

Monica Malseed  
St. Max Principal



### Chester County Infant & Toddler Program

"I'd like to express how grateful I am for the assistance provided by West Chester University's Community Solutions Program. I had reached out to your program in February of 2018 when the Chester County Early Intervention Program wanted to embark on a project to develop a professional video to convey to families what Early Intervention is and what parents can expect. Richard and Sarah were initially assigned to the project and did a remarkable job videotaping the subjects in the video and providing their expert guidance and feedback along the way. Richard has been a steady and consistent partner all throughout this project and continued with the project after Sarah graduated this past summer. Richard was joined in August by Ethan who assisted with some on site videography at a family home as well as the many edits that were needed to pull this together. Aside from the expertise that the students provided, a project such as this required a great deal of ongoing check ins to communicate our priorities and wishes at each step. Richard was very responsive, professional and clear in all communications. The communication and cooperation we received made this project run very smoothly and efficiently. We are thrilled with the results and as a program that offers services to children and families at no cost, with little to no budget to work with for this type of project, we are forever grateful to the University for their support in making this possible. We truly could not have accomplished this without your assistance."

Lori Gallagher, Early Intervention Director  
Chester County Infant and Toddler Early Intervention Program



Chester County Infant and Toddler Program:  
Ethan Weigant and Richard Forcey

EI Making A Difference



# COLLEGE TO CAREER



**40**

Students  
Employed by  
CCS

**2000+**

Student  
Hours of  
Employment

**70**

Total  
Projects/  
Requests for  
Assistance

**19**

Colleges/  
Departments/  
Programs  
Collaborated

"The CCS has prepared me for a post-graduation job in many ways. Most importantly, it has helped me with, what I believe is the most important responsibility of someone within an organization, clear and effective communication. Clear and effective communication ensures that everyone involved in a project knows exactly what is going on and what is to come. It is also something that cannot be taught in the classroom so having this experience is an advantage I will have over others that are just entering the workforce. Am I a perfect communicator? No, absolutely not but I have learned and improved because of the opportunities the CCS has provided me with."

Patrick Thompson  
WCU 2019 Graduate



Local Yoga Café  
Amanda Saleh

"Thank you for the opportunity to work on such a meaningful project! It is a good feeling to know that our work will help families receive assistance with their day-to-day challenges."

Richard Forcey, WCU/ CCS Student  
Chester County Infant and Toddler Program



Chester County  
Health Department  
Annae Wetherhold

"Working for the Center for Community Solutions has been so helpful in gaining tangible experience to further expand my career. I am thrilled that West Chester University has the Center for Community Solutions to invite partnership and engagement which ultimately makes the community stronger."

Bridget Marley  
Chester County ACEs Coalition

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

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### Get to know Patrick Thompson, CCS Alum!

During my time at the CCS I have had the chance to work with Chester County 2020, Uptown! Knauer Performing Arts Center, and Friends of the Chester Valley Trail. My work with them included anything from advising on webpages to revamping entire sites. Every project I have worked on has reflected what I have studied at WCU. From the way I approach a large project, to the way I tackle each individual problem, I draw experience and knowledge from techniques I have learned during my time at WCU. Having the opportunity of working for the CCS has allowed me to take what I have learned in the classroom and apply it to real-world applications like the projects I have worked on during my time at the CCS. Following graduation, Patrick is now working for Entech in Malvern, PA.

### Get to know Bella Landis, CCS Graduate Assistant August 2018 - May 2019

During this time as the CCS Graduate Assistant, Bella was responsible for helping students with their hiring process and working closely with them to insure they completed their required documentation and project tasks on time. Bella also helped coordinate multiple projects with the CCS Liaison and also maintained the CCS database and other records. Bella assisted several organizations with their requests for assistance including Robyn Jewitt Home, The Sierra Club and Align Fitness.

In May 2019 Bella completed the University's Earth and Space Sciences Accelerated Master's Degree Program and will begin working as a Groundwater Inspector with Apex, an environmental consulting firm in Denver, Colorado.



### Get to know Bridget Marley, CCS Student Support, Graduate Assistant Fall 2019

In addition to working on projects for the Center for Community Solutions, Bridget works as a Prevention Specialist at a local nonprofit organization and is also a candidate for a Master's Degree in the University's Public Health Program. In her position with the CCS, Bridget has provided invaluable support to companies needing social media, marketing, graphic design and planning assistance. One of her ongoing projects is with the College of Health Sciences' Diabetes Prevention Program. In her position with the nonprofit organization Bridget provides drug and alcohol prevention programming and also serves as a certified tobacco treatment specialist. Bridget will continue working with the CCS as the CCS Graduate Assistant starting in Fall 2019.



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## CONTACT US

Contact us for more information on how West Chester University can work together with your organization to find solutions to your organization's needs. The Center for Community Solutions serves as the link between the University and the community.

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS  
DIVISION OF UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS  
WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

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University Affairs actively cultivates and maintains effective relationships with internal and external constituencies to enhance the overall visibility, reputation, and appreciation of West Chester University and its institutional priorities.

[www.wcupa.edu/universityaffairs](http://www.wcupa.edu/universityaffairs)

