

From Karen Rightmire, the board and staff at The Wyomissing Foundation (TWF):

Established in 1926 by German immigrants, the founders of The Wyomissing Foundation (TWF) had the foresight to create a mission statement that allows the Trustees of the Foundation to support charitable organizations and activities that are most critical at any given time in the life of the Foundation. Times change and issues change and sometimes they stay the same, but events shine a light on them that can't be ignored. These are those times.

While TWF has focused significant resources on the goal of creating family sustaining wealth and opportunities for communities in our urban core, we can and will do more. At this time in our history, we are compelled to publicly acknowledge the importance of determining how to address issues that result from systemic racism: disparities in the workforce, our education system, opportunities for employment, affordable housing, and barriers to re-entry from the criminal justice system.

In 2010, TWF hired a consulting team, Urban Partners, who did a detailed exploration of current community needs at that time. These consultants helped and continue to help us stay focused on our goals. Since then, our efforts have included trying to increase access to health care in the City of Reading, increasing capital for low income and minority entrepreneurs, encouraging Latino business development in the city and surrounding communities; supporting multiple approaches to workforce training for low income and minority individuals, and increasing access to ESL and GED programs offered in the neighborhoods.

To hear the voice of the community, TWF continues to build upon our place-based task forces which bring together institutions and residents to tackle the neighborhood's most pressing needs. These task forces include: South of Penn Task Force; Northeast Youth Development Task Force; West Reading Task Force, and the Googleworks "U" Task Force. Many of these activities have been chosen for support at the behest of the residents of the neighborhood. Although TWF's funding initiatives often fly under the radar of the community, TWF investments of \$4.6 million made from 2010 through 2019 have helped leverage an impressive \$44.6 million in other funding for our community.

The Wyomissing Foundation supports a variety of other organizations who work in health and human services, arts and culture, education and the environment. We pledge going forward to add the lens of equity and inclusion to our grant making in these areas as well.

When times change or the light shines, we will be here. On our continued journey, we are anxious and willing to learn, to adapt and to support strategies that address these injustices and to commit ourselves to do more and to listen to the voices who have so long been unheard.