

Annual Report
North Light Community Center
2015-2016

Since December 26, 1936 North Light Community Center has served the most vulnerable in our community. Last year, approximately 3,000 people walked through North Light's doors. ***Ninety-one percent of direct service clients were economically disadvantaged (incomes below 250% of federal poverty guideline) including 71% who fall below 100%.*** North Light prides itself on never turning anyone away due to an inability to pay.



The **Childcare Education and Enrichment Development** program (CEED) provides care for about 100 at-risk school-age children (pre-K–6th grade) each year in our KidZone after-school and summer camp programs. Programs prioritize education, arts and recreation. Seventy-eight percent of children served in 2015-16 fell below Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. Fifty-eight percent of children served in 2015-2016 come from single parent households. With funding for state childcare subsidies getting smaller and smaller each year, North Light offers a sliding pay scale to families

who need childcare services but are unable to pay our full tuition. ***Last year, only 27% of the program fee income for CEED came from families paying full tuition for KidZone or summer camp.*** We are a Keystone Stars 2 rated program, and are actively working towards achieving a Stars 3 designation within the next two years. This important distinction reinforces NL's place in the community as a quality-driven childcare and youth enrichment provider.

Summer Career Exploration Program (SCEP) has provided workforce development training, mentoring and summer jobs for over 1,500 youth since 1982 that includes recruitment, enrollment and 10 hours of work-readiness training in May/June; July/August: 6-week internships/120 hours including weekly professional development sessions. In providing career preparation, academic enrichment and work-readiness training, SCEP reaches out to teens in TANF and TANF-eligible households. SCEP's goal is to reduce high school dropouts by preparing youth for the workforce and promoting higher education and reached 36 teens this past summer from 17 high schools across Philadelphia. ***Ninety-six percent of participants reported a positive***



summer work experience and 100% of employers noted positive changes in the youth over the course of their employment.



The Urban Sustainability Leadership Academy (USLA) builds leadership and entrepreneurial skills, and additionally gives students opportunities for internships and community service projects. *In school year 2015-16, USLA served 36 youth through initiatives that supported college and career readiness, and provided youth with paid internships to gain hands-on work experience.* USLA staff provides extensive support to students, often post-graduation, to help them navigate the admissions and job acquisition process. In partnership with the Drexel College of Medicine, **Women in**

Medicine (WIM) provides one-on-one mentorship for 20 adolescent girls interested in the healthcare field. The events included a Kickoff event, CPR and First Aid training, a career panel discussion focused on the healthcare industry, a trip downtown to the Mutter Museum at the College of Physicians, and three trips to Drexel's College of Medicine's campus in East Falls in the spring. These trips included a visit to the anatomy lab, the simulation lab and a lesson on the brain. *Students are directly exposed to non-traditional careers for women in the medical field, including surgery and specialty medicine.* WIM recruits heavily from Roxborough High School, Saul Agricultural High School, Lankenau High School, and Parkway Northwest.

Last year, Friends in Supplying Help Community Food Cupboard (FISH) gave out over *108,000 pounds of food and vouchers valued at \$205,509 to 754 food insecure neighbors, a 50% increase over the last three years.* Additionally, 256 people benefitted from NL's Holiday Assistance Program (HAP) through our Adopt-a Family program. Six hundred and seventy-two elderly and disabled neighborhood residents benefitted from our holiday meal delivery, Manayunk Meals and More, in partnership with Main Street restaurants. *The Community Utilities and Fuel Fund (CUFF) helped 117 individuals pay their utility bills and keep heat in their homes.* In response to evaluation surveys completed by FISH patrons, we added a number of non-grocery items, such as cleaning and personal hygiene products, through a partnership with our local Target store. These items are not able to be purchased with food stamps, but are household necessities out of reach for many low-income families.



Volunteers are a crucial piece to providing quality services with limited capacity. *Last year, NL had over 600 volunteers providing over 10,000 hours of service.* NL has established an effective, comprehensive partnership with Villanova University, providing volunteer opportunities for Villanova's undergraduate and graduate students. During the school year, at least 150 undergraduate students volunteer at NL serving as tutors and mentors. During summer camp,



Villanova sends three graduate-level nursing students to provide mini-health related instruction for their month's practicum. The nursing students prepared age-appropriate lessons aimed at nutrition, diet, exercise, and disease prevention. In addition, NL has a partnership with Drexel University's School of Public Health whereby five graduate-nursing students provide health instruction.

North Light underwent several capital projects to improve the usage and quality of our physical space. In August, we completed a partnership with IKEA through their Life Improvement Challenge. ***We were nominated to receive a room makeover and, following a public voting process, won a sorely needed new kitchen.*** Our kitchen serves many programmatic functions, in addition to its use as staff kitchen and for site rentals, from our weekly cooking classes with KidZone to healthy eating workshops with USLA. The renovated kitchen provides a safe, clean, modern environment for students to learn healthy eating and food preparation habits. It will also allow us to offer community cooking classes as both

an added service and additional stream of income. We have also converted the adjacent half-court gym into a multi-purpose community room that will permanently house the food cupboard, provide cafeteria space for our childcare programs, and be an attractive space for events. The conversion included the deep sanding and coating of the thirty year old floor and removal of the basketball standards. ***In early September, we broke ground on a rain garden and outdoor environmental education space, funded by the Schuylkill River Restoration Fund.*** The Belgium block swale allows rainwater to flow through a channel that feeds a garden of native plants and pollinators. A boardwalk was built through the garden to allow children access to this natural environment. In addition to being an educational feature, the garden also increased our stormwater management by removing 100 square feet of asphalt from our outdoor space. Coupled with our expansive KaBOOM! playground, half-court basketball, outdoor classroom, container gardens, and spray park, the rain garden will complete the next phase of our outdoor space master plan, developed by the Community Design Collaborative, and create a dynamic space for neighborhood children to learn, play, and grow.



It is the support of people like you that will keep us going strong another eighty years.