



2024
YEAR IN
REVIEW
ANNUAL REPORT



A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Network Connect Community,

As I reflect on the work of Network Connect this past year, one word stands tall: **PERSEVERANCE**. In a time of deep systemic challenges, shifting societal dynamics, and urgent community needs, perseverance is the fuel that keeps us moving. It's more than just endurance; it's the determination to continue advancing, growing, and building even when the path is uncertain. Perseverance is strength in motion, our commitment to pressing forward with courage, purpose, and hope.

This unwavering determination lives at the core of our mission:
Creating community transformation through collective impact.

It's reflected in the tenacity of our Community Wellness Ambassadors, the bold vision of our Future Culture Creators, and the care and consistency of our RACE mentors, staff, and leaders. It informs every partnership, every conversation, and every decision we make. As we pursue our vision - strong, independent, and self-sufficient communities in which everyone thrives - We are guided by our deeply rooted values.

Each day, we ask hard questions:

How do we ensure our youth grow up confident and connected?

How do we preserve community bonds in a tech-driven world?

How do we support healing while addressing the root causes of trauma?

How do we shift systems so everyone, regardless of race, income, or circumstance, can truly thrive?

We don't always have immediate answers. But we do have purpose. We have partnership. And we have the perseverance to keep showing up. Our next chapter requires us to lean into the basics, connection, trust, healing, joy, and ACTION. We know transformation doesn't happen overnight—but with each conversation, each collaboration, and each courageous step, we get closer.

I'm honored to lead this work alongside each of you. Together, we network, to connect, to learn, to grow, and to serve.

With determination and gratitude,

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

7. 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Featuring Achievements, Partnerships, and Events

9. OUR STRATEGY

A Guide to Innovation, Collaboration, Impact

10. WHAT'S NEXT?

Future Goals, Growth Plans, and Bold Vision

CONNECT WITH US!



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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

Creating community transformation through collective impact.

OUR VISION

Strong, independent, and self-sufficient communities in which everyone thrives.

OUR CORE VALUES

Community

We are local communities.

Integrity

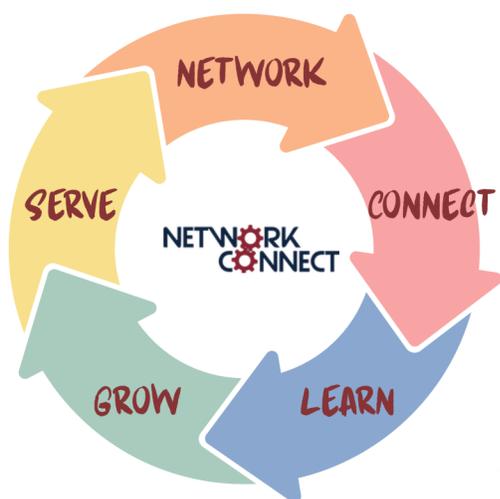
We do what we say we are going to do.

Partnership

We work with others for collective impact.

Respect

We respect and leverage separate realities.



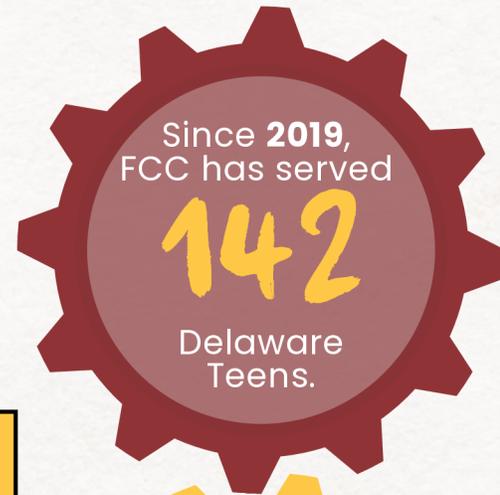
ALL WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED

At-a-Glance

Throughout 2024, we expanded NC's reach and impact. With routine programming across New Castle, Kent, and Sussex counties, NC supports individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities.

PEOPLE SERVED BY OUR CWA PROGRAM

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



RACE TO WELLNESS
after school and summer camp programming

WILMINGTON STREET TEAM



In total, we serve

16 Zipcodes in Hard-to-Reach areas.

In Delaware, we serve

3 Counties including New Castle, Kent, & Sussex.

ALL WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED

New Spaces

We're excited to introduce our new nomad Network Connect locations, expanding our reach to better serve the community. The Kent County Hub and the two new Wilmington Street Team Hubs bring essential resources closer to those who need them most. These new locations enhance accessibility, allowing us to provide direct support, services, and opportunities right where people live and work. By establishing these hubs, we're strengthening our ability to connect with the community, offering a more convenient and impactful way to access the resources necessary for stability, growth, and success.

Whether it's job assistance, housing support, or community programs, these hubs serve as a bridge to opportunity, making it more convenient than ever for people to get the help they need right where they are.



KENT COUNTY HUB

The Kent County Hub at 20 E Division Street is now open, bringing essential resources and support directly to the heart of the community.



WILMINGTON STREET TEAM HUBS

Our Wilmington Street Team Hubs at 914 N Pine Street and 2214 North Market Street serve as neighborhood anchors, connecting people with vital services right where they live and work.



STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

OUR NETWORK



**FUTURE
CULTURE
CREATORS**



We are proud to offer our Future Culture Creators, RACE, The Messaging Center, Safe Passage, Recovery Cafe, and Community Well-Being Ambassador programs across all three counties in Delaware, ensuring that individuals and families statewide have access to vital resources and support. With a presence in every county, we are bridging gaps, fostering growth, and making meaningful connections where they matter most.

KENT



**FUTURE
CULTURE
CREATORS**

FUTURE CULTURE CREATORS

Future Culture Creators (FCC) is a holistic workforce development program that empowers disengaged youth by building employment skills, self-image, and professionalism. Led by Network Connect with culturally competent facilitation, the program prepares teens to design and lead peer-focused community programming.

NEW CASTLE



Participants engage in a culturally relevant curriculum focused on four key areas: professional development, brand building, civic engagement through design thinking, and hands-on job placement. Using restorative practices, cognitive-behavioral techniques, and group activities, the program fosters leadership, mental wellness, and community accountability. In 2024, Future Culture Creators graduated 65 youth from its Cohorts 8 and 9, equipping them with all the necessary tools to secure employment.



RACE

RACE aims to prevent and reduce the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) through early intervention, family support, and universal youth screening in Delaware and surrounding areas. Partnering with schools and community organizations, we promote preventive strategies aligned with the CDC’s six ACE prevention pillars. Our vision is for all youth across the state of Delaware and its surrounding areas who have experienced ACEs to have access to the mental, physical, and emotional tools they need, both at home and in school. RACE delivers four core programs: after-school programming, summer camps, RACE kits, and RACE Days, each designed to empower and support youth statewide. In 2024, the RACE program expanded its after-school programming to South and East Dover Elementary, reaching 35 new youth in the Dover area.



RECOVERY CAFE



Recovery Café, launched in June 2024 in our Dover office, it’s a community-driven safe space offering long-term support, activities, and resources for people in recovery. Visitors are encouraged to become members and actively contribute to the café community. In the program’s inaugural year, 30+ members joined our Recovery Cafe program.



COMMUNITY WELL-BEING AMBASSADORS

The **Community Well-Being Ambassadors Initiative (CWA)** is a community-driven, place-based prevention strategy to increase the capacity of individual neighborhoods and communities in Delaware. CWAs promote community well-being and resilience amongst all residents regardless of age. This initiative represents a collective impact approach, utilizing collaboration and resources among various community-based and public organizations in Delaware. CWAs support community members as they combat the daily stress and trauma existing within our communities, with a special emphasis on individuals impacted by the effects of opioids and other stimulant abuse. When experiencing a challenge, a helping hand and an outside perspective can help someone find the starting point or solution to address specific needs. CWAs are members of local Delaware communities (a CWA could be your neighbor or a friend of a friend) and are trained to provide tailored support to individuals, families, and communities in need. In 2024, our Community Well-Being Ambassador program expanded into Sussex County, launching at Cornerstone Community Center, where it continues to thrive today.



WILMINGTON STREET TEAM

The Wilmington Street Team, part of the City's Community Public Safety Initiative, is led by Network Connect and the Center for Structural Equity. The team monitors and responds to community violence by providing intervention services and connecting residents to resources. In 2024, we expanded with a second hub on Market Street and together both hubs made 1,618 resource connections across Wilmington.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024

Collaborations, Partnerships, Initiatives, and Events

At Network Connect, we believe collaboration is key to the work we do; when partners combine and leverage their strengths, transformative programs emerge!

CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CENTER



We are thrilled to announce our partnership with Cornerstone Community Center, a vital organization in Sussex County that has been instrumental in serving and uplifting the local community. Their dedication to providing essential resources, support, and programs has created a lasting impact, making them an anchor of positive change. Through this partnership, we have been able to engage more deeply with individuals and families, fostering meaningful connections and expanding our reach to those who need it most. We look forward to continuing this collaboration and working together to strengthen and support our community in new and impactful ways.

THE WILMINGTON PAL



Network Connect is proud to partner with Wilmington PAL, a trusted community hub providing a safe, welcoming space for residents. Together, we've hosted free stores, community dinners, and events that foster connection and support. We're grateful for their partnership and look forward to continued collaboration.

MILFORD FOOD BANK



Network Connect is honored to partner with the Milford Food Bank, an organization whose mission aligns closely with our commitment to serving the community and addressing critical needs. Together, we are working to combat food insecurity by providing essential resources to individuals and families who need them most. Through this partnership, we have been able to expand our outreach, ensuring that nutritious food is accessible to those facing hardship. By combining our efforts, we are not only meeting immediate needs but also fostering a stronger, healthier community where no one has to worry about where their next meal will come from.

HIGHMARK



Network Connect is proud to partner with Highmark in a shared mission to improve community health and well-being. Through our collaboration, we have hosted impactful community conversations across the state, addressing potential health disparities and ensuring that individuals have access to vital information about preventive care, healthcare resources, and benefits. These conversations have been instrumental in empowering community members with the knowledge they need to make informed health decisions while also creating space for dialogue about the barriers many face in accessing care. Together, we are working toward a healthier, more informed, and more equitable future for all.



2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Event and Community Spotlights

RACE CAMP

RACE Camp is a transformative, free summer program designed to provide youth with engaging and interactive activities that help reverse the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Through enriching field trips, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum, and healing-centered activities, campers are given a safe and supportive environment to grow, heal, and thrive. More than just a summer program, RACE Camp is a space for healing, connection, and personal growth—empowering young people with the tools they need to build resilience, develop positive relationships, and experience joy through meaningful experiences.



2024 "CONNECTING IN COLOR"

On April 20, Network Connect hosted the sold-out Connecting in Color Net Gala at the Community Education Building Atrium. This vibrant evening brought together community members, partners, and supporters for a celebration of culture, creativity, and connection. More than a fundraiser, the gala highlighted the power of unity and diversity while generating vital support for Network Connect's programs helping us expand opportunities, uplift voices, and drive lasting change.



COMMUNITY SUCCESS STORY

"Where do I begin?? These women have changed my perspective, my self-worth, and MY LIFE. Alyiah has been my angel. I keep her in my prayers. Then Jennine has become an invaluable member of the team.. These women may not realize that they have changed /saved many people's lives, especially my life. I am a college-educated woman. It happens to anyone. Homelessness, worthlessness, and abuse have no prejudice. But these women make us laugh, cry, and most importantly, feel human, leading us to the resources and holding us responsible for our own futures. AMEN".

-Recovery Cafe Client



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.

WHAT'S NEXT?

2025 Preview of What's to Come



GROW

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



STRATEGIZE

Continuing strategic work across community coalitions and collaborations.



CELEBRATE

In 2025, we celebrate our 7th Anniversary! Save the date and Celebrate with us!

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!

COLLECTIVE IMPACT PARTNERS



SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS



NETWORK.
CONNECT.
SUPPORT.



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