



A proud hub for AmeriCorps service in Northwestern PA



COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER INC.

AmeriCorps

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025



SERVICE SPOTLIGHT: AMERICORPS HOUSE OF TRADES PROGRAM

Building Skills, Strengthening Communities

Keystone SMILES' House of Trades program continues to build both skills and community pride across northwestern Pennsylvania. AmeriCorps members gain hands-on trade experience through projects that improve local spaces and lives. This fall, members rebuilt a shed at the Children's Environmental Center in Knox, learning framing, siding, and drainage skills. In Oil City, they renovated a donated home—training in plumbing, wiring, drywall, and heating. The team also partnered with Mustard Seed Ministries in Polk to construct an accessibility ramp and is preparing to work with the Clarion County Housing Authority on a new community room.

Beyond construction, members host a monthly Senior Brunch and assist with Knox's Light Up Night, combining service and leadership. Through every project, House of Trades members strengthen both their skills and the communities they serve.

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The House of Trades team has been working on rebuilding a shed that is located at the Children's Environmental Center in Knox. They have learned new skills such as learning how to safely run power tools, putting up walls, soffit & fascia and siding. They also dug a ditch and laid pipe to assist with drainage on the property



FRONT STREET - OIL CITY

Venango County

In Oil City the team just removed concrete steps at the house they have been renovating for a future family home. This house was donated by the City of Oil City and has been used as a training center teaching members from several program years many new and useful skills such as: to new plumbing, wiring, flooring, drywall repair, painting and heating system.



Venango County

POLK RAMP PROJECT

In October the AmeriCorps House of Trades team collaborated with Mustard Seed Ministries, Franklin, PA to build a paver ramp project for a person in need in the Polk community. This consisted of first digging and leveling the ground, hauling and shoveling gravel and laying cement pavers. This project took approximately 3 ½ days to complete.





CLARION COMMUNITY ROOM PROJECT

Clarion County

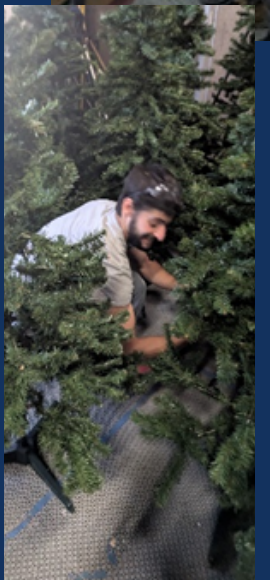
Keystone SMILES AmeriCorps will be collaborating with the Clarion County Housing Authority for their next community service project. This will include framing walls and hanging drywall amongst other trade skills training. At this time the team is preparing for the project by studying and planning with the blueprints provided by architects. The project is set to start in November through the winter months.



KNOX COMMUNITY LIGHT UP NIGHT PREPARTIONS

Clarion County

Preparations are underway for The Knox annual Light Up Night and Once Upon a Christmas events which takes place the Friday before Thanksgiving each year. This year, Light Up Night will be November 21st from 6 pm -8:00 pm. The House of Trades are busy fluffing trees, building floats and games that the Knox businesses and family members will enjoy this Holiday season. The event will host games, snacks, craft-making stations, a parade, and a variety of businesses and community agencies.



COMMUNITY/SENIOR BRUNCH

Clarion County

This program year, the House of Trades AmeriCorps members will be hosting the Community/Senior monthly breakfast and fundraising for the 2026 Horsetheif Bingo event. They cook breakfast, and serve breakfast for a minimal cost of \$3 and call bingo for the attendees in the Knox and surrounding communities. All bingo proceeds are donated to the Horsetheif Committee. This event is held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. This event provides the AmeriCorps members the opportunity to serve their community in an alternative service opportunity integrating culinary skills with interpersonal relationship building as part of their team leadership curriculum.

The event also is highlighted by the Keystone SMILES preschool children providing entertainment with songs and favors as a service-learning curriculum.

