

The Sutherland Initiative for Civic Engagement

GOAL: \$3 MILLION

People's Light has a long history of civic engagement — there just wasn't a name for it until recently.

“Civic engagement encompasses the many ways that people may get involved in their community. In arts-based civic engagement, the creative process and resulting art work [or] experience can provide a key focus, catalyst, or space for civic participation, whether it is becoming better informed or actively contributing to the improvement of one's neighborhood, community, and nation.”

*Americans for the Arts,
an arts advocacy nonprofit*

We envision People's Light as a bridge between our region's arts and civic sectors. Through our plays and programs, we invite critical discourse, strive to create a deeper sense of community, and seek out stories that awaken a greater collective consciousness of our American experience.

Fred and Barbara Sutherland are longtime patrons, supporters, and champions of People's Light, where Fred serves as a Trustee and is a former Board President. They established this initiative to bolster the Theatre's current programs and ensure the future of civic engagement at People's Light.

NEW PLAY FRONTIERS, EST. 2013

New Play Frontiers (NPF) is a long-term initiative to create original work that explores our American identity through local stories. We invite nationally recognized playwrights to immerse themselves in our region and collaborate with nearby organizations on the development of new plays. 12 writers have been commissioned so far, including Tony Award nominee Dominique Morisseau and Pulitzer Prize finalist Eisa Davis. The first productions to emerge from NPF, Karen Hartman's *Project Dawn* and Morisseau's *Mud Row*, received widespread acclaim and played to a total national audience of over 15,000, establishing People's Light as a leading incubator of new theatre.

“New Play Frontiers is emblematic of the arts in action, producing plays that engage our local communities, promote important issues, and inspire the audience members to consider new viewpoints regarding identity, heritage, and personal experience.” — *State Senator Andy Dinniman*

NEW VOICES, EST. 1990

One of the Theatre's longest running education programs, New Voices is our commitment to the young people of Chester, Pennsylvania. This fully subsidized program uses theatre to develop confidence, academic discipline, and communication skills. Each year, about 25 students receive mentoring and instruction in various settings with a low teacher-to-student ratio. The average student stays with the program for 6 years (and some never leave!) Nadira Beard, one of our original 1990 ensemble members, now leads New Voices and 4 other alumni serve as volunteers and supporters. To date, 300 young people ages 8 through 18 have participated in New Voices.

COMMUNITY MATTERS, EST. 2011

Community Matters is a series of free events presented in partnership with local organizations to spark dialogue about vital issues. Each includes a play reading followed by a facilitated discussion between the audience and a panel of experts. People's Light has hosted 31 Community Matters events (and counting), attended by a total of 5,000+ community members. Topics explored include autism, race and the arts, school shootings, and more.

PEOPLE'S LIGHT COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO DATE, AS OF FEBRUARY 2020

*Alianzas de Phoenixville • Alzheimer's Association • American Mushroom Institute • Arc of Chester County • ArtistYear
AmeriCorps • Art-Reach • Arts Holding Hands and Hearts (AH-HAH) • Dr. Koreen Bell • Brandywine River Museum •
Bucks Coalition Against Trafficking • Career Wardrobe • Chester County ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Committee
• Chester County Anti-Trafficking Coalition • The Charles A. Melton Center • Chester County Adult Probation • Chester
County District Attorney's Office • Chester County Economic Development Corporation • Chester County Historical Society
• Chester County Food Bank • Chester County Fund for Women & Girls • Chester County Futures • Chester County Lawyers
for Progress • Chester County Library • Chester County OIC • Chester County Youth Center • Christina Chiarelli- Helminiak
• Citizens for Cabry • Citizens for Judge Sondergaard • Coatesville Youth Initiative • Jeannette Cole • The Colonial Theatre
• Committee to ReElect Judge John Bailey • Community Volunteers in Medicine • Community, Youth and Women's Alliance,
Inc. • ContactLifeLine • Covenant House Pennsylvania • Cradles to Crayons • Chuck Crawford • Crime Victims' Center of
Chester County • Lisa Croft • Dr. Cliff de Baptiste • Natalie Dallard, LCSW • Dawn's Place • Mary DeFusco, Esq. • Delaware
County Against Human Trafficking Coalition • Senator Andy Dinniman • Domestic Violence Center of Chester County, Inc. •
Lisa Dorsey • East Whiteland Township Police Department • Arielle Egan • Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church • Lisa Faranda •
Terence Farrell • Firebird Festival • Friends of Farmworkers • The Garage Community & Youth Center • Gathering Hope • Les
Glauner • Senator Stewart Greenleaf • Greater Phoenixville ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Committee • Sara Gruen
• Alice Hammond • Mayor Diane Herrin • Hearing Loss Association of America (Chester, Lebanon/Lancaster & Delaware
county chapters) • Leslie Hempling • Sister Teresita Hinnegan • Historic Yellow Springs • District Attorney, Tom Hogan
Esq. • Katie Holton • Home of the Sparrow • Andi Hubbard • Liz Hulse • Sonia Huntzinger • The Institute on Disabilities,
Temple University • Dr. Roger Ideishi • Iota Tau Omega Chapter: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority • Vanessa Jackson, LCSW •
The Johnson House • Kenneth Johnson • Anne Marie Jones • Joseph J. Peters Institute • Justice Works Youth Care • Sandy
Kornhauser • La Comunidad Hispana • Sister Michelle Loisel, DC • Jennifer Lopez • Main Line Health • Malvern Police
Department • Jamie Manirakiza • Regina Marshall • Carol Hart Metzker • Montgomery County Anti-Trafficking Coalition
• Linda Muraresku • National Association of Clinical Social Workers • National Council of Jewish Women • Nationalities
Service Center • Hon. Judge Marsha Neifield • New Jersey Theatre Alliance • Pennsylvania Society of Clinical Social Workers
• Pennsylvania State Nurses Association • Philadelphia Anti-Trafficking Coalition • Philly Fades • Phoenixville Community
Health Foundation • Phoenixville Community Health Foundation • Ploughshares Community Garden • Project Dawn Court
• John Rafferty • Religious Council of Greater West Chester • Shea M. Rhodes, Esquire • Derek Riker • St. Paul's Baptist
Church • The Salvation Army New Day Drop-in Center • Leshia Sanders • Christina Sappey • Mike Schwien • Chaya Scott
• Corey Shdaimah • Diane Sheppard • Sister Terry Shields • Stefanie Snyder • Annalisa Sondergaard • Jesse Sterge • Sam
Stretton • Support Center for Training Child Advocates • Cornelia Swinson • Rebecca A. Tavangar • Henrik Stubbe Teglbjaerg
• Theatre Philadelphia • Upper Merion Township Police Department • Valley Forge National Historical Park • Villanova
University Widger School of Law & Institute to Address Commercial Sexual Exploitation • Renee Washington • The Well •
WeReign • West Chester Chapter of the NAACP • West Chester University • Sister Eileen White • Women's Resource Center
• Worthwhile Wear • Aaron Zappia • Zoe Ministries*