



FIRESIDE

The Newsletter of Open Hearth, Inc.

Spring Edition 2026

Paying Homage to Fireside, Our Original Newsletter

35th Anniversary Issue

Celebrating 35 Years: A Letter From The CEO

As we celebrate Open Hearth's 35th anniversary, I find myself reflecting on the thousands of individuals and families who have walked through our doors seeking stability, opportunity, and hope. Each person's journey is unique, yet they all share a common thread: the courage to take the next step toward a stronger



Kelly Raggazino, CEO

future. It has been our privilege to walk alongside them, offering tools, guidance, and support as they work to build the lives they envision. Over the past three and a half decades, we have seen lives transformed—

parents buying a first home, young adults gaining the financial footing to pursue education, and neighbors rebuilding after unexpected setbacks. These successes are not ours alone. They are the result of a community that believes in showing up for one another, and of partnerships that have grown into a wider, more resilient safety net for those who need it most.

Our work has always been strengthened by collaboration, and each partnership expands what is possible. As we look ahead, we remain committed to innovation, compassion, and the belief that affordable housing and financial stability are within reach for every household in our region.

Thank you for being part of this mission—whether you've supported us for decades or are joining us for the first time. Your trust and partnership make this work not only possible, but powerful.

Who We've Helped In 2025



948 households served



1,625 services provided - Many households participated in multiple programs

Matched Savings Program

Since the program launched we've had **298** graduates, saving a total of **\$608,000** and **\$21.1** million in assets secured (including education, vehicles and first homes)



Celebrating a Year of Impact MADE POSSIBLE BY YOU

2025 brought meaningful recognition for Open Hearth's work—and every honor we received reflects the commitment of the donors, volunteers, and partners who make our work possible. At their core, the awards below are a celebration of the impact you help create.

Open Hearth was selected as a **2025 GSK IMPACT Award winner**, joining nine other nonprofits across the Philadelphia region recognized for improving community health through their work. GSK's investment—and yours—ensures that more individuals and families can access the tools and support they need to achieve lasting stability.

In 2025, volunteers harvested **3,879 pounds of organic produce** in our community garden, with 100% donated to Phoenixville Area Community Services' food distribution program. We were honored to receive the **Abundant Harvest Award** from garden partner Trellis for Tomorrow, whose expertise helped build and sustain the space.

Our work to end homelessness was recognized regionally and nationally. at the **Greater Philadelphia Social Innovations Awards**, Open Hearth's Cory Lovera was named a top finalist in the Innovative Cross Sector Partnerships

category for leading collaboration among shelters, nonprofits, and County government to prioritize housing and supportive services for people experiencing homelessness in Chester County.



Open Hearth staff accepts the GSK IMPACT Award from a team of GSK volunteers

That progress was further affirmed when Chester County was **recognized** by Built for Zero **for achieving quality by name data**, a key milestone in creating an effective and equitable homelessness response system. Built for Zero also honored Cory with the **Captain of the Partnership Award** for forging nontraditional partnerships and leading countywide case conferencing that moves households into stable housing.

Open Hearth will also be recognized as **Nonprofit of the Year** by the Phoenixville Regional Chamber of Commerce at its 2026 Annual Awards Dinner on March 18, honoring our longstanding leadership in affordable housing and community building.



Open Hearth is a member of a partnership recognized for achieving quality by name data - a key step in ending homelessness

Each of these achievements tells the same story: when donors, volunteers, partners, and staff work together, real change happens. Thank you for fueling this momentum and for believing in a future where every household has the opportunity to thrive.

Open Hearth Through The Years

Gained 501(c)(3) nonprofit status with an initial focus on creating housing options for people with developmental disabilities

Launched the Family Savings Partner Program, a matched-savings asset development program supporting goals such as homeownership, education, and car purchase

Over 15 years published six editions of The Help Book – a health and human services guide in partnership with the Phoenixville Community Health Foundation

Became the official lead agency at Chester County United Way's Financial Stability Center, offering Financial Navigation services

Awarded contracts to operate Chester County's largest Permanent Supportive Housing program, strengthening long-term housing stability for vulnerable residents

Administered the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), distributing over \$7 million in rent and utility aid in 17 months, while supporting flood relief for Mont Clare and Port Providence residents after Hurricane Ida.

Recognized by the Phoenixville Regional Chamber of Commerce as the Nonprofit of the Year



Chester County resident Dawn enrolled in our Financial Navigation program after Hurricane Ida severely damaged her car. What could have become a long term setback instead became an opportunity to rebuild with support and guidance. Working closely with Heidi, one of Open Hearth's financial navigators, Dawn developed a budget, improved her credit, and increased her financial literacy. Through our Family Savings Partner program, Dawn received education on the car-buying process and had her savings matched, which allowed her to secure favorable terms on a reliable vehicle. She says the experience was about more than replacing a car – it gave her practical tools, confidence, and a clearer path toward long-term financial stability. She continues working with Heidi to make progress toward her long-term financial goals.

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1991



1995

Launched the Goal Achievement Program, an expansion of our transitional housing program which included rental assistance in open-market units for the first time

2001



2004

Created a partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Chester County and Residential Living Options to develop and build a fully handicap accessible home in Phoenixville

2005



2006

Began facilitating the Phoenixville Area Resource Network, providing a monthly networking opportunity for the staff of area nonprofits

2014



2015

In partnership with The Workplace, launched Platform to Employment to support people facing long-term unemployment with financial coaching, job readiness training, and paid work experience.

2016



2020

Given an extraordinary gift of a 3,948-square-foot building on an acre in Phoenixville, Open Hearth became the One-Stop Operator at PA CareerLink–Chester County and launched the Economic Transition Grant.

2021



2025

Partnered with Trellis for Tomorrow and Phoenixville Area Community Services (PACS) to create a volunteer-powered community garden providing fresh produce to residents, and was named a 2025 GSK IMPACT Award winner for improving community health.

2026

