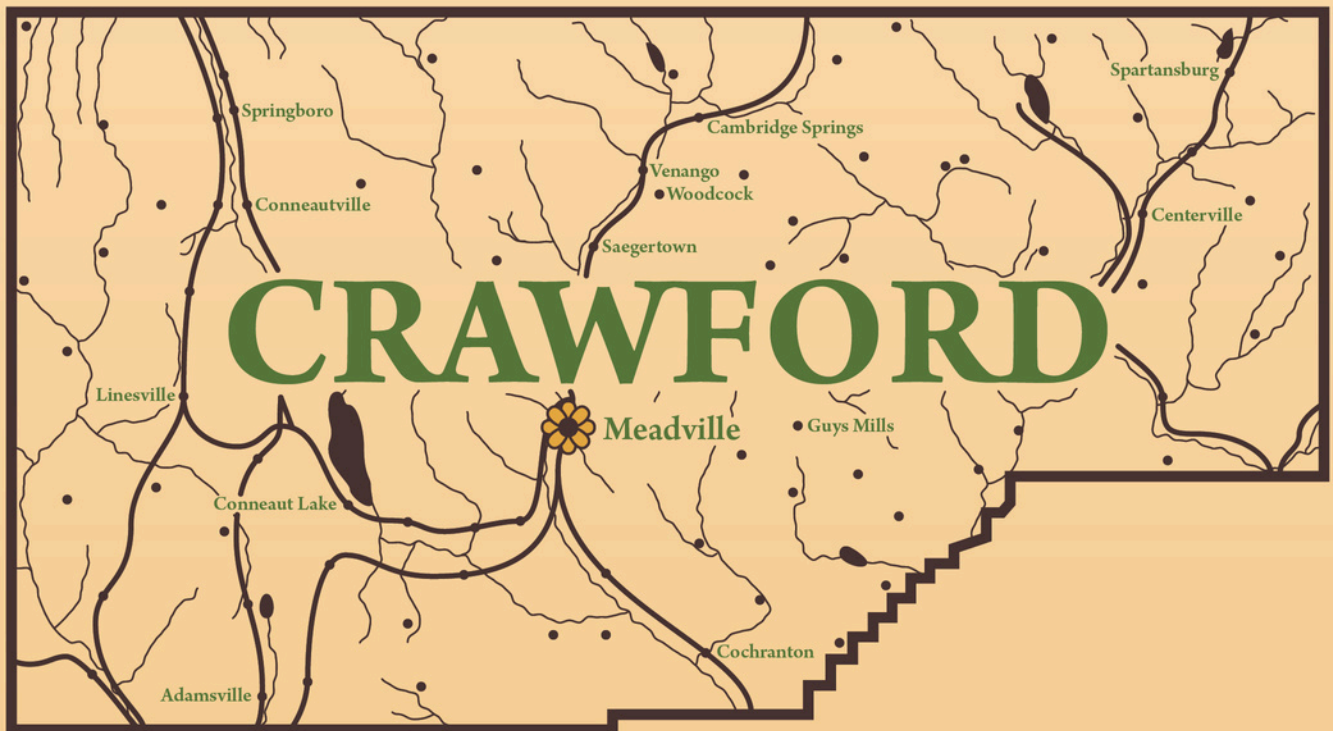




**2023 YEAR IN REVIEW**



## RESIDENT COUNCIL



Eric Trypus



Tim Hunter



Alex Wheeler



Carol Kuhn



Sandra Horn



Rhonda  
Husband



Sandra  
Nicolls



Patricia Kuhn

Resident Council is the decision-making leadership team for the community, they participate in leadership training, run meetings, speak to City Council or other City commissions, and are the primary contacts between the community and partners.

Since all of the resident council members live in the community, they are excellent connectors, always striving to create a welcoming group for old and new participants.

## You can help – HOPE Volunteers

HOPE Volunteer staff are integral to the everyday operations of the HOPE Initiative, and its continued success in 5th Ward.

The volunteer staff encompasses all non-paid personnel who contribute to helping with the goals of the HOPE Initiative. These include community members, Allegheny students, and everyday people from the City of Meadville.

HOPE Volunteers help deliver the monthly newsletter to the people of 5th Ward, participate in community beautification projects, and help maintain the community garden.

The Volunteer Staff love the work they do, and are amazed at HOPE's fantastic growth, and find it remarkable how the community has come together in recent years.





# HEALTH

Health refers to the improvement of living standards and promotion of healthy habits for our communities and the individuals living within them. Examples include mental health cafes and neighborhood walking groups.

## Summer Picnic



Each summer a community picnic is held in 5th Ward where we share all we've achieved in the community, report community health data, have listening sessions for future community goals and of course have lots of good food and fun!

This event brings neighbors together to strengthen relationships and help people be active within community.

In 2023 we celebrated the grand opening of the HOPE Memorial Community Garden and saw so many new and happy faces. The picnic was well attended, boasting more than 60 attendees, including representatives of local government and other community resource partners.

## HOPE Health Plan



Each year the Resident Council creates a community health plan based on the input and needs of the community. There are at least two goals under each pillar and as the goals are met the council adds a new one.

Examples include: the provision of fresh food from the community garden, development and launch of the snow removal/lawn care service program, improving communications with law enforcement regarding safety issues, improving communications with the city on public works needs, and the involvement of community members in walking groups to facilitate safe and healthy summer parks programming.



# OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity refers to the creation of services and activities in the community, and the use of said services and activities when they arise. Examples include committee creations, and public works programs to improve the community.

## HOPE Greenscaping



After seeing some residents lacked the means or physical ability to care for their lawns and walkways, the council felt compelled to help residents with their greenscaping needs.

After many brainstorming and planning sessions the resident council partnered with Allegheny's community engaged learning and sub-grant program and created the Harmony Greenscape Project.

Now community members can pay a small monthly fee, avoiding citations regarding property maintenance. Donations are also accepted to cover the costs for those who cannot afford the small fee due to financial hardship.

## After School Program



Seeing that many students in 5th Ward were struggling academically and socially, to address these needs, HOPE decided to run an after school program twice a week.

Our program boasts non-tech time (only exception is school issued laptops that homework must be done on), social skills opportunities, arts and crafts, games, outdoor time and yummy snacks! Secondary students are also welcome to join us and get any needed homework assistance and social opportunities as well.

We have amazing staff and volunteers who are all dedicated to children and families who participate.





# PLACEMAKING

Placemaking refers to the deliberate act of improving the community in ways which the residents decide themselves. Examples include the creations of community gardens and community beautification programs.

## Cleanup Program



Every year, 5th Ward participates in a community junk haul. During this, items such as broken equipment, furniture, and construction materials are transported to the city garage with the assistance of many volunteers.

Some wonderful local businesses sponsor this undertaking, and many fantastic volunteers make it happen, residents often go above and beyond to help each other each year.

The HOPE community also assists neighbors who may have outdoor property violations; We work with the property code inspector to get the needed information and create a plan of correction that is timely and manageable.

## Memorial Garden



One of 5th Ward's most consistent desires was fresh veggies and fruit. Part of HOPE's solution was to create a community garden.

5th Ward's community has some residents whose roots go back generations and the community wanted to

honor their memory and contributions. Their objective was to construct a garden that would provide fresh food and also include perennial plants and flowers to honor the memories of lost relatives and friends.

Residents are currently looking at opportunities to expand the garden to increase the production of vegetables, and to grow fruit trees and berries.



# ENGAGEMENT

Engagement refers to residents and our friends being involved in our community, from decision making and public works to having fun at community events. Examples include resident council meetings and community events.

## HOPE Coffee Hour



The HOPE Community Coffee hour has grown to become a community staple. Aside from 5th Ward residents, guests from all over the area come every week to enjoy a warm beverage, pastry and mingle in the community.

We never know who we will see on any given Wednesday, but we know that the discussions will be lively, respectful and positive. This is where we create plans to resolve challenges and to celebrate our successes.

HOPE's coffee hour is proof that if a community has a foundation of trust, respect and compassion, they can share differing opinions and work towards solutions together.

## City Teamwork



Residents of the HOPE community have been regularly engaging with elected officials and city employees to address safety concerns and poor infrastructure.

Last year when a terrible storm hit and severely affected this community, assistance and repairs came in a timely manner. City officials were able to contact HOPE leaders who were already out assessing the situation and get real-time updates on damage, electrical problems, and anything else needed to quickly address the issues. Public Works officials also work with residents to find and repair any sinkholes or problems with drains and provide updates on upcoming or ongoing work.



# HOPE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

## HOPE Staff

### Maria Rosado-Husband



The HOPE Initiative is a wonderful community I am so happy to be a part of! I have met some fascinating friends, and the way we all come together like a big family continues to amaze me.

It really takes a village, and I am seeing constant perseverance resulting in great improvements. Helping one another is one of HOPE's main objectives.

Transformations such as the launching of some fabulous events, esthetics, and many other developments have made the initiative self-sustainable in an incredibly short amount of time. Passion, vision, and execution are a few words that come to mind when I think of the HOPE community. I have an unwavering faith that it will continue to grow!

### Francee Motley



I am new to the HOPE Initiative after working in the Early Childhood Education field for the past 21 years, and have found my niche working part-time with the HOPE After School Program.

The HOPE community as a whole has shown me some fabulous improvements and I have met some amazing people. The developments in 5th Ward never cease to amaze me.

When I think of HOPE I think of community and cooperation. Their perseverance is positively refreshing! The rediscovered beauty of the neighborhood, particularly the Garden, is easily my favorite HOPE accomplishment. I am extremely excited about this work and proud to be partnering with Maria Rosado-Husband to spread HOPE!

## Allegheny Bonners

The Allegheny Bonners Program is a work-study program that works on local community projects as opposed to working in on-campus positions.

The Allegheny Bonners Students are incredibly passionate, and are in love with the work they do for the HOPE Initiative. Students find the work they do for HOPE much more engaging and meaningful than other work-study programs on Allegheny campus.

Bonners Students enjoy being involved in their communities both in Meadville and on Allegheny Campus. They appreciate the opportunity HOPE has provided to help the people of 5th Ward and beyond, all while being able to pursue their higher education at Allegheny College.

## Pathstone

Pathstone is a valued community partner who provides work-based training opportunities for workers age 55+.

HOPE is able to train individuals to become familiar with Community Health Outreach. Our trainees gain valuable skills in areas such as relationship building, understanding social determinants of health - both positive and negative - engagement strategies, minor data collection, and more!

Mr. Michael Lehman, Deputy for Field Operations, ensures to provide excellent support for both trainees and the organization that trainees are placed in. This program addresses opportunities and encourages engagement, two areas of HOPE's focus, as well as providing some financial incentives for participants.

## Learn More



Meadville Tribune - 'Hope is Here'



Meadville Tribune - 'Vision 2024'



Women's Services Website

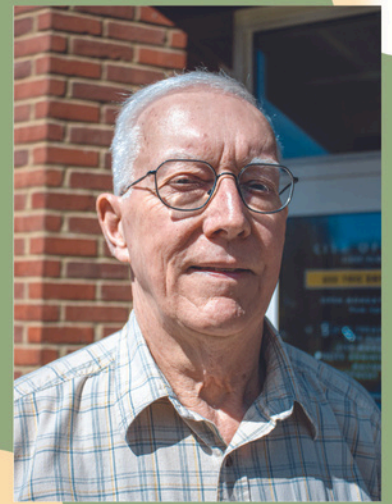


## TESTIMONIALS

### Nicholas Cheropovich – City Property Inspector

Maria Rosado-Husband's calling card states, "Building Community Resilience One Neighborhood at a Time." And that's exactly what she does. Some people just have a knack for getting along with others and bringing diverse people together to create positive change. Maria is highly gifted in this regard, creating positive results where everyone wins.

I came to know Maria through the HOPE Initiative, here in Meadville. As a result, I've become better acquainted with the residents of Fifth Ward as they work together on a variety of levels to make positive changes happen. Seeing neighbors come together, committed to a common vision, and producing tangible results is nothing short of miraculous. I see the results first-hand, but I also hear change in the voices of the participants. I hear courage, strength and understanding in their voices... evidence of the personal attributes that allow them to advocate for the wellbeing of their neighbors, to work cooperatively with neighbors, and to bring outside resources into situations when needed. These individuals also take pride in their neighborhood, and it shows. They are breathing new life into their community.



### Mike Steffanucci – Meadville Chief of Police

Over the past 20 years, I have witnessed events in 5th Ward that would test the humanity and resolve of any community. From severe flooding, and high crime rates, to dilapidated housing and businesses - then, something changed.

Suddenly, I saw the number of emergency calls drop, and started to get visits from residents wanting to talk about what was happening in their neighborhood. Then in early 2024, Donnarae Morrison invited me to a monthly meeting in the 5th Ward for the HOPE Initiative. She spoke highly of the initiative and convinced me to attend.

When I attended the meeting, I was excited to learn of what the HOPE Initiative was all about. The meeting was attended by several residents of 5th Ward, all eager to help one another and the community.

I fully support the HOPE Initiative, and I look forward to seeing their accomplishments in the future, hopefully throughout the city of meadville.



Photo by Ville de Fismes, Facebook.com

### Rob Smith – Women's Services Board Member

As an investor in 5th Ward with the creation of Cussewago Square on the old Race Street Lumber site, I believe in a bright future for Meadville and the 5th Ward.

The HOPE initiative is contributing to that future by creating a safer and healthier neighborhood, and one in which residents can take pride. As a Board Member of Women's Services, which is the sponsor of HOPE, the initiative represents one of our most important efforts to work upstream to prevent violence and other causes of poor mental and physical health throughout the county.

The residents of 5th Ward were some of the first to hear about the plans for Cussewago Square, which were met with excitement and openness to working together to transform this community.

I look forward to seeing you soon in Cussewago Square so that everyone can see for themselves a vibrant community on the move.

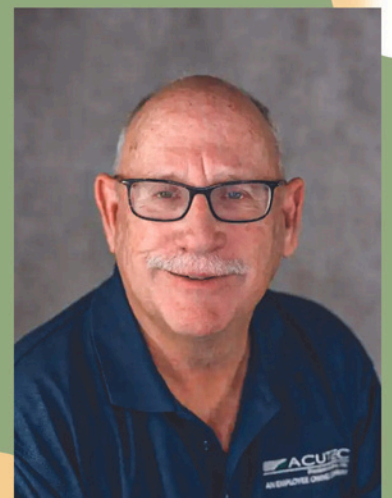


Photo by acuteprecision.com



## NOTE FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE



Neighborhoods in our area have tremendous pride in their histories and their people. At the same time, their potential has been stifled by the loss of major employers and well-paid jobs, poverty, violence and substance abuse. Many of their residents suffer from chronic diseases, disabilities, and the loss of hope in a brighter future.

For the past five years the HOPE initiative in Meadville's 5th Ward has supported residents in the development of leadership skills, helping each other to find their voices, and advocating for themselves and their neighborhood. Although a year and a half was mostly lost to the pandemic, this community has and is changing in so many ways. Neighbors and community leaders have been raised up to address risks and to bolster protective factors. Together they have built trust in themselves and each other.

The results are a cleaner, safer and more beautiful neighborhood; neighbors look out for each other including the most vulnerable residents. Working with community partners they have built a community garden, provided after school programs, launched a snow removal and lawn cutting mutual benefit project, and effectively advocated with elected leaders for long overdue maintenance to streets, sewer lines, and bridges. Every Wednesday finds residents meeting for coffee and conversation, walking groups are forming and await spring, and longer summer days will find them in the garden planning for adding fruit orchards and larger growing spaces. Summer evenings are often scheduled with meetings with elected officials, or discussing the planned redevelopment of the old Race Street Lumber, or simply meeting for game night.

The past few years have brought all of us tremendous opportunities to learn, grow, and understand the true meaning and work of loving your neighbor. As we roll into 2024, we are pursuing new opportunities to extend this work to other neighborhoods throughout the area. A generous grant from the Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect will support this expansion as a strategy for reducing violence using our framework of trauma informed neighborhood development, as well as new evidence-based strategies to reduce harm and build resilience. Leaders and neighbors in 5th Ward will be active participants in expanding this work. They will be mentoring emerging leaders in new neighborhoods, sharing their experiences and lessons learned, and cheering them on through the hard work that is needed to build trust, connection and healthy communities.

On behalf of the HOPE Steering Committee, we are humbled and devoted to supporting this ongoing work to transform our community.

Onward.

HOPE Steering Committee Member





# PARTNERS OF HOPE



## Collaborators



Crawford County  
Human Services



Crawford County  
System of Care



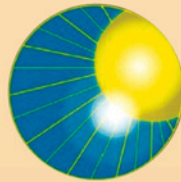
Center for Family  
Services



Crawford County  
Drug and Alcohol



Bethany United  
Methodist Church



MLK Scholarship  
Board



Penn State Master  
Gardeners



The City of  
Meadville



The Home Depot



Not One More



Allegheny College



CHAPS



Peace 4 Crawford



Family & Community  
Christian Association



Pathstone

## Sponsors



Women's Services



Mary's U-Haul



Bayshore Homes



Mendel & Sylvia  
Solomon Trust



Rotary Club of  
Meadville



PA Coalition Against  
Domestic Violence