



*A proud hub for AmeriCorps service in Northwestern PA*



COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER INC. **AmeriCorps**

# NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2025



## **KEYSTONE SMILES WELCOMES AMERICORPS CLASS XXXII**

**Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, McKean, Mercer, Venango Counties**

Keystone SMILES has been hard at work enrolling new AmeriCorps members for the 2025-2026 program year! To date, we have welcomed 74 members across 15 partner sites.

To ensure our new members are well-prepared for their service, we've conducted seven Pre-Service Orientations. Each orientation features a dynamic one-day interactive virtual session led by Keystone SMILES staff, along with an additional 16 hours of online training. Topics covered include CPR/First Aid, Mandated Reporting, Certified Emergency Response, AmeriCorps 101, and more.

We are excited to see the amazing stories and positive impacts our XXXII AmeriCorps Class will achieve this year. Stay tuned for updates as our members make a difference in their communities!

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## 9/11 DAY OF SERVICE AND REMEMBRANCE

### Clarion, Erie, and Mercer Counties

AmeriCorps members honored the anniversary of 9/11 through a variety of service activities, doing their part to kindle the spirit of unity that brought Americans together in the days following the 9/11 tragedy.

*"We put up flags on a school area that is commonly used to raise awareness and remember those who were brave and who sacrificed themselves to save others on 9/11. We also had a moment of silence school-wide to acknowledge the families who were affected by this event."*

--AmeriCorps Member, Heavenlily Trelease, Fairview School District Youth Corps



*"The students and I are drawing on the whiteboard table during child's choice. I decided to draw a fire truck and one of the students being a fire fighter. I made them aware that fire fighters solve problems as a team and are heroes that save people and buildings."*

--AmeriCorps Member, Avery Ellis, Mercer County Housing Authority

*"Some of the fifth-grade students made acrostic poems and I got to help them work through their writing ideas with them. The main goal was to show respect to those who lost their lives or loved ones during 9/11. We also were able to learn some new words and get a better understanding of what really happened that day 24 years ago."*

--AmeriCorps Member, Ashton Koppes, Girard School District







## WELCOME NEW STAFF!

### Clarion and Mercer County

Keystone SMILES would like to welcome 2 new staff members to our organization.

Ms. Sonya Weaver (pictured at left, top) is the new PreK Counts teacher in Knox. Sonya graduated this Spring from PennWest Clarion with an early childhood education degree. She also served as an AmeriCorps member in Knox this summer.



We would like to also welcome Miss Bree Harrison (picture at left, middle) to our Sharpville Pre-K Counts program as the lead cook. The Preschool children in Sharpville have been enjoying her delicious home cooking.

## COMMUNITY BRUNCH AND BINGO

### Clarion County

The House of Trades members prepared and served breakfast for the community in Knoxville. (pictured at left, bottom) This year, our House of Trades program will be hosting the monthly event. Engaging in this community outreach project provides the opportunity to learn or enhance cooking, communication, and leadership skills while hosting in this civic engagement project. The community enjoys this monthly event while playing bingo to raise money for the upcoming Horsethief Days celebration in 2026. We would like to thank Lou Ann MaCammet for coordinating the project with Keystone SMILES CLC. Looking for a morning of relaxation while helping your community, join the House of Trades team and Lou Ann every third Wednesday of the month at 525 Main Street Knoxville. Breakfast is served at 9:30am with a visit from our preschoolers and bingo following the entertainment.



## PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

### Clarion and Mercer Counties

Our preschool classrooms are in full swing of being back in school

#### Mercer County

Sharpsville Gardens Children's Learning Center has a full classroom of 17 children in their Pre-K Counts program this year. Miss Nicole is the PKC lead teacher and Miss Lonnie is her aide. The children have been getting to know each other and they have also been starting to recognize letters and writing.

AmeriCorps members Avery Ellis & Bradley Houser will focus on social behavioral skills and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, ( STEM ) lessons as part of their AmeriCorps term of service with Keystone SMILES AmeriCorps program. Currently, they are in deep preparation developing curriculum for three after school programs starting in October to be held in the Sharpsville Gardens, Mallable Heights, and Frank Fay Communities of the Mercer County Housing Authority.



Preschool Students in Clarion County sing for Community Brunch and Bingo.

#### Clarion County

Keystone SMILES preschool program in Knox has 2 classrooms. Miss Tracy Hilton is the lead teacher of one classroom and Miss Kara Goodman is her aide.

Miss Sonya Weaver is the lead teacher for the second classroom while Miss Nately Alvarado is her aide.

The children also walk down the street to another SMILES location to participate in the Keystone SMILES AmeriCorps STEM program with Mary McDonough & Easton Ploof teach STEM lessons with Mr. Andy Traister. They have been learning about "DOTS" and learning how to build.





# WEED AND SEED

## Venango County

Weed & Seed is an after-school program that operates in Oil City. This is a safe place youth can come to socialize, get homework help, and participate in STEM activities. They also receive an afterschool snack and a nutritious dinner before they go home. The program is open from 3:00 pm until 7:30 pm Monday and Tuesday on the lower level of Free Crossing Methodist Church on the East End and Wednesday & Thursday on the lower level of the Bethel Methodist Church in Siverly, Oil City. If you know of any youth 6-12 years of age who could benefit from this program, please [bcanter@smilesamericorps.org](mailto:bcanter@smilesamericorps.org).



Tues/Thurs  
2:45 - 7:30 PM  
206 Wilson Ave Oil City PA

**EAST END**



Mon/Wed  
2:45 - 7:30 PM  
486 Colbert Ave Oil City PA

**SIVERLY**



Fridays  
2:45 - 4:30 PM  
486 Colbert Ave Oil City PA

**TEENS ONLY**



**KEYSTONE SMILES**  
Weed & Seed

**HOTSPOT PROGRAM**

**OPEN TO YOUTH AGES 6-17**  
**BEGINNING SEPT 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2025**

**FREE!!**



**WE OFFER :**

- HEALTHY SNACK AND DINNER
- HOMEWORK HELP
- STEM ACTIVITIES
- MENTORING
- FIELD TRIPS



**AmeriCorps**



**Scan the QR code to register your student today!**

**REGISTER NOW!**

# HOUSE OF TRADES FUTURE PROJECT

## Article take from Explore Clarion

CLARION, Pa. (EYT) – The Clarion County Housing and Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit of the Clarion County Housing Authority, is excited to announce the upcoming opening of the Clarion Community Center on 2nd Avenue in Clarion, scheduled for early 2026.



The building, which has served the community in many ways over the years—as the former ARC Building, Career Link, and originally the Coca-Cola Bottling Company—will soon reopen as a hub for local agencies, organizations, and residents.

The Clarion Community Center will feature:

- A community room available for use by local agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community groups.
- Office space dedicated to social service agencies to better serve the needs of Clarion County residents.
- A new mural on the side of the building, created through local partnerships.

Keystone SMILES AmeriCorps Service Opportunities

The project also includes a collaboration with Keystone SMILES Community Learning Center, a grantee for the Keystone SMILES AmeriCorps program. Participants in this service-learning program—locally referred to as the House of Trades—will help renovate and revitalize the facility space for the community room gaining hands-on training in skills such as drywall, painting, and electrical work.

AmeriCorps service is not employment; it’s an opportunity to make a difference through service while members build their future through career exploration in community service. Members will:

- Serve a four-month term beginning in October 2025.
- Receive a gross living allowance of \$6,300, paid bi-monthly.
- Earn an education award of \$1,956.50 for future training, paying on federal loans, or coursework.
- Qualify for federal student loan forbearance and interest repayment during service.
- Contribute to neighborhood revitalization and leave a lasting legacy through an AmeriCorps “Season of Service.”

## A Space for the Community

“The Community Center represents a new chapter for this historic building,” said Executive Director Penny Campbell. “We want it to be a welcoming space where local organizations can connect with residents and where partnerships can grow.”