

NETWORK
CONNECT

2025

YEAR IN
REVIEW

ANNUAL REPORT

a Note from our Director



Dear Network Connect Community,

As I reflect on the work of Network Connect this past year, one word rises to the surface: STEWARDSHIP.

Stewardship is the responsibility we share to care for our communities, our relationships, and the opportunities entrusted to us. It calls us to lead with intention, to honor the trust placed in us, and to ensure that the work we do today strengthens the future for those who will come after us.

In communities navigating systemic inequities, trauma, and rapid social change, stewardship means showing up consistently with humility, compassion, and a deep commitment to the people we serve. It is built through relationships, trust, and shared responsibility for the well-being of our neighbors.

This year, I witnessed stewardship in action everywhere. I saw it in the work of our Community Well-Being Ambassadors, who meet people where they are and help neighbors navigate life's challenges with dignity and care. I saw it in the creativity and leadership of our Future Culture Creators, who continue to redefine what youth leadership looks like while shaping the future of their communities. And I saw it in the healing-centered spaces created through our RACE initiatives and Recovery Café, where individuals and families find connection, belonging, and renewed hope.

Each of these efforts reflects the heart of our mission: **Creating community transformation through collective impact.**

At Network Connect, we believe that meaningful change happens when communities are not only supported but trusted to lead. Our role is to be good stewards of that process: building capacity within neighborhoods, connecting people to resources, strengthening partnerships, and empowering individuals to thrive.

Through collaboration with grassroots organizations, schools, healthcare partners, and community leaders across Delaware, we continue to expand opportunities for youth, families, and communities.

As we look ahead, our commitment remains clear: to deepen community partnerships, expand access to resources, and continue building spaces where people feel seen, supported, and empowered.

Transformation does not happen overnight. But stewardship, when grounded in community, compassion, and collaboration, creates the conditions for lasting change.

I am deeply grateful for the staff, partners, funders, and community members who demonstrate stewardship every day through their commitment to this work.

Together, we are the network connecting communities.

Cierra Hall-Hipkins
Cierra Hall-Hipkins
Founder and CEO

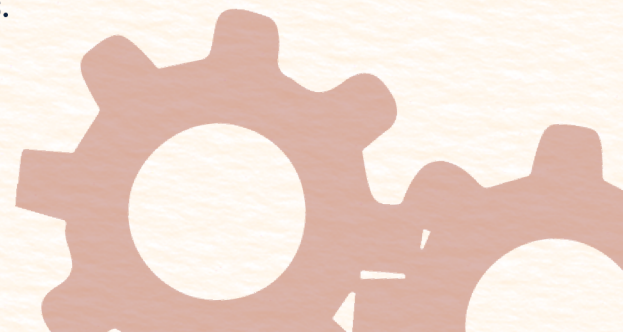


TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. WHO WE ARE

Our Mission, Vision, and Community Identity

2. ALL WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED

Celebrating Milestones and Measurable Impact

4. STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

Our Programs Driving Change Across Delaware

10. 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Featuring Achievements, Partnerships, and Events

14. WHAT'S NEXT?

Future Goals, Growth Plans, and Bold Vision

16. OUR STRATEGY

A Guide to Innovation, Collaboration, Impact



**NETWORK
CONNECT**

☎ 302-300-1222

🌐 www.networkconnect.org

✉ info@networkconnect.org

📍 1200 N French St
Wilmington, DE 19801

WHO WE ARE

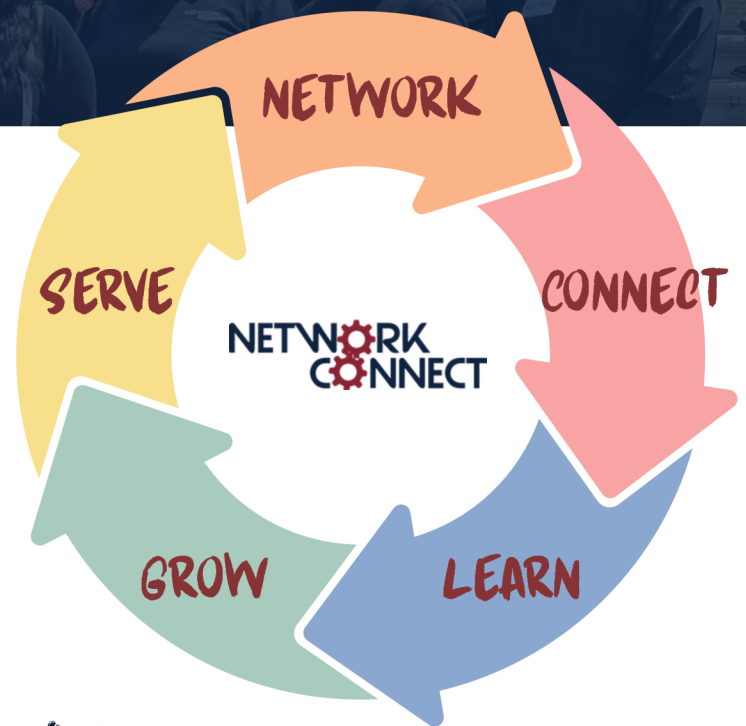
Network Connect seeks to improve the coordination of youth-serving organizations by building effective partnerships for youth, families, communities, and organizations. For over four years, Network Connect has served hundreds of Delaware's children, youth, and families.

OUR MISSION

To create community transformation through collective impact.

OUR VISION

To build Strong, independent, and self-sufficient communities where everyone thrives.



OUR CORE VALUES

COMMUNITY

We are made of local communities.

INTEGRITY

We do what we say we are going to do.

PARTNERSHIP

We work with others for collective impact.

RESPECT

We respect and leverage separate realities.

WE ARE THE NETWORK
CONNECTING COMMUNITIES.

ALL WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED

At-A-Glance

Throughout 2025, NC expanded its reach through routine programming in New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, supporting individuals, families, neighborhoods, and hard-to-reach residents across all three counties, with a focused presence in 10 priority zip codes.



PEOPLE SERVED BY OUR CWA PROGRAM

Counties	2022	2023	2024	2025
CWA - New Castle	606	1,169	1,381	1,556
CWA - Kent & Sussex	189	685	626	749

RACE TO WELLNESS - after school and summer camp programming

In 2023

555

youth served

In 2024,

888

youth served

In 2025

1,184

youth served



WILMINGTON STREET TEAM

Gave

2,899

Helpful Resources

Hosted

33

Public Safety Round Tables

Hosted

48

Community Walks



FUTURE CULTURE CREATORS

Since 2019, the FCC program has served

167

Delaware Teens.

FUTURE CULTURE CREATORS

ALL WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED

Transparency & Impact

CLEAN AUDIT

In 2025, Network Connect proudly achieved a clean financial audit, reflecting our continued commitment to transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship of the resources entrusted to us. This milestone affirms the strength of our financial systems and the diligence of our leadership and administrative teams in maintaining the highest standards of compliance and fiscal management. A clean audit not only demonstrates sound organizational practices but also reinforces the trust placed in us by our funders, partners, and the communities we serve. As we continue to expand our impact, this achievement underscores our dedication to operating with integrity while advancing our mission to connect individuals and families to the resources they need to thrive.

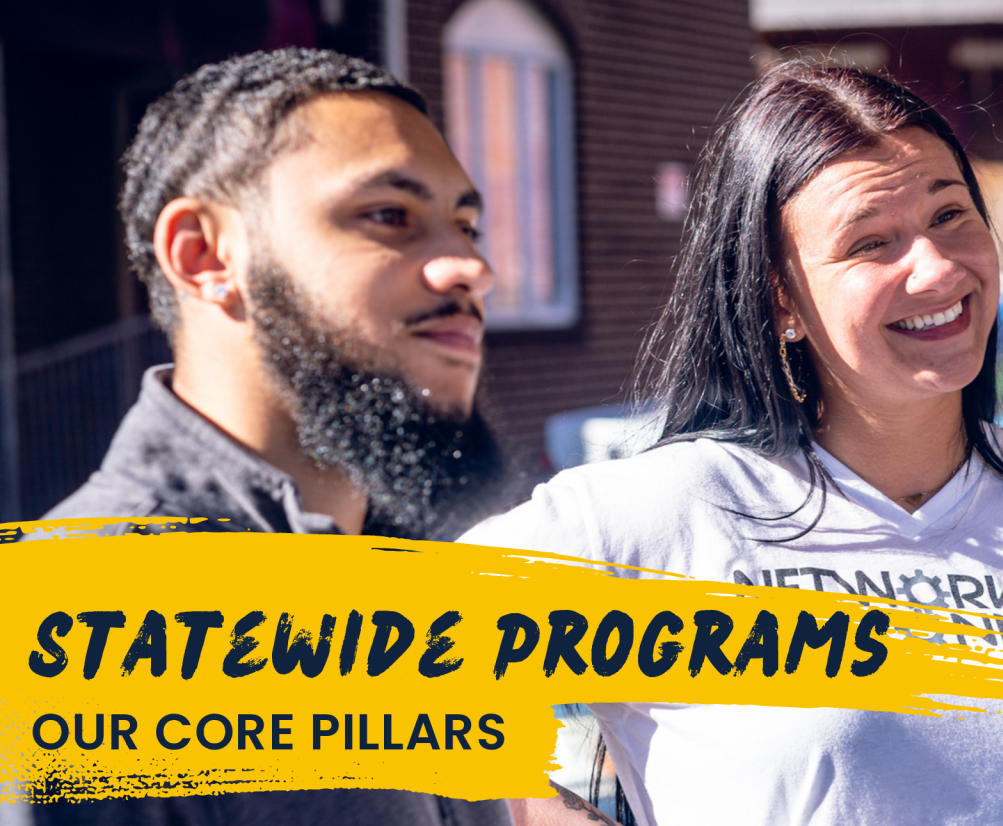


DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH

LEADING NARCAN DISTRIBUTOR IN DELAWARE

The Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) recognized Network Connect as the lead Narcan distributor in the state of Delaware in 2025





WELL-BEING & MENTAL HEALTH

FAMILY & NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT

VIOLENCE PREVENTION & SAFETY

RECOVERY & HEALING

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

OUR CORE PILLARS

WELL-BEING & MENTAL HEALTH



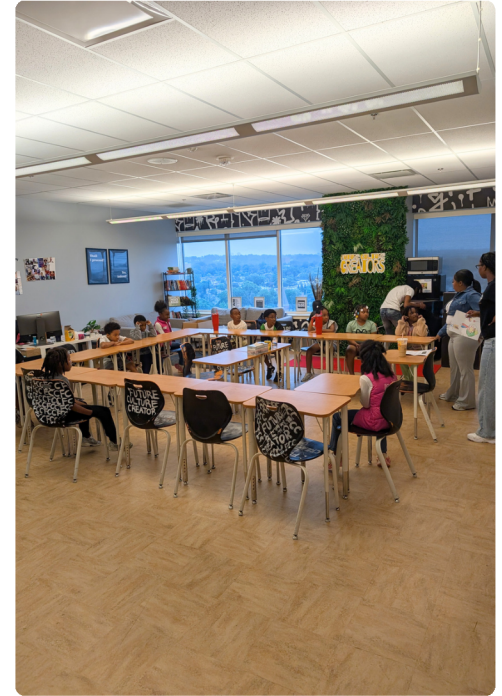
Community Well-Being Ambassadors

In 2025, our CWA team achieved an important professional milestone as ambassadors earned their Certified Community Health Worker (CHW) certification. This accomplishment further strengthened the initiative by enhancing the team's training and expertise in community health, resource navigation, and advocacy. By expanding their skillset through this certification, CWAs are even better equipped to support residents, address community needs, and connect individuals to critical health and social services.

The Community Well-Being Ambassadors (CWA) Initiative is a community-driven, place-based prevention strategy designed to strengthen neighborhoods and increase community capacity across Delaware. Through this initiative, trained ambassadors work directly within their own communities to promote well-being, resilience, and connection among residents of all ages. CWAs take a holistic approach that addresses social determinants of health, recognizing that factors such as housing stability, access to resources, community safety, and economic opportunity all play a role in overall health and well-being. Using a collective impact model, the initiative brings together community-based and public organizations to collaborate and share resources in support of healthier communities. In 2025, efforts continued to expand through strengthened partnerships, increased outreach, and deeper engagement with residents. As trusted members of the communities they serve, CWAs provide compassionate support to individuals and families navigating daily stress and trauma, with a special focus on those impacted by opioid and stimulant use, helping connect them to resources and pathways toward stability and healing.



WELL-BEING & MENTAL HEALTH RACE



RACE is dedicated to preventing and reducing the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) through early intervention, family support, and youth-centered programming across Delaware and surrounding communities. By partnering with schools and community organizations, the initiative promotes prevention strategies aligned with the six pillars of ACE prevention identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. RACE works to ensure that young people who have experienced adversity have access to the mental, emotional, and physical supports they need to succeed both at home and in school. To advance this vision, the program delivers four core initiatives—after-school programming, summer camps, RACE Kits, and RACE Days, each designed to equip youth with tools for resilience, healing, and long-term well-being.

RACE Camp is a free, transformative summer program created to support youth through engaging, hands-on experiences that help counter the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Through a blend of enriching field trips, social-emotional learning (SEL), and healing-centered activities, campers are provided with a safe and nurturing environment where they can learn, grow, and build resilience. The program focuses on helping young people develop positive relationships, strengthen emotional well-being, and experience joy through meaningful and supportive experiences. In addition to youth programming, we also hosted a Parent Engagement Night, creating an opportunity for families to connect, learn more about the camp experience, and strengthen the supportive network surrounding each participant. RACE Camp is more than a summer program, it is a space where healing, connection, and personal growth are intentionally cultivated.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Future Culture Creators

FUTURE CULTURE CREATORS

POWERED BY NETWORK CONNECT

Network Connect continued its commitment to empowering youth through Future Culture Creators, a holistic workforce development program that helps disengaged teens build employment skills, confidence, and professionalism while preparing them to design and lead peer-focused community initiatives. Last year, we successfully hosted Cohorts 10 and 11 in New Castle County and Kent County, providing participants with hands-on opportunities to develop leadership, civic engagement, and professional skills. The program's culturally relevant curriculum focuses on key areas such as professional development, personal brand building, civic engagement through design thinking, and practical job placement.

Additionally, Network Connect partnered with the Youth of the City of Wilmington Career Development Program, offering workforce-focused trainings that equipped students with real-world skills, interview preparation, and professional mentorship, while integrating restorative practices, cognitive-behavioral techniques, and collaborative group activities to promote mental wellness, accountability, and meaningful community impact.





recovery cafe

POWERED BY NETWORK CONNECT

RECOVERY & HEALING

Recovery Cafe

In 2025, Network Connect celebrated one year of The Recovery Café, a welcoming space dedicated to supporting individuals in recovery and fostering community connection. Over the past year, the café has provided a safe, stigma-free environment where guests can access resources, build supportive relationships, and engage in programs that promote wellness and long-term recovery. This milestone reflects Network Connect's ongoing commitment to holistic support and community-based solutions for those impacted by substance use, creating opportunities for healing, empowerment, and resilience across Delaware.

Network Connect was recognized as the largest distributor of naloxone (Narcan) in the state of Delaware, a significant milestone in our ongoing fight against the opioid crisis. Through consistent outreach, community partnerships, and harm-reduction initiatives, our team placed thousands of doses of this life-saving medication directly into the hands of individuals, families, and community members across the state. By ensuring naloxone is accessible where it is needed most, Network Connect continues to play a critical role in overdose prevention and community safety. This recognition not only highlights the dedication of our frontline outreach teams, but also reflects our commitment to meeting people where they are and equipping communities with the tools, education, and resources needed to save lives.



VIOLENCE PREVENTION & SAFETY

Wilmington Street Team



Throughout the year, the Wilmington Street Team remained deeply embedded in the community, providing frontline violence intervention, outreach, and support to individuals and families most impacted by community violence. Our team maintained a consistent presence in neighborhoods across Wilmington—building trust, mediating conflicts, connecting residents to resources, and creating pathways to safety and stability. Through direct engagement, crisis response, and relationship-based outreach, the Street Team continues to play a critical role in interrupting cycles of violence and supporting healing in the community.

This year, members of the Street Team also attended the Community Justice Advocacy Summit, a national gathering focused on addressing gun violence through community-driven solutions. The summit brings together advocates, organizers, and community leaders from across the country to build political power, share strategies, and advocate for policies that invest in community-based violence intervention and prevention efforts.

Participation in the summit allowed our team to connect with national partners, learn emerging best practices in violence prevention, and strengthen our commitment to community-led safety. The experience reinforced the importance of investing in grassroots solutions and ensuring that those closest to the pain of violence are at the center of the work to create safer communities.



FAMILY & NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT

Free Store/Highmark Health Options



A long-standing staple of Network Connect's community support is our Free Store, guided by the motto "Donations with Dignity." The Free Store provides individuals and families with access to essential clothing at no cost, allowing them to select what they need in a welcoming, respectful environment. In 2025, our reach expanded through a partnership with Highmark Health Options, which enabled us to provide winter coats, hats, gloves, socks, heated blankets, and sleeping bags alongside our usual clothing offerings.

This collaboration helped ensure that more community members could stay warm and cared for during the winter months, reinforcing our mission to meet needs while preserving dignity for all who visit the Free Store.

WINTER COAT DRIVE
November 20, 2025
at **NEIGHBORHOOD STORE**

140
Attendees Served!

ITEMS DISTRIBUTED:

- 50** Turkeys
- 100** Heated Sleeping Bags
- 100** Heated Blankets
- 200** Hats & Socks
- 130** Winter Coats

"Thank y'all for the help."
-Coat Drive Attendee

"I always wanted a pink coat!"
-Coat Drive Attendee

NETWORK CONNECT

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

2025 "REMOVING THE MASK" GALA

We celebrated seven years of community impact at The NetGala: Removing the Mask, a special evening marking the continued growth and mission of Network Connect since our founding in 2019. The event brought together community leaders, partners, and supporters to reflect on the progress made and the work still ahead. Centered on the theme Removing the Mask, the gala emphasized transparency, healing, and the importance of confronting challenges openly while reducing stigma surrounding issues that affect our communities. Through powerful storytelling, celebration, and connection, the evening honored the resilience of those we serve and strengthened the collective commitment to expanding resources and opportunities for individuals and families across Delaware.



2025 HIGHLIGHTS

BUILDING BRIDGES

A story about the power of connection and community.

A DOCUMENTARY BY

NETWORK
CONNECT

In neighborhoods marked by stigma, trauma, and survival, a new kind of support system is rising, built not by institutions, but by the people who lived the stories themselves.

NETWORK CONNECT DOCUMENTARY "BUILDING BRIDGES"

This year, Network Connect proudly released Building Bridges, a documentary highlighting the impact of our work since our founding in 2019. The film captures the relationships, community partnerships, and grassroots efforts that have shaped our journey over the years. Through the voices of community members, staff, and partners, Building Bridges showcases the evolution of our work, from violence intervention and community outreach to youth engagement, family support, and resource distribution.

A key theme of the documentary is the people who make the work possible. Our staff is intentionally hired from the very communities we serve, bringing lived experience, trust, and authentic connection to the work each day. The film also highlights the importance of our partners, organizations, and leaders who have been intentionally selected to collaborate toward collective impact. Together, these partnerships strengthen our ability to provide meaningful support and expand opportunities for the community.

At the center of it all is the community itself. Building Bridges reflects our commitment to meeting people where they are, building genuine relationships, and responding to the real needs of neighborhoods we serve. More than a reflection on our past, the documentary celebrates the progress made, the voices of the community, and the strong foundation that continues to guide our work moving forward.



2025 HIGHLIGHTS

JUNETEENTH

In June, in honor of Juneteenth, Network Connect partnered with Highmark Health Options and Mother African Union Church to host a Community BBQ at Tilton Park, serving over 200 neighbors from the community. Our staff helped run games and activities for children, while a free store offered clothing and household essentials. Local partners joined us, sharing their resources alongside ours to ensure families had access to a variety of support services. Events like this not only celebrate culture and bring joy, but also strengthen connections, provide vital resources, and create welcoming spaces where families feel supported, valued, and truly part of the community.



2025 HIGHLIGHTS

BIG INNERG SANKOFA COLLECTIVE

The Big InnerG Sankofa Collective, a collaboration with 7GODXX, brought together art, fashion, community, and wellness in a powerful space for connection and creativity. Through a pop-up experience at Concord Mall, the collective created a hub where culture and community could intersect in meaningful ways.

The pop-up store featured RACE kits, original artwork, fashion from local artists, and opportunities for community members to engage through connection circles focused on healing, reflection, and shared experience. Free clothing was also made available to ensure accessibility and support for those in need.

The Big InnerG Sankofa Collective reflects our commitment to honoring culture, uplifting local creatives, and fostering spaces where wellness, expression, and community care come together.



COMMUNITY CATALYST



THE LAFFEY-McHUGH FOUNDATION

In 2025, Network Connect, in partnership with Laffey McHugh, completed the third and final round of investments through the Community Catalyst Investment Fund. Over the course of 2024 and 2025, this initiative directed \$30,000 in funding to local change-making organizations across Delaware, strengthening community-led efforts and expanding support for residents in need. These investments helped empower partner agencies to continue delivering critical services and making a meaningful impact in their communities.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Heading into 2026, here's what you can expect from Network Connect!



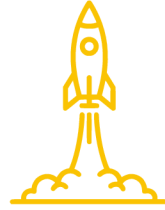
GROW

Continuing to grow our programs to provide quality services in all 3 counties.



STRATEGIZE

Continuing strategic work across community coalitions and collaborations.



LAUNCH

The Launch of Network Connect's Microschools in collaboration with Freire Charter School.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Network Connect would like to thank the following individuals and groups for their generosity and support of our mission



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!

Network Connect sends a special thank-you to all of our partners. Together, we are positively impacting Delaware!

COLLECTIVE IMPACT PARTNERSHIPS



COMMUNITY PARTNERS



SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS



NEW PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS



+



2025-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

Network Connect strengthens communities through trusted partnerships, people-centered programs, and local leadership. At the heart of Network Connect is a commitment to people and place. We believe strong communities are built through deep local relationships, shared accountability, and meaningful collaboration.

Our work is grounded in integrity, shaped by listening and learning, and focused on real impact. We respect diverse lived experiences, invest in individual growth, and promote environments where everyone is valued, supported, and empowered to lead.



OUR STRATEGIC GOALS



Leadership – Grow the people and systems that guide our mission.

Strengthen leadership at all levels through training, succession planning, and partnerships.

Foster a culture of clear communication, accountability, and inclusive governance.

Share our impact through storytelling, marketing, and outreach to partners and funders.



Management – Improve how we work, together.

Review processes regularly to increase efficiency and identify improvements.

Recognize and celebrate staff through awards and milestones.

Upgrade systems and documentation to support smooth operations.



Financial Strength – Secure long-term resources to sustain our work.

Maintain financial transparency and achieve clean audits annually

Grow unrestricted and program-specific funding across Delaware and beyond

Expand our donor and sponsor base through digital engagement and outreach



Programs & Services – Deliver high-impact services in our communities.

Expand programs across vulnerable communities using a phased approach.

Evaluate programs regularly to align services with community needs.

Build pathways for community members to grow from participants into volunteers/staff.

WE'RE CELEBRATING
7 YEARS

BEING THE NETWORK
CONNECTING COMMUNITIES.

NETWORK
CONNECT



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Donate to our Cause.

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Follow us on the Socials!



CONNECT.

NETWORK.

SUPPORT.



OLD PAGES