

# WCDC

Wilkinsburg Community  
Development Corporation

*2012–2013 Annual Report*



## **STAFF**

*Tracey Evans,  
Executive Director*

*Jennifer Salmans,  
Administrative Coordinator*

*Rebecca Martin,  
Project Coordinator*

## **BOARD MEMBERS**

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Honorary Chair*

*James P. Butler*

*Christine Kush*

*Jan Maczka*

*Glenn McKenzie*

*Leslie Patterson*

*James B. Richard*

*Ernestine Stevens*

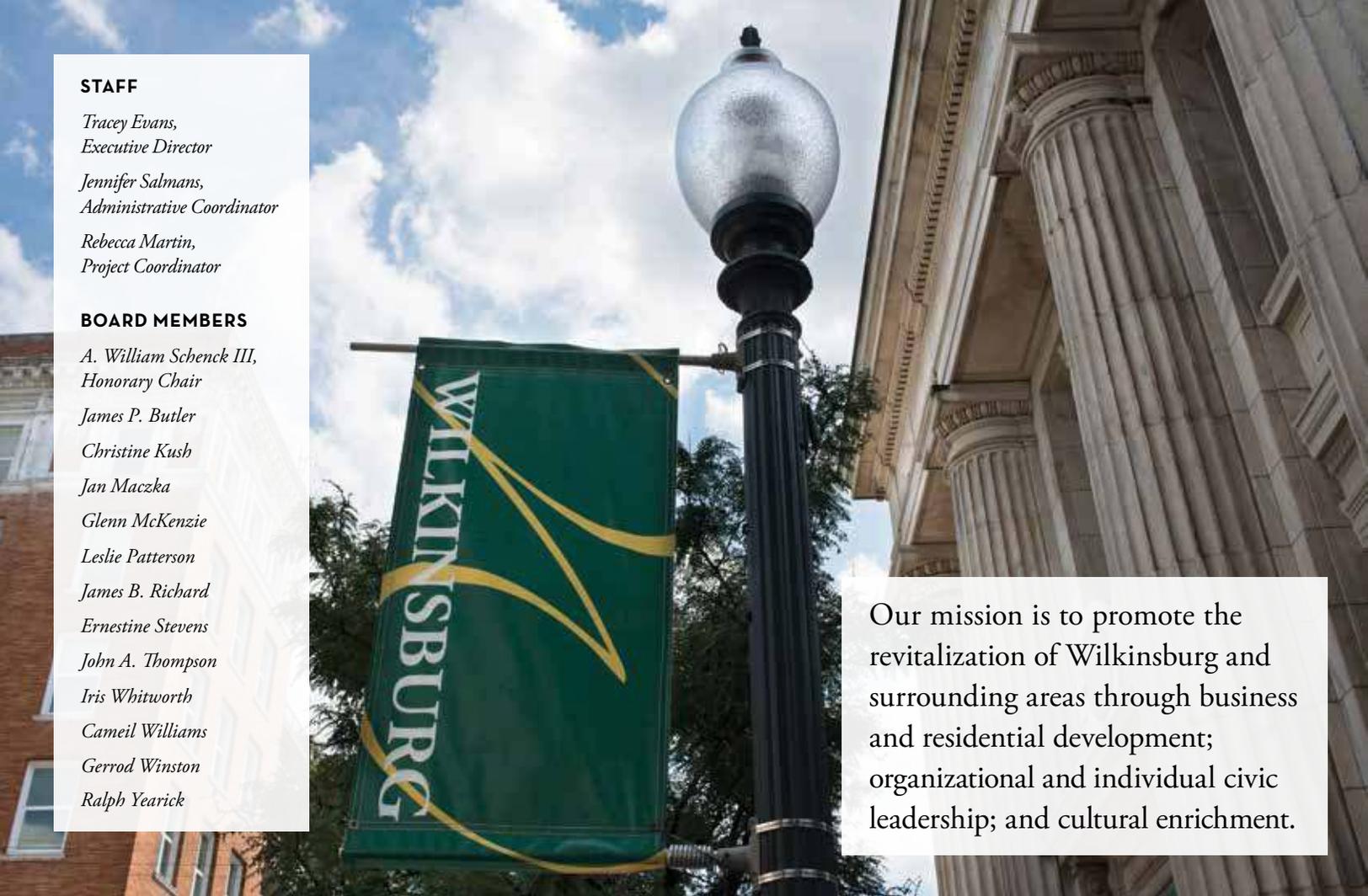
*John A. Thompson*

*Iris Whitworth*

*Cameil Williams*

*Gerrod Winston*

*Ralph Yearick*



Our mission is to promote the revitalization of Wilkinsburg and surrounding areas through business and residential development; organizational and individual civic leadership; and cultural enrichment.

# Wilkinsburg is open for business.

I summed up last year's report by saying "Wilkinsburg is open for business." Indeed we are.

One of our challenges has been a steady supply of clean, safe, code-ready buildings for new businesses. I am pleased to report significant progress on this in the past year. We have been working with developers on innovative projects in the business district that will provide new up-to-code space.

One significant partner is the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. Through their Strengthening Communities Partnership, we will receive funding for the next five years that will increase WCDC's capacity and program funds.

We also are making significant progress on our five-year strategic plan, which covers mission, vision, belief statements and strategic initiatives and goals. At the end of year one, we are ahead of schedule and embarking on many items slated for year three. I attribute this to a solid, hard-working staff, dedicated board, and the many strategic partners who are committed to the work of WCDC.

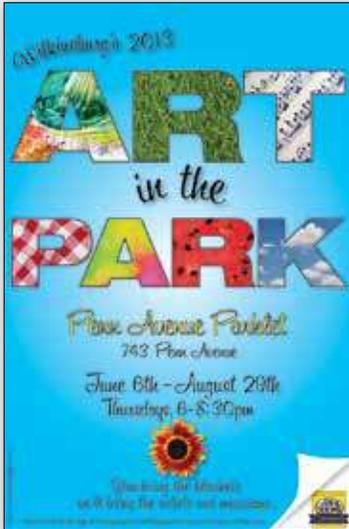
WCDC's work is more than just attracting and supporting businesses. We're rebuilding our community to be both functional and aesthetically pleasing. To that end, we are addressing available green spaces for recreation and leisure activities. We have identified a number of potential parklets for which we are pursuing funds for development. In fact, landscape architecture students have provided plans for four different projects that we hope to implement in the future.

As I pass the gavel to the new president, I am proud to look back and see how WCDC has transitioned from an all-volunteer organization to a staffed and funded development corporation that is highly visible in the community and creating significant positive change. And looking ahead, I can only imagine a bright future for this community.



Leslie Patterson  
President, 2012–2013

# Pride



Marketing and promotion of positive activities in Wilkinsburg continues to be a top goal of the WCDC. Our organization provides support for businesses, community activities and partner organizations.

On October 5, 2012, the Borough of Wilkinsburg celebrated the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its incorporation. The WCDC provided administrative and public relation support and contributed at the highest sponsorship level.

Our ongoing efforts include:

- Publicize Wilkinsburg activities such as Art in the Park, community day, parades and anniversary celebrations.
- Promote Wilkinsburg businesses through websites, brochures, blogs and feature stories.
- Maintain continued media campaigns to include: a monthly WCDC page in the Wilkinsburg Sun newsletter, ongoing media outreach, and positive news stories about events in Wilkinsburg.

Website Views





The WCDC is proud to have been a Gold Sponsor of the Borough of Wilkinsburg's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Celebrating the Past, Present, and Future.



AL'S FISH & CHICKEN 24 HOURS

PENN AVE

1000

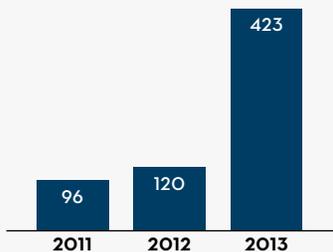
Twelve new businesses have located in Wilkinsburg since we opened our doors in 2010.

# Progress

## 2013 Highlights

- Six properties sold and three vacant storefronts filled through our real estate website and marketing initiative
- Three façade restorations and one storefront improvement completed
- Branch of Fifth Third Bank newly opened on Penn Avenue

## Inquiries Assisted



“Since I opened my doors five years ago, things in Wilkinsburg have changed dramatically. Penn Avenue is well-lit, trees have been planted, sidewalks are updated, and storefronts are getting face-lifts. And best of all, more businesses are coming to Wilkinsburg. I first met WCDC through an invitation to their monthly meetings. Business owners meet with local government officials to discuss code enforcement, public safety, and public works. Ideas are exchanged, issues are communicated and problems addressed.

WCDC has been a great supporter by providing information and resources, improving my property through the façade renovation program, and helping me to acquire a blighted property to develop a parking lot for my business. As I celebrate my fifth anniversary, I would like to thank the WCDC for their great work, commitment and dedication to small businesses and community development.”

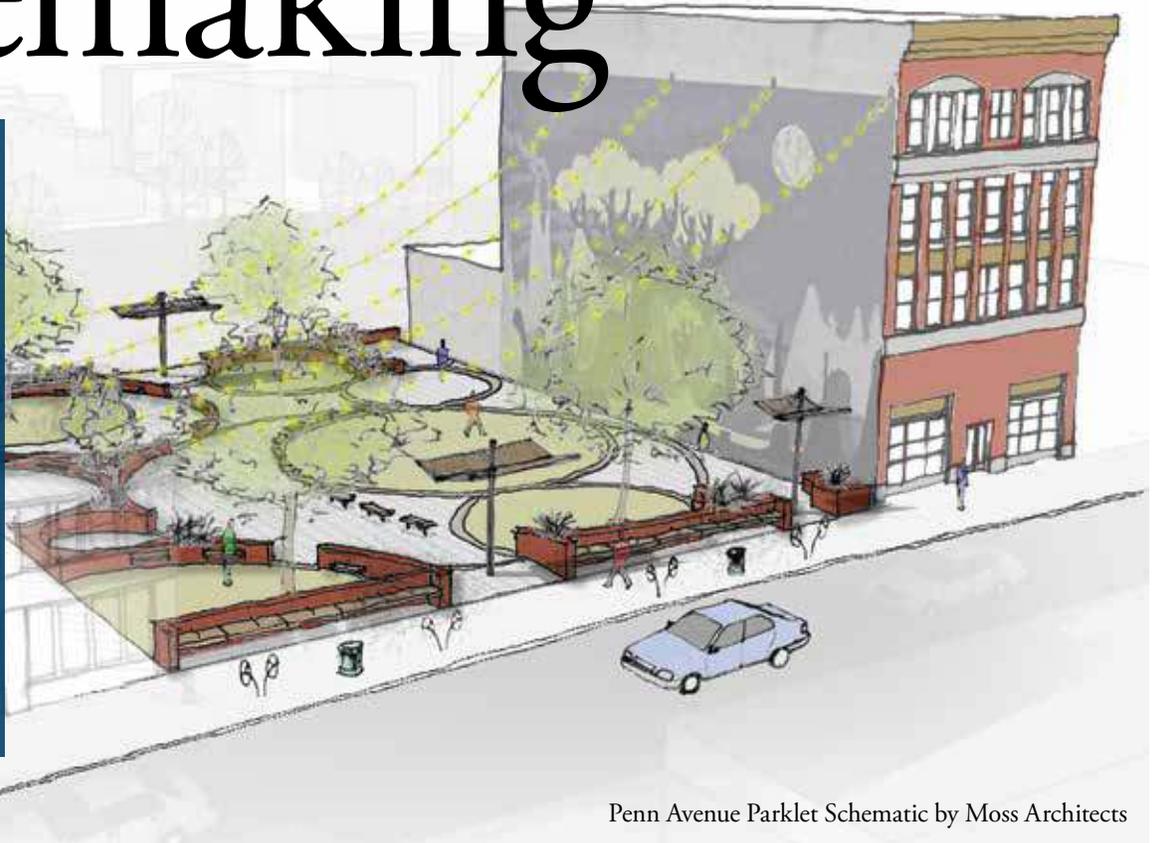
*Al Agra*

*Owner, Al's Fish and Chicken*

# Placemaking

As part of Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's TreeVitalize program, an initiative that aims to plant 500 trees throughout Wilkesburg, WDCDC has worked with Nine Mile Run Watershed Association and the Borough to plant more than 100 trees in the business corridor.

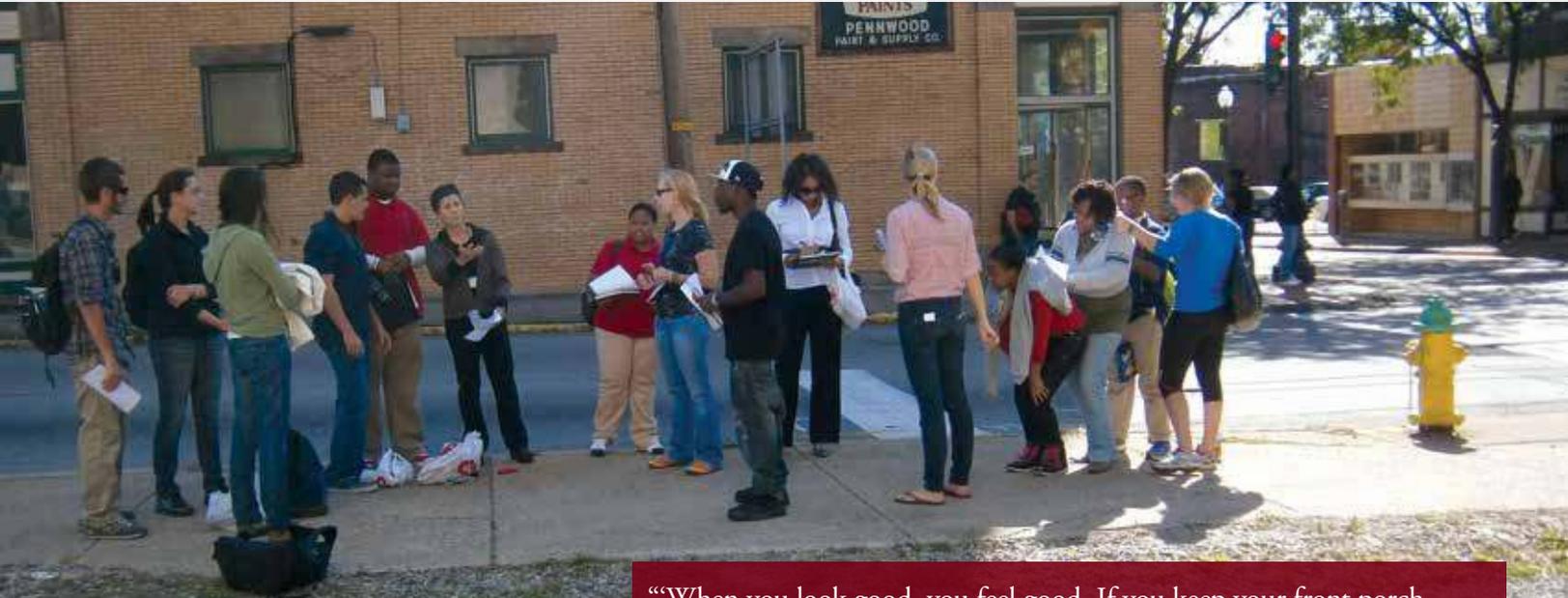
The greening of the Penn Avenue business district is part of a greater strategic plan to revitalize Wilkesburg. To learn more about these efforts, watch the FUSE video for the Hear Me 101 project at <http://tinyurl.com/wcdc-fuse>.



Penn Avenue Parklet Schematic by Moss Architects

WCDC seizes opportunities to explore solutions to our urban design challenges. We worked with landscape architecture students from the Pennsylvania State University to create designs for vacant lots in the borough's business district. You can read the report and see final concept drawings at <http://tinyurl.com/wcdc-landscape>.

In another project, Wilksburg youth involved in FUSE—a local organization that provides artistic and authentic learning experiences for urban youth—helped to develop designs for pedestrian tunnels, the South Avenue / Wood Street lot, the Gazebo Park on Wood Street, and the Wilksburg train station.



“When you look good, you feel good. If you keep your front porch clean and I keep my front porch clean, we’re more apt to invite friends.”

— from “Wilksburg: The Way We See It,” <http://tinyurl.com/wcdc-fuse>

For the past 10 years, the Young Preservationists Association (YPA) of Pittsburgh has compiled an annual list of the Top Ten Best Preservation Opportunities in our region. This year, YPA selected the Tip-Top Ten, ten significant buildings from their past ten years of lists. They chose Wilkinsburg Pennsylvania Railroad Station as their **number one building worthy of preservation investment.**

WCDC agrees, and we're actively working to secure funding to restore this building. Giving this building new life would enhance our community through a strong connection to the East Busway and Penn Avenue—which together host over 50,000 travelers per day.



Through collaboration with our partners, the WCDC supports programs to preserve and restore architecturally significant homes and multi-unit buildings; connects eligible homeowners to multiple resources, including homeownership assistance, home improvements agencies, and energy efficiency opportunities; and promotes efforts to make vacant properties available to homeowners, businesses, and investors.

Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation (PHLF) continues to renovate vacant and blighted vacant homes in the Hamnett Place neighborhood, which is directly adjacent to the MLK East Busway.

The WCDC has engaged in a marketing campaign to promote the Allegheny County Vacant Property Program (VPRP) and other incentives or methods to obtain vacant property in the Borough of Wilkinsburg. Currently, Wilkinsburg has 756 abandoned properties. The WCDC will promote these properties for the VPRP, thus stabilizing more property ownership throughout the Borough and the County.



The Wilkinsburg Affordable Housing Coalition (WAHC) was formed in late 2011 and exists to increase coordination and information sharing between groups providing housing services to Wilkinsburg residents. The WAHC provides services to residents who want to make improvements to their houses or who are required to make such improvements to correct code violations.

The Housing Coalition consists of a variety of nonprofit housing organizations, including Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Housing Development Association, Inc., and Wilkinsburg Christian Housing, with WCDC staff providing marketing and outreach, serving as the contact for residents and the coordinator for these agencies.

# Preservation

# People



Since 2010, WCDC has provided summer grants to Wilkinsburg youth organizations. Past grant recipients include the Wilkinsburg Boys and Girls Club, Wilkinsburg Community Ministry, Inc., and the Wilkinsburg Youth Police Academy.

The most recent award honored a pilot project developed by high school students, called “Gym after Dark,” that kept the gym open after school hours. Learn more by watching the video at <http://tinyurl.com/wcdc-gym>.

In the spring, WCDC partnered with Wilkinsburg School District to complete an educational community assessment survey. The survey was completed by more than 500 Wilkinsburg residents, workers, and business owners. Respondents cited preparation of students for the future, safety and security, and the overall academic program as their top concerns. The complete survey results and report are available at <http://tinyurl.com/wcdc-schoolsurvey>.



WCDC has contributed \$12,500 to summer youth programs in Wilkinsburg through our Youth and Education Initiative.



“I went into this just wanting to help make the building viable. We did that, and more, with the help of the Vacant Property Recovery Program and the Borough.”

– *Suzanne Nuss, Wilkinsburg property owner on acquiring a vacant condo building*

# Property

Wilkinsburg has an abundance of vacant properties, and the WCDC is helping to find new owners. This year we documented eight instances of vacant properties in Wilkinsburg being repurposed by resourceful people. These success stories include an urban farm, community vegetable gardens, a professional art studio, renovated living spaces, public parks, community activism and leadership, as well as growing businesses.

Read the full stories at <http://tinyurl.com/wcdc-stories>, and learn more about the program at <http://tinyurl.com/wcdc-vprp>.



# Partnerships



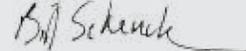
“On behalf of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, we’re proud to welcome the Wilksburg Community Development Corporation as a member of our new Strengthening Communities Partnership (SCP).

The Wilksburg Community Development Corporation is one of five CDCs in the Pittsburgh region to be selected to pilot the SCP. Working with the 300+ larger employers who make up the Regional Investors Council of the Conference, we are concentrating private investment in SCP neighborhoods and complementing that with targeted, pro bono professional services that will make redevelopment and revitalization happen faster.

The Wilksburg CDC was selected because of its demonstrable need, strong redevelopment plan and unified community leadership. The CDC also has sufficient organizational capacity to be successful in this partnership with the Allegheny Conference. We look forward to working with the Wilksburg Community Development Corporation board and staff to drive economic growth and improve the quality of life for everyone here.

Sincerely,

  
Laura Ellsworth

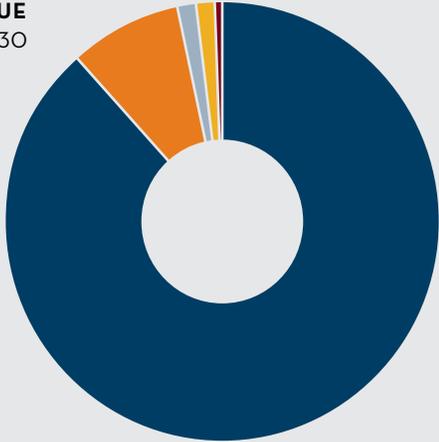
  
Bill Schenck

  
Dennis Yablonsky



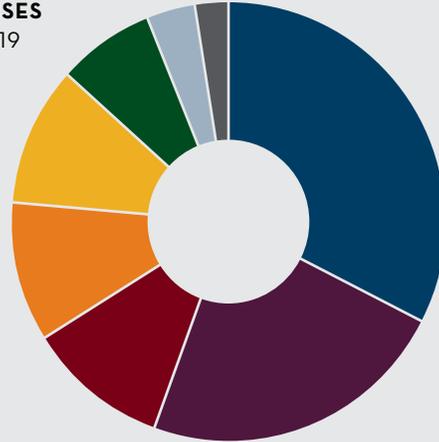
# Financials

## REVENUE \$444,430



■ Neighborhood Partnership Program	\$350,000 (78%)
■ Support from Foundations	\$32,500 (19%)
■ Business & Organizational Contributions	\$6,176 (2%)
■ Individual Contributions	\$5,582 (1%)
■ Other Revenue	\$1,110 (<1%)

## EXPENSES \$398,319



■ Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation	\$150,000 (33%)
■ Business District Revitalization	\$105,442 (23%)
■ Clean, Green & Safe	\$48,448 (11%)
■ Marketing, Image & Identity	\$47,160 (10%)
■ General Program Services	\$46,686 (10%)
■ Management & General	\$33,104 (7%)
■ Education & Youth	\$16,837 (4%)
■ Fundraising	\$10,751 (2%)

# Support

Your contribution—however large or small—helps fund important projects to improve the business district and serve the community. It also ensures the long-term sustainability of the WCDC by demonstrating to grant-makers and foundations that we have support and commitment from residents and other stakeholders.

## Donate today!

You can help revitalize Wilkesburg by sending your tax-deductible contribution to WCDC, 1001 Wood Street, Wilkesburg PA 15221—or donate online at [www.wilkesburgcdc.org/donate](http://www.wilkesburgcdc.org/donate).

The Wilkesburg Community Development Corporation (WCDC) is a non-profit organization declared tax-exempt by the federal government (under section 501(c)3 of the IRS code) and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A copy of our official registration may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free from within Pennsylvania, (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. All donations to the WCDC are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

# Many thanks to our generous supporters.

## MAJOR FUNDERS

TriState Capital Bank\*  
PA Department of Community &  
Economic Development

## CORPORATIONS & FOUNDATIONS

Buhl Foundation  
Dollar Bank  
Dominion Foundation  
Fifth Third Bank  
First Niagara  
McCune Foundation  
Pittsburgh Partnership for  
Neighborhood Development  
PNC Foundation  
The Pittsburgh Foundation

## PARTNERS

Allegheny Conference on Community  
Development  
Allegheny County Economic  
Development  
Borough of Wilkinsburg  
Community Technical Assistance  
Center of Pittsburgh  
Congress of Neighboring  
Communities - CONNECT  
Habitat for Humanity  
Hosanna House, Inc.\*  
Institute for Entrepreneurial  
Excellence, University of Pittsburgh  
Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment  
Group  
Pittsburgh History and Landmarks  
Foundation  
Nine Mile Run Watershed Association  
Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh  
Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce\*  
Wilkinsburg Christian Housing  
Wilkinsburg School District  
Wilkinsburg Sun

## BUSINESSES & ORGANIZATIONS

Pittsburgh Asian Market  
Davis Optical  
Glenn Engineering\*  
G-TECH Strategies  
James Floral & Gift Shoppe  
Kenyon Jewelers  
Khan Medical Associates  
Kiwanis Foundation of Wilkinsburg  
Law Offices of Wayne D. Gerhold\*  
MaherDuessel\*  
Michael J. Witherel\*  
Milestone\*  
Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency\*  
Pittsburgh Dry Cleaners & Furriers, Inc.  
Rotary Club of Wilkinsburg  
Stanton Electric  
Technique Architectural Products  
The Christian Church of  
Wilkinsburg\*  
Wesley Spectrum\*  
Western Pennsylvania  
School for the Deaf\*  
Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce  
Village at Pennwood\*  
Young Elders Fellowship  
Your CFO of Pittsburgh

## INDIVIDUALS

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John Blackford  
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## \*Sponsor of Wilkinsburg's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

*Printing generously provided by LionWorks Printing & Graphics at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf.*

*Photography provided by Martha Rial and Heather Mull. Design by Ashley Deal.*



1001 Wood Street  
Wilkinsburg PA 15221

(412) 727-7855  
[www.wilkinsburgcdc.org](http://www.wilkinsburgcdc.org)

## **Donate today!**

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