

# KEYSTONE SMILES COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

420 Main Street  
Knox, PA

## A Transformation...

*Business, Education, National Service and Individuals Come  
Together to Build Rural Community*



# In the Beginning...

A telephone business office and switching center on Main Street in Knoxville had been phased out and had sat mostly vacant – used only for storage – for two years. Owned by ALLTEL, it was known locally as the ALLTEL Building.

Keystone SMILES, an AmeriCorps National Service program, had started a childcare/community center just down the street a year before. SMILES had already outgrown that center and was looking for an additional facility. SMILES Director Joyce Fosdick, with the help of now-State Representative Fred McIlhattan, got permission from ALLTEL to lease and make renovations to the ALLTEL building.



The lobby of the ALLTEL building as it appeared in 1995.



## **SMILES is...**

- **Service**
- **Making an**
- **Impact through**
- **Learning**
- **Experiences with**
- **Students**

The main entryway to the ALLTEL building when SMILES began work.

SMILES mobilized large amounts of community resources – time, materials, and equipment, – to turn the building into a community asset, but problems with the building's roof could not be easily overcome. Rainy weather resulted in damaged ceiling tiles, stained walls and other kinds of damage.

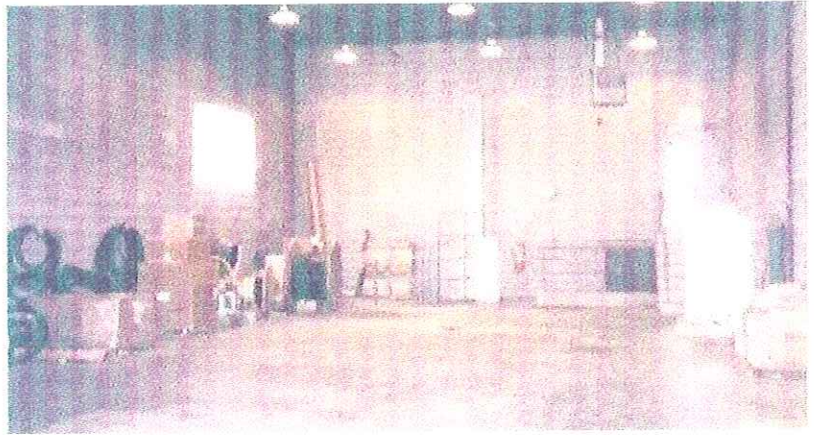
ALLTEL forwarded funds that had been set aside to repair the roof, providing SMILES with \$9,000 to make roof repairs. By mobilizing community resources, SMILES was able to use those funds to put a new rubber roof over the building excluding the garage section.



A celebration of the agreement between SMILES and ALLTEL was held in early 1996. From left (standing) Mr. Hoffman of ALLTEL, SMILES Director Joyce Fosdick, construction supervisor Libby Hansford, SMILES Board of Directors member Deb Benetti, AmeriCorps Member Cliff Codispot, Legislative Assistant Fred McIlhattan, Knoxville Mayor Carol Weaver, Mr. Jeffries of ALLTEL, and (kneeling) AmeriCorps Members Sharla Wright and Dawn Bowser.

# The garage...

was just that – bare concrete walls and floor, large drain for washing trucks, old-fashioned industrial lighting fixtures.



AmeriCorps Member hangs suspended ceiling.

SMILES crews and volunteers installed a special athletic floor, covered some of the floors and walls with carpeting, hung new lighting and built two rooms – one for free weights and one for exercise machines – for our fitness center.



Volunteers from Clarion U. apply glue and place carpeting in the weight room.



SMILES Intern frames up the fitness room.

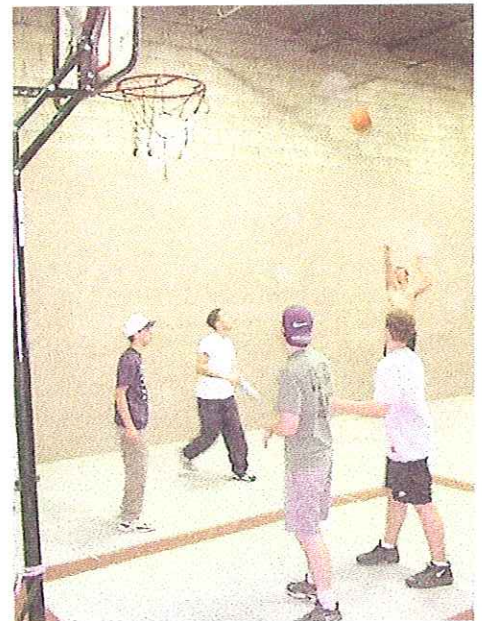
## ...becomes a fitness and recreation center.



Fitness Center patrons use the exercise machines to keep fit.



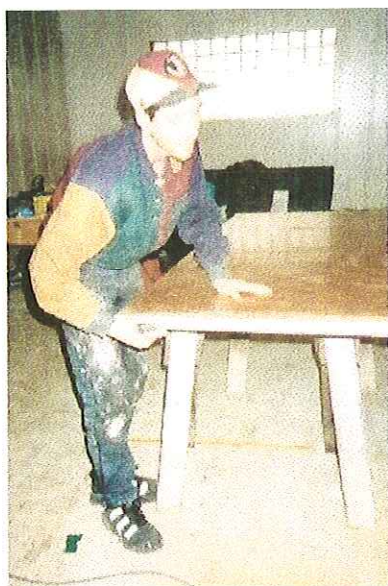
Elementary gymnastics class in the gym.



Open gym after school is a great place for kids to cut loose with a game of pick-up basketball.

## One switching room...

This room needed more lighting, a new ceiling and a general face lift. AmeriCorps Members and volunteers installed a drop ceiling with lights, painted the walls, carpeted the floor, installed shelves and a coffee station and much more. The carpeting, paint, furniture, and much of the other materials were donated by local individuals and businesses. SMILES is covering other expenses, including materials, furniture bought from federal surplus or local merchants.



A volunteer planes a donated door.



A volunteer from Clarion University turns an unneeded doorway into built-in bookshelves.



SMILES AmeriCorps Members give the room a fresh coat of paint.

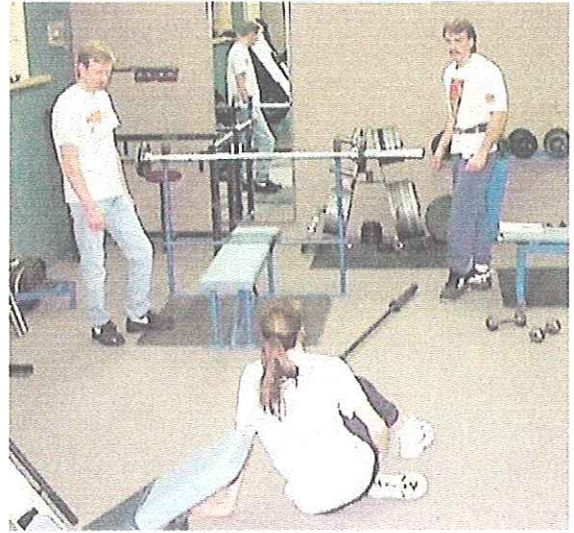
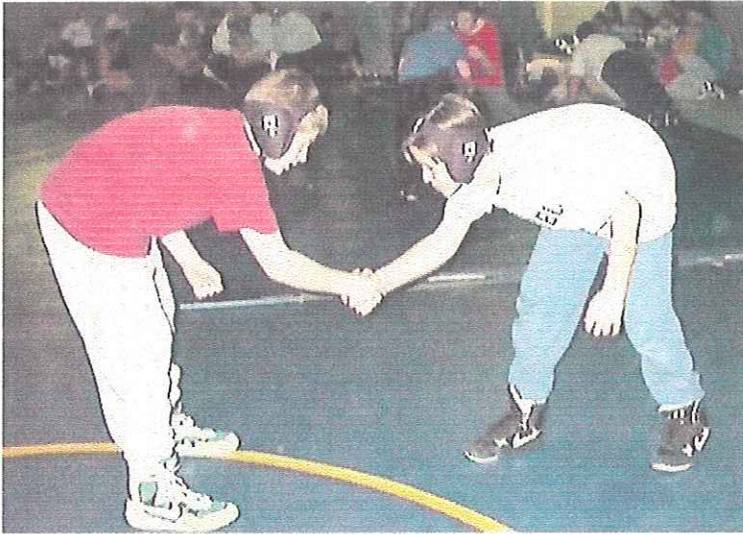
## ...becomes a multi-purpose meeting and training room.



Equipped with tables, chairs, sofas, large-screen TV, stereo, coffee maker, and projection screen, the room is suitable for meetings, trainings and relaxation.



An exhibit of paintings by local artists is one of a variety of events held in the multi-purpose room.



Keystone/A-CV Wrestlers prepare for practice match in the SMILES gym.



SMILES Intern works on her secretarial skills while covering the reception desk.



Large muscle development is a key part of Child Care visits to the gym.



Young Christmas carolers from SMILES child care entertain senior citizens at Maturity Mornings.

In addition to the services offered right here at the SMILES Community Center, the building serves as the hub for AmeriCorps\*State National Service projects all across Northwest Pennsylvania. Operations for SMILES/AmeriCorps education programs, which place 54 Members in 12 school districts within 8 counties, are centered here. The facility also serves as a training site for 88 AmeriCorps Members serving in schools and local communities. Programs such as Rural Pennsylvania Reads, operate in cooperation with Clarion University, placing teams of tutors in 6 school districts to help improve the reading skills of elementary students. The Superintendent's Initiative program, another partnership with CU, places AmeriCorps Members in 12 school districts serving in programs providing tutoring support, technology, and mentoring programs to assist schools in academic goals for students.

