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Log on to our virtual event at redcross.org/berksheroes

8 am MAY 13, 2021



THE PEOPLE YOU KNOW THE NEWS YOU TRUST



WEEKNIGHTS at 5:30 & 10:30PM



Welcome to the 17th Annual American Red Cross Berks County Heroes Breakfast!

We thank you for joining us for this year's Virtual Breakfast, which you can access via the event webpage at: <u>www.redcross.org/berksheroes</u> on Thursday morning, May 13 at 8:00 am.

2020 was a year unlike any other, as the COVID-19 pandemic engulfed our country and the world. Locally, the pandemic took a tremendous toll with lives lost, thousands becoming ill, and our everyday lives being disrupted as our communities came together to reduce the spread through school and business closings, working from home, engaging in new practices with masking, social distancing, and other steps to help keep our friends and families safe. Our 2020 Heroes Breakfast was first postponed and then became our first virtual event last November, allowing us to recognize the local heroes nominated by the community for their life-saving actions during 2019.

As we began planning for this year's event, we realized we had an obligation to recognize a new type of Hero, the individuals and organizations who stepped up to provide vital health care, education services, and to meet other critical community needs during the pandemic. Nominations flooded in last fall with so many worthy candidates that we have expanded this year's Heroes Breakfast to recognize 19 individuals whose contributions during the pandemic have helped so many in Berks County. We are excited to share some of their stories with you this morning.

It's also my pleasure as the new Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Rivers Chapter to say thanks to the sponsors, volunteers, and dedicated committee members who make this event possible. Sponsorship revenue for this year's Heroes Breakfast is up over 25% from last year, a remarkable showing of support during this challenging year. Special thanks to our Platinum Sponsors UGI and WFMZ-TV and to all the local businesses you will see listed in the program.

An event like this takes leadership and hours of volunteer time to create. We are blessed to have a strong Heroes Breakfast Committee and strong leadership from Katie Simone, a PA Rivers Chapter Board Member. We also thank Karin Mallett from WFMZ-TV for her personal commitment to this event for many years and to the production team for their incredible work telling our Heroes' stories.

Lastly, we thank our Heroes, the local community members whose dedication, tenacity, and desire to help others shines through the stories we will share today. Thank you for your selfless service to our community!

I hope this morning's program leaves you with a warm feeling knowing that so many people have done so much during this difficult year to help our community in a time of greatest need. Thank you for supporting the 17th Annual Berks County Heroes Breakfast today and thanks for your ongoing support of the American Red Cross!

2021 Berks County Heroes Committee

Judge Patrick T. Barrett, County of Berks Wayne Becker, Dave Zerbe Photography Todd Boughter, Berks County Emergency Services Joan Breidenstine, Community Volunteer Karin Mallett, WFMZ John Miravich, Fox Rothschild LLP Christopher Neidert, Penn State Health St. Joseph Deborah Rutter, Reading Hospital Tower Health Katie Simone, Community Volunteer (Committee Chair) Turie Sotzin, Mid Penn Bank Lidia Zidik, Connors Investor Services, Inc.

2021 Berks County Heroes Judges

Judge Patrick T. Barrett

Berks County Court of Common Pleas

Hamid Chaudhry Owner, Wyomissing Restaurant & Bakery

Dr. Jill Hackman Executive Director, Berks County Intermediate Unit

Edward Michalik, Psy.D.

Mike Reinert, "Berks Time Train" Host Senior Account Executive, WFMZ-TV 69 News

Senator Judith Schwank PA State Senate



Thursday, May 13th at 8 am



Go to: redcross.org/berksheroes

Click on the event link just before 8:00 a.m.

Hosted by:

Karin Mallett, WFMZ-TV 69 News

Peter Brown, *Executive Director American Red Cross Pennsylvania Rivers Chapter*

Produced by:

Paul Ricciardi, Golden Pepper Productions WFMZ-TV 69 News

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All Hero honorees will receive a special delivery, including a Heroes Cake from Wyomissing Restaurant and Bakery, award certificates, and goodies from the below generous supporters:









Fred Tamarri

Jay Worrall

Chief Steven Stinsky

Theresa Adams

Daniel Smith

Adelle Schade & Ellen Albright

Walter Gensemer

Brian Gottschall

Anthony Tucci

Christopher Winters

Anthony Pignetti

Marian Rhoads

Laurie Heagy & Jennifer Yashur

Jeffrey J. Knopf & Brian K. Benoit Sr.

Berks Nature

Don Hirsch

FRED TAMARRI



Last June, Fred Tamarri was out walking when he heard shouting outside a local Sheetz. A Caernarvon Township Police Officer had approached a drunken male about to drive away and tried to get him out of his car. The intoxicated man became belligerent and turned aggressive, slamming the car door on the police officer's hand in the struggle to resist being detained. As the fight ensued, Fred ran into the Sheetz and told the clerk to call 911. According to police reports, the officer tried to deploy his taser, but the man continued to fight with an onslaught of bites, kicks, and punches, which rendered the police officer unconscious and disarmed. Tamarri knew the officer needed help. With complete disregard for his own safety, Fred jumped in to restrain the man, so he could be arrested. "I didn't know what to do, so I got behind him and put him in a full Nelson and held him until back up arrived, probably about 4 or 5 minutes…I did not want to

fight him so I was trying to calm him down." Thanks to Fred's heroic actions, no one was seriously harmed and the man was taken into custody and charged with assaulting an officer, DUI, and public intoxication. When he's not being an amazing hero at the local Sheetz, Fred Tamarri works for Renewal by Anderson windows and is a talented videographer who specializes in weddings.

JAY WORRALL



In March of 2020, as our community was shutting down due to COVID-19, not everyone could afford to stock up on food and basic necessities. Many people quickly found themselves with little or no income to buy food. By late March, especially with schools closed, the demand for food at Helping Harvest Food Bank had more than doubled. Jay Worrall, President at Helping Harvest, and his team worked around the clock, bringing in additional volunteers, to help meet the incredible surge in hunger brought about by the pandemic. Helping Harvest spent millions above their normal annual budget to purchase additional food in bulk to support the growing lower-income community in Berks and Schuylkill counties. Unfortunately, this surge wasn't temporary; the need for food doubled throughout the entire year following March, 2020. When asked how they did it, Jay praises the generous donations from the community and his whole team, including

the warehouse workers, truck drivers, volunteers, and his leadership team, Deb Mest, Deb Gehris, Jess Umberhauer, Doug Long, and Lori Lowery.

CHIEF STEVEN STINSKY



Fleetwood Chief of Police, Steven Stinsky, went above and beyond to help save the life of a teenage boy across the Atlantic Ocean, after receiving a cry for help via social media on August 13th, 2020. Chief Stinsky wears many hats, including managing the Fleetwood Police Facebook page. Late that night, he answered a Facebook Message from a young man in distress, and continued trying to reach him the next day in an attempt to prevent him from committing suicide. After making contact and gathering info, Chief Stinsky realized the teenager was located in Fleetwood, England, NOT Fleetwood, Pennsylvania, which made the case even more difficult. While reaching out to local authorities in Lancashire England, Chief Stinsky continued his dialogue with the teenager throughout the day, trying to make him feel heard and give him hope. At the same time as he was skillfully gathering information to relay

to the England Constables who were searching for him. Hours later, thanks to Chief Stinsky's diligence and skill, the teenager was found alive and taken to get the help he needed. For his actions, the U.K. awarded Chief Stinsky their highest honor for law enforcement, the Chief Constable's Commendation Award.

THERESA ADAMS



As a retired professor of nursing at Alvernia University, a former staff nurse at St. Joseph Hospital, and head nurse at Wilson High School, Dr. Theresa Adams has had many roles. She is not only an experienced RN, BSN, but also an accomplished nurse educator with a PhD in leadership. Since retiring about 5 years ago, Theresa has become an active volunteer in the community. When COVID struck, she quickly recognized the critical lack of masks available to the public, so she deployed one of her other talents, as a seamstress. She started making masks, at first giving dozens away to family and friends, then she heard there was also a shortage of masks in the hospitals. Theresa reached out to Reading Hospital Volunteer Services, and offered to sew cotton masks for distribution to patients. As a nurse of nearly 50 years, Theresa explained, "I felt guilty sitting in my home because I felt I should be

out there... this was one of the ways that I could help". Within weeks she was making masks by the thousands. To this day, she has donated almost 8,000 masks crafted by her, as well as a number of comfort pillows that also went to patients. After manufactured PPE became more available, Theresa shifted her focus to continue to help as a volunteer at Reading Hospital vaccine clinics. Theresa continues to give countless COVID vaccines 3-4 days a week as a volunteer RN vaccinator, and to share her passion for healthcare while helping to educate younger nurses and students.

DANIEL SMITH



Daniel Smith is a 17-year-old Junior at Wilson High School and a good Samaritan who wanted to support and thank frontline workers throughout the COVID pandemic. Daniel started a GoFundMe account to solicit donations and he successfully raised hundreds of dollars with the intention of buying and personally delivering meals to essential frontline workers. A friend of Daniel's family, Heather Clark, the owner of GO FISH Seafood and Sushi Restaurant jumped on board to help provide meals to as many front-line workers as possible. Daniel developed a list of organizations who needed it most and worked with GO FISH to come up with a plan. He then personally delivered the meals during their lunchtimes. Daniel delivered over 350 free meals to law enforcement offices, fire departments, urgent care centers and hospitals. Long after the donations Daniel had raised ran out, GO FISH kept cooking for free!

Heather also wanted to serve the community and thank them for supporting her restaurant throughout a tough time, so she gave generously toward the goal of showing gratitude and offering support to Berks County frontline workers.

ADELLE SCHADE AND ELLEN ALBRIGHT



Adelle Schade and Ellen Albright are heroes in our community due to their leadership during the early response to COVID, when many organizations with frontline essential workers, such as police departments, EMTs, retirement homes, etc. had a severe lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). "People were cutting plastic soda liter bottles...and trying to tape them to a headband because there was nothing available," recalls Adelle Schade, the Director of Albright College's Science Research Institute. Adelle and Ellen Albright, the Director of Talent

and Workforce at the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance, both recognized a critical need and came together to create the Berks PPE Resource Network. They coordinated with local colleges, universities, non-profits, high schools, even families who had 3D-printers at home, as well as the GoggleWorks and students, to create a coalition of volunteers who started 3D-printing around the clock to meet the massive demand for face shields. In a matter of weeks, over 100 volunteers were mobilized, over 255 organizations were served, and over 85,000 units of PPE were distributed to front-line essential workers, at no cost to the end user. This incredible organizational feat was a result of Ellen and Adelle's leadership, as well as the many organizations and volunteers in our community that came together in this crisis. Lastly, their work is continuing–local high school students are developing a prototype for a flexible mask strap and hope to start production soon!

WALTER GENSEMER



Walter Gensemer was a door gunner and crew chief for two tours in Vietnam, earning many medals, five of which with "Valor" Devices, for his selfless, heroic actions, including 3 Bronze Stars (two for heroism), 2 Army Commendation Medals for heroism, 27 Air Medals for combat missions (1 of which for heroism), the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm Leaf, and he was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds he endured when he was hit with shrapnel in both legs during a combat mission. To this day, Walt continues to be a hero, as a very active volunteer in the Berks County veteran's community. Walt works as a hospice volunteer for veterans and he spends countless hours volunteering for the Berks County Veterans Treatment Court (VTC), which serves dozens of veterans at any given time. As the Lead Mentor Veterans Coordinator, Walt pairs justice-involved veterans with volunteer veteran mentors, hosts training and coordinates

meetings with the veteran mentors. Walt is also the original founder and lead coordinator of the Berks County Veterans Jail Initiative (BCVJI). The BCVJI is an outreach and information resource team, mainly comprised of volunteer veterans, who serve as advocates and mentors to currently incarcerated veteran inmates in Berks County Jail, with a goal of reducing incarceration rates among veterans and supporting successful community re-entry. Walt also speaks at schools about his experiences in Vietnam, and he coordinates speaking groups to raise awareness in the community regarding Veterans living with PTSD.

BRIAN GOTTSCHALL



As the Director of Berks County Emergency Management Services, Brian Gottschall, has saved many lives with his emergency preparedness background by applying his knowledge and experience to the COVID-19 pandemic with ferocity. Due to his early intervention and his tireless ongoing efforts, to prepare and continually educate our community, he saved Berks County lives that may have been lost due to inaction or hesitation. Starting in early February 2020, Brian began regular coordination and communications with our local healthcare providers, first responders and county leaders on the potential threat of COVID-19. His early actions helped the County respond a few weeks later in a rapid and effective way when the threat emerged here in the US and Berks County. Between accessing PPE, setting up the COVID command center, and his ongoing updates on how this crisis is directly impacting Berks County,

Brian Gottschall has stood as a leader and champion for the health of Berks County residents.

ANTHONY TUCCI



Anthony "Tony" Tucci, is the Executive Director of Western Berks Ambulance. His organization served the community on the frontlines of COVID throughout the past year. He is also the leader of the Berks County COVID EMS Task Force. Tony immediately recognized a need for an entire-community approach in the COVID response, realizing that many organizations could face a lack of staff and resources. Tony's leadership throughout the COVID response brought together pre-hospital providers, hospital staff, and other emergency responders in the community to ensure collaboration and sharing of resources to benefit all of Berks County and beyond. He maintained on-going meetings, cooperative grant applications, shared services and practices, and leveraged his own community relationships to secure physical material support for our entire EMS community, not

only his organization, Western Berks Ambulance. Thanks to his vision, the overall EMS services to the community were capable of operating at the highest possible level and our brave EMS workers were properly protected.

CHRISTOPHER WINTERS



As President and CEO of the Olivet Boys & Girls Club, Christopher Winters has led this organization with a passion for its mission. In response to the pandemic, his first priority was to make sure the children and their families were being served as part of their on-going mission. They have served hundreds of thousands of meals for children, delivered thousands of pounds of food to families, and developed and launched countless hours of virtual programming. They also developed and implemented a working model which is now being used by other community partners to address the remote learning needs of children from various school districts. Chris has worked countless hours, personally helping many families behind the scenes, and organizing efforts with multiple community partners to develop programs as an advocate for the youth in our community. In the words of his team, "We

could not think of another hero in this community who always places his team and more importantly the youth of our community first, especially as Olivet continues to address the effects of the pandemic on the children of Berks County. Chris Winters is a true hero for our community and especially for the youth of Olivet Boys & Girls Club".

ANTHONY PIGNETTI



As Executive Director of Business Development at the Reading Fightin Phils, Anthony Pignetti works with hundreds of clients in Berks County, many of which are non-profits. Throughout his career, he has helped countless organizations raise life-changing funds, with a willingness to go above and beyond. When COVID hit and baseball came to a halt, Anthony stepped up to the plate to work with a variety of nonprofits, hosting numerous drive-thru events at First Energy Stadium. At a time when unemployment, hunger, and homeless rates were higher than ever, Anthony and the Fightins went above and beyond to do what they could to help. Working with Humane Pennsylvania to give away over 40,000 pounds of pet food to those in need and teaming up with United Way to help distribute personal care, safety, and sanitation items are examples of the events hosted multiple times throughout last year.

Anthony also hosted a variety of safe "Party with a Purpose" events throughout the summer, with proceeds supporting many local nonprofits and he helped spread holiday cheer with a Sweet Street dessert giveaway, which brightened the holidays of 3,000+ families. Thanks to the Fightin Phils and Anthony's dedication, thousands of lives were touched and supported when they needed it the most.

MARIAN RHOADS



As the Pharmacy Leader at Penn State Health St. Joseph (PSHSJ), Marian Rhoads has gone above and beyond to ensure that PSHSJ has had the necessary medications and vaccines to help patients fight the battle with COVID. Throughout the pandemic, pharmacies everywhere have played a critical role in the health care response. As essential healthcare workers, pharmacists have been on the front lines from the beginning, providing services to the community despite the risk for their personal safety. Marian's leadership of the PSHSJ hospital pharmacy, as well as her high level of collaboration with the clinical and non-clinical staff, have both been critical to the ability of St. Joseph's Hospital to serve their patients and our community. According to John Morahan, recently-retired President and CEO of PSHSJ, "Both professionally and personally Marian embodies the values and mirrors

the criteria in selecting a candidate for the Red Cross Hero award."

LAURIE HEAGY & JENNIFER YASHUR



Laurie Heagy and Jenn Yashur are leaders at East Penn who provide Employee Health and Safety services. They have gone above and beyond to meet the unprecedented challenges brought about by COVID. Both Laurie, as the Director of Medical Services, and Jennifer, as Medical Services Supervisor, have spent countless hours overseeing the education, training, and care of over 8,100 people who work in the Berks East Penn locations. Their skills were instrumental in the research, development, and implementation of new policies, procedures, and

training for their team and all employees to protect themselves and maintain safe facilities. In addition to taking care of their own, Laurie and Jenn's leadership was critical for East Penn, as an essential business, to continue to safely provide energy storage solutions to other essential businesses, including hospitals, data centers, and vaccine distribution centers.

JEFFREY KNOPF & BRIAN BENOIT



Jeffrey Knopf and Brian Benoit were not only on the front lines with COVID patients last year at Boyertown Community Ambulance, but they were leaders in setting new standards and providing health and safety education and equipment to protect other agencies across Berks County as well as their own. Jeff is the executive director, and Brian is deputy chief of Boyertown EMS. Additionally, they both actively participated on the Berks County COVID taskforce, which was created to increase collaboration and communications across the many Berks County

organizations and community leaders in health, education, and emergency services. Jeff's leadership in coordinating resource acquisition and distribution between the Boyertown Borough Council, DES, Fire, Police, and EMS was critical to distribute PPE to protect the safety of these essential workers. Both Jeff and Brian are among the many heroes who led the way not only in their own organizations, but across the community, as they continued to provide a high level of services, while keeping frontline essential employees protected to prevent the spread of infection.

BERKS NATURE



For over 10 years Berks Nature has offered a successful day camp and now offers a fully licensed Nature Preschool. In fall 2020, as many schools went back to in-person learning, Berks Nature created an extension of their summer camp program during the school year, called "Camp for School". This allowed parents to drop off their child for the day where friendly teachers and counselors assisted with their virtual learning and gave them a fun filled day outside packed with educational opportunities. It was the support that many parents needed. As one parent

describes: "It is difficult to put into words how much [your camp staff] have meant to us over these past months. It is overwhelming to try to convey how important they have been to [our daughter] and the quality of her education this year...Thank you for having the foresight, responsiveness, ingenuity, and dedication to community service to create this program." Pictured above are Camp for School staff members, Amy Deviney (left), Michael Griffith (middle), and Beckey Seel (right). They, along with the entire Berks Nature team and President, Kim Murphy, created this program.

DON HIRSCH



Don Hirsch and his team of brave individuals, the Hospital Emergency Response Team (HERT), at Penn State Health St. Joseph, has gone above and beyond for the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a part of their COVID response, the HERT group immediately started running testing sites at the St. Joseph campus. Throughout the year, the HERT experienced many moves in locations, endured the summer heat in full protective gear, as well as the cold and snow, in the winter months. Yet, you won't hear a single complaint from the staff who have been on the front lines since the beginning. They changed their positions from inside the hospital to working at the test site full time, braving all the elements as well as potential exposure to the virus. A few of the members became sick themselves, but never failed to come back, once healthy, to help the public with the continual need for COVID 19 testing.

FY21 Chapter Statistics July 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021



COVID-19 has created many challenges for the Red Cross. Our volunteers have demonstrated tremendous flexibility and dedication as we modified protocols to ensure the safety of clients and volunteers across all of our programs. Disaster response has been uninterrupted since the outbreak last March. Our community preparedness programming, blood collection, and training programs for first aid, CPR, and other lifesaving skills have been impacted by COVID-19 restrictions and the overriding concern for safety. Our results in these areas are climbing back to pre-pandemic levels.





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American Red Cross Pennsylvania Rivers

Here's to heroes with the energy to do more.

UGI is proud of its continuing support of the American Red Cross' Home Fire Campaign, a critical component of the Red Cross' commitment to saving lives and providing assistance during emergencies and disasters. We join the Red Cross in honoring the efforts of this year's local heroes, whose collective acts of kindness and courage make our community a better place.

2021 BERKS COUNTY HEROES

Fred Tamarri Jay Worrall Chief Steven Stinsky Theresa Adams Daniel Smith Adelle Schade Ellen Albright Walter Gensemer Anthony Pignetti Anthony Tucci Brian Gottschall Christopher Winters Laurie Heagy Jennifer Yashur Jeffrey J. Knopf Brian K. Benoit Sr. Berks Nature Marian Rhoads Don Hirsch

In addition, we join the Red Cross in saluting all frontline workers who bravely continued to provide essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Thank you for all you do!

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There are heroes everywhere. On every street, in every town. Some you hear about. Some you don't. As we honor these heroes today, let's remember that every one of us, no matter where we live, no matter what we do in life, no matter how visible the impact of our efforts, can be a hero to someone. So, for now, let's just be heroes.



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Thank you to all of the heroes in our local community.



