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BUSINESS QUARTERLY

Winter 2022

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Erie's Downtown Renaissance

Partnerships, preservation, and community events make downtown a destination

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Erie County non-profit creates huge impact for their small city

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Erie's Downtown Renaissance: The First Place of Return

Preservation, partnerships, and progress make downtown a destination

By Erin Phillips

For a short period of time, between 1830-1831, Horace Greeley, printer, editor, and founder of the New York Tribune, lived in Erie in the building known as the Sterrett House (named for Joseph Sterrett, founder of The Erie Gazette) on the west side of State Street between 4th and 5th. Greeley was famously quoted as saying: "Erie is the shabbiest and most broken-down looking large town I, an individual not wholly untraveled, ever saw in a free state." Greeley is certainly not the only one who has held this belief in the past, as those in the comment sections can attest: the self-esteem problem in Erie often shows up loud. Up until recently, the home in which Greeley resided during his short stint in our town, actually was one of the shabbiest, most broken-down buildings on State Street. But that building, along with a shockingly large number of other historic buildings in the greater downtown area, have undergone a transformation and now, as the oldest building on State Street, it has been restored, shored-up, and renovated into something worth celebrating.

It is obvious to anyone spending time in Downtown Erie, that we are in a period of major transition. With so many organizations working together to bring beauty and vibrancy to our main street (like the Erie Downtown Partnership, The EDDC, Gannon, Erie Events, UPMC Hamot, Erie Insurance, Tom Hagen and the Historic Erie Preservation Trust, the Erie Art Museum, the ExpErience Children's Museum, neighborhood groups, individual business owners and, of course, City Hall) the changes happening in Erie are coming all at once and totally upending the way our downtown looks, feels, and is perceived by all who visit it. And perhaps best of all, the buildings that lend Erie its character, and make it a place worth visiting and learning about, are all getting a second look, and the work being done in these historic buildings ensures that they will stand and contribute



This aerial view of the new construction happening along West 5th Street between State and Peach shows a glimpse of the massive scope of work being completed by the EDDC. / Corey Cook

to the character of our city for generations to come.

Having beautifully preserved and reimaged uses for historic buildings is a key element in creating a destination: for locals and tourists alike. According to the National Park Service, "One of the most overlooked aspects of historic preservation is its economic impact. Cities and towns that have embraced their heritage and allowed it to remain often take on a vibrant, eclectic feel, a trick that could not be pulled off in a new construction by the cleverest architects. Preservation enhances real estate values and fosters local businesses, keeping historic main streets and downtowns economically viable. Heritage tourism is a real economic force, one that is evident in places that have preserved their historic character. Developers are discovering that money spent rehabilitating historic buildings is actually an investment in the future, when these structures could be the showpieces of a revitalized city."

But we certainly don't need empirical evidence here, we know it intrinsically: people

enjoy visiting a place with character, with a walkable, charming historic downtown. And with our refreshed old buildings lining State Street, North Park Row and around Perry Square, the newly restored Warner Theatre, as well as all the buildings in the West 6th Street Historic District (which is the first point of contact to our downtown from the west), we are seeing the benefits of this kind of economic impact first hand and realizing that our town can be considered an alluring destination.

The Erie Downtown Partnership (EDP) is one organization that has been aiding in Erie's Renaissance for the past 18 years. And while they have been a fixture for nearly two decades, the group has become much more noticeable lately, as they have significantly bumped up the number of events and projects offered in recent years, bringing a buzz to downtown. Executive Director, Emily Fetcko comments: "In 2022 we coordinated 150 activations downtown including farmers' markets, movie nights, music series, wellness and fitness groups, and retail pop-ups." But creating program-

ming for our downtown spaces is not the be all, end all of the EDP, they also maintain the public spaces to make sure downtown remains a beautiful and safe place to spend time. Fetcko continues, "In addition to our activation we help care for and maintain the public right of way providing power washing, graffiti removal, litter and weed abatement, tree and flower watering, and snow removal on the sidewalks. We also provide business support services in the form of marketing, advocacy, and grants. A lot of people don't fully understand just how much we do and how involved we are with the management of the downtown."

With that management comes a new and welcome addition to the responsibilities of the EDP: design guidelines. "We just completed the first Downtown Design Guidelines to assist property owners with historic property consideration and maintenance. This particular project was born out of many property owners asking for resources to get information about their building as well as where to start in thinking about a plan for maintenance or renovation. For



The buildings lining North Park Row's western block have all recieved a large amount of structural preservation work at the hands of the Erie Downtown Development Corporation, ensuring they stand tall for generations to come. / Jessica Hunter Photos

years the Erie Downtown Partnership has provided Façade Reimbursement Grants and having a resource guide to provide to applicants is very helpful to creating a

better built environment," Fetcko states. With those design guidelines in place, any new construction or renovations to existing buildings will be ensured to fit, charac-

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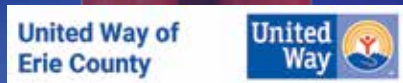
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ter-wise, into the overall vibe of our downtown.

The other major player in downtown's Renaissance is the Erie Downtown Development Corporation (EDDC), and they have taken the work of historic preservation very seriously, investing nearly 40 million dollars into the restoration and preservation of seven (soon to be eight) historic buildings along North Park Row, the Cashier's House, and along the Wright Block on State Street (between 4th and 5th on the east side of State Street). CEO, John Persinger comments on the importance of this preservation work: "It was critical for us to preserve these buildings because, as Erie's first commercial district, these buildings represent our great history. Every community deserves a sense of place, and Downtown Erie is the heart of our community. These buildings hold great stories about where we have come from and, maybe more importantly, where we are headed as a community. We are proud to have been able to preserve these historic properties for decades to come."

Not only has the EDDC injected new life into these buildings with opportunities for new small businesses to move into a newly renovated space, they have also done an important amount of structural work with their restorations (most that would be considered unaffordable for the average business owner). "Sadly, these historic properties had suffered from decades of deferred maintenance, which is why the restoration costs are so high," Persinger continues. "We are so appreciative of the National Park Service, which oversees the National Register of Historic Places, and the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office, who both offered plenty of assistance and guidance as we worked to restore these properties." But restoring a building is really just the first step in reinvigorating our downtown, it takes active small businesses, and people to patronize those businesses, to make it all work. "A lot of credit is due, as well, to all of our commercial tenants, who represent the best that Erie has to offer and who are helping us to cultivate an Erie Experience downtown, and to our residential tenants, who believe in downtown's great potential," Persinger explains.



The Sterrett House at 414 State Street has recently undergone a complete renovation and restoration at the hands of Tom Hagen, the Erie Historic Preservation Trust, and Kidder Architects. It is the oldest building on State Street, constructed in 1830. / Jessica Hunter Photos

With the reinvigoration of the downtown corridor comes the overall improvement of the nearby neighborhoods. Organizations like Our West Bayfront to the west, and the East Side Renaissance to the east, can attest: it is not only downtown seeing the positive impacts of historic preservation and increased community activity. Anna Frantz, Executive Director of Our West Bayfront comments, "The way I see it, the revitalization of the downtown business district and the neighborhoods around it are all connected parts of an overall effort to remake Erie's downtown core. Strong residential neighborhoods support vibrant businesses, and a great downtown gives people just another reason to live close by in the West Bayfront." And with the newly organized East Side Renaissance helping to increase vibrancy, opportunity, and affordable, safe housing for Erie's historic neighborhood in the Parade Street corridor, both neighborhoods bookending downtown are aiding in the revitalization, making downtown's renaissance a microcosm of the City of Erie's reinvention as a whole.

Whether you're coming downtown to work, eat, see a show or a game, go to a yoga class or farmer's market, passing through on your way to the Bayfront, or coming

home, there can be no doubt that Erie's downtown is changing rapidly, and with that change comes a good, long look at our past. Melinda Meyer, President of Preservation Erie comments on these positive changes to our historic buildings and the areas surrounding them: "Erie's historic buildings offer unique opportunities. They are part of what differentiates Erie from anywhere else. While their preservation helps anchor the community's sense of identity and retain cultural capital, reuse of these spaces also contributes to the downtown's renewal. Study after study has shown that historic downtowns and neighborhoods are made to be walkable, old buildings tend to offer affordable, right-sized spaces for entrepreneurs, and historic areas of a city are the 'first place of return' when growth occurs."

If that old curmudgeon, Horace Greeley, visited Erie today, his opinion might be a bit less negative in light of all of the work we've done to shine up our gem of a city. And while Erie still wrestles with its own self-esteem, given all of the changes and progress we've made even in just the past few years, one can't help but be hopeful that all of the time, energy, and love that has been put into our beautiful old buildings will make a positive difference for the future of Erie.



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Connecting the World Through Erie, Pennsylvania

Headquartered in the Flagship City: Logistics Plus has global reach, growth since 1996



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Talk to anyone who has lived or spent significant time in Erie, and you're likely to hear about one flag in particular. You might see it waving from porches, strung across business storefronts, or on bumper stickers, T-shirts, or mugs: "Don't Give Up The Ship."

So the legend goes, Oliver Hazard Perry sketched those words to serve as a rally cry during the Battle of Lake Erie, fought during the War of 1812. In Erie, a place celebrated as "The Flagship City" (so named after the U.S. Brig *Niagara* that Perry steered to triumph) history is alive in the present. And the flag that Perry once flew serves as an inspiration for our city on the rise.

But Perry's flag isn't the only one flying in Erie. Atop the historic Union

Some 50 flags fly atop the historic Union Station building, representing the various countries of origin of the many locations and employees of Logistics Plus.

Station building at 14th and Peach, in the heart of downtown, some 50 flags ripple in the wind, and fall still in the calm. They are in Erie, too, as an inspiration to our future thanks to Logistics Plus.

"It kind of started out with us saying, let's put a flag for either every office or every employee that we have at Logistics Plus to show that we are a true global company and a melting pot of cultures," Yuriy Ostapyak told me. He is the Chief Operating Officer at Logistics Plus (which encompasses freight transportation, warehousing, fulfillment, global logistics, business intelligence, technology, and supply

chain management solutions) and is headquartered in Erie. "It's important to us to showcase our global reach, our growth, just how many places we actually do business with, and how diverse our workforce is."

Among the flags atop the building, which Logistics Plus founder Jim Berlin purchased in 2003, is one representing Ostapyak's homeland: Ukraine. Ostapyak arrived in the United States when he was just 16 as a foreign exchange student. He attended Villa Maria High School, and decided to stay in the Erie area, where he attended then-Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. It was there that a professor



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Nearly a quarter of the one thousand employees Logistics Plus now has worldwide work in Erie, Pennsylvania

introduced Ostapyak to Berlin, who founded Logistics Plus in 1996. Ostapyak started in the warehouse, sorting and shipping shoes, and, as he told me, “one thing led to another, which led to another...”

Logistics Plus, which boasts nearly \$500 million in global annual revenue, employs nearly 1,000 people, and has more than 60 offices and warehouses worldwide, has grown to what it is because mentorship, talent attraction and retention, and a hunger to grow permeates the workforce, starting at the top. When asked what he loves most about the work he specifically does with the company, Berlin rattles off: “Mentor. Excite. Find ways forward.”

Berlin isn’t one to mince words. He is a guy who has bet big on Erie by making an investment in a struggling part of a city, before the more recent downtown improvements. Berlin has stated in company literature, “I always said if downtown Erie comes back, I’ll look like a genius, but at the time I bought the building, I looked like the dumbest guy in town.” It seems safe to say at this point that he is solidly the former.

The global logistics industry is a massive one: at about \$800 billion, and Logistics Plus is relatively small in comparison. However, Logistics Plus is regularly recognized as one of the fastest-growing transportation and logistics companies, a top 3PL, a successful freight brokerage and warehousing provider, a leading project cargo manager, and a certified great place to work.

For outsiders, the industry jargon might be tough to understand at first. Although he isn’t tired of getting the question, one Berlin often gets is the obvious: So what is it that you do? “I always tell them, ‘we move stuff’ – and so much more,” he tells me. That *so much more* includes proclaiming and establishing the first and only *National Logistics Day* (which is June 28) to recognize the importance of the logistics industry which is often a first responder in the face of global crises. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the company procured and shipped much-needed personal protective equipment to frontline responders. And when Russia attacked Ukraine, the company rallied support locally and beyond to Ukrai-

nians, raising over \$660,000 in relief and providing other aid. And that’s not even scratching the surface.

Berlin has a get-stuff-done kind of attitude that’s been both at the core of the growth of Logistics Plus (they most recently expanded their local operational footprint by acquiring the Erie Times-News building a few blocks away from their current location), and serves as a welcomed spark in a city ever-inspired by that declaration: Don’t Give Up The Ship (or as Jim likes to say, “Don’t Give Up the Shipment”).

Berlin isn’t giving up any time soon. But with the reach of Logistics Plus spanning the globe, why stay headquartered in Erie? As he puts it, his decision to keep Logistics Plus in Erie serves as “one of the ‘antidotes’ to Erie’s brain drain, it keeps kids home and helps bolster Erie’s middle-class.”

“We love Erie, love the Erie community,” Ostapyak told me. “We’ll continue to develop and grow in all markets, but we have no plans on moving out of the area. It’s been our headquarters the past 26 years, and it will remain our home going into the future.”

Scott Enterprises: Hospitality for Erie's Future

Reinvesting, renovating, and reimagining our businesses

Scott Enterprises has been a part of the landscape of Erie County for generations, beginning in the 1940s, when Chris Scott came to Erie and started building businesses. First was a hair salon (at Eighth and State) and then Scott's Restaurant, which once sat across the street from the Lawrence Hotel (at 10th and Peach) followed by Scott's Motel (located at Sixth and Peninsula), which was one of the first modern hotels built in Erie. The history of the Scott family's hospitality business has informed its future, as Chris' son, Nick Scott Sr., and grandchildren, Nick Scott Jr. and Chris Scott, carry on the tradition of bringing restaurants, hotels, resorts, and hospitality venues to Erie. The family business has now grown into an enterprise that keeps improving, upgrading, and evolving, now with 28 locations in Pennsylvania and New York state. The combined locations entertain 4 million people per year.

When Nick Scott Sr. speaks about the businesses he has built, one can sense the pride he has in all that his family has accomplished — in particular, Splash Lagoon. The decision to create the one-of-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Splash Lagoon has grown since its construction in 2003 to become one of the top ten indoor water parks in the country and hosts over 350,000 guests each year, from both near and far.

a-kind, world-class indoor water park was an organic one; not a franchise, but mostly an original idea. "Splash Lagoon is something that we opened back in

2003 and is now one of the top ten indoor water parks in the country according to USA Today. Upwards of 350,000 people come each year to enjoy Splash Lagoon, from hundreds of miles away." Scott Enterprises is constantly improving the park, whether that's through new water features, slides, or commissioning a colorful mural. There have been five expansions and additions since 2003; Splash Lagoon is more than an indoor water park, it is an experience. Scott continues, "In the last two years we've invested \$5.5 million in additions to Splash Lagoon. We don't take these investments lightly, and by and large they have helped generate more expansion and customer satisfaction, so they're always worth it. We take business risks for the things we believe in."

In addition to Splash Lagoon, Scott Enterprises has invested impressive sums in upgrading and improving Peek'n Peak Resort in Clymer, N.Y., which they acquired in 2011. While Peek'n Peak isn't



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Chris Scott, Nick Scott Sr., and Nick Scott Jr. of Scott Enterprises. It is truly a family business.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Peek'n Peak was acquired by Scott Enterprises in 2011, and since then the group has invested millions of dollars in improvements and additional amenities, making it a year-round destination.

technically in Erie, Scott likes to think of it as a recreational escape for Erie residents to enjoy. A short, 30-minute drive and you're suddenly in a completely different atmosphere, like an old English resort. Scott explains, "We turned it from a winter ski center into a year-round resort by adding summer activities such as an adventure park with treetop climbing that has 11 courses in the trees, zip lines and mini golf, and an expanded indoor/outdoor swimming pool area." And they haven't left the skiers in the drift; major upgrades and renovations to the ski rental area and a new outdoor deck with a band stage and fire pits, as well as two new Snowcats to keep the slopes nicely groomed, have all come together to make Peek'n Peak an outstanding recreational winter destination.

Of course, what makes Erie special is

our unmistakably beautiful Bayfront, and Scott Enterprises has helped bring more of a focus (and a lot more visitors) to lower State Street with their more recent projects: The eight-story Hampton Inn & Suites and the increasingly popular Oliver's Rooftop Restaurant and Beer Garden, which offers fine dining in their rooftop restaurant (with the best views of the bayfront in Erie) and casual entertainment at the bustling beer garden below. "This is now one of the most popular venues in Erie. People love to be near the water and we have bands playing all summer long at Oliver's Beer Garden. We have 150 employees and we entertain 130,000 guests annually at the Hampton Inn and Suites, Oliver's Rooftop Restaurant and Beer Garden." Both Oliver's Rooftop Restaurant and Beer Garden have won numerous awards, including The

Best Restaurant on Lake Erie, by *Lake Erie Living* magazine, Best New Restaurant in the 2021 Erie's Choice Awards, as well as Best Romantic and Best Waterfront Dining in the 2021 Best of Erie Awards.

For Scott Enterprises and the Scott family, being a part of moving Erie forward is what drives them. They are proud to donate regularly to local charities and support the local universities and the arts. Scott sums it up: "We keep reinvesting. Our goal is to be the best at whatever we do and we're very passionate about it. Myself and my two sons, Nick Jr. and Chris, are all actively involved in developing new business ventures and skillfully operating our existing ones. We have a lot of pride in what we do. If it's good for Erie and it's good for the company; that's something we strive for."

Knox Law: A Practice Built On Capability, Character, and Community

Knox McLaughlin Gornall & Sennett, P.C. is a law firm with firm roots



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Knox Law has long upheld a reputation for good judgment. This legacy is to some degree literal — after all, four federal judges have emerged from the law offices of Knox McLaughlin Gornall & Sennett, P.C. over the course of its nearly 65-year history. That includes two founding partners (William W. Knox and Gerald J. Weber), a founding partner's son (Sean J. McLaughlin), and another tenured litigator in 2018. We would be remiss not to mention former Firm President William C. Sennett, who served as the Attorney General of Pennsylvania from 1967-1970.

But also historically ruling in Knox Law's favor are its dedication toward integrity, excellence, client-focused

The firm of Knox McLaughlin Gornall and Sennett, P.C. is located at 120 West 10th Street in the heart of Erie and has been serving the community for nearly 65 years.

service, responsiveness, innovation, professionalism, and community. By adhering to these core values, the firm has grown to approximately 40 attorneys, 25 paralegals, and a robust support staff working diligently to achieve their clients' objectives. Together they provide practical legal solutions to businesses, families, public entities, and nonprofit organizations throughout all of Western Pennsylvania and the tri-state area.

With offices in Downtown Erie, North East, Pittsburgh, and Jamestown, N.Y., Knox Law continues to be a discerning judge of:

1. Capability

Knox Law leverages the firm's wide-ranging collective experience to provide individualized focus, matching client concern with attorney concentration.

Tom Tupitza, firm president, says Knox Law distinguishes itself in its ability to provide "sophisticated, quality services at reasonable fees with a personalized approach that a larger firm in a larger market may not be able to deliver as effectively. We're used to working with our clients one-on-one, we're used to helping them with the whole range of their needs, and trying to get a holistic



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tom Tupitza, firm president, feels Knox Law excels in all areas of law practice: their all-encompassing knowledge and capability, their uncompromising character, and their love of the Erie community.

picture of their industry.”

That team comprises experienced lawyers in matters such as bankruptcy and creditors’ rights, business and tax law, elder law, environmental law, estate planning and administration, governmental practice, health law, intellectual property and technology, labor and employment, litigation, public finance and bonds, real estate, and workers’ compensation. Together, they have significant knowledge of a number of industries, and bar memberships in several states (including Florida, where Northeasterners are known to flock for the winter).

“The client knows there are different fields of law, but may not know which are relevant to their immediate need,” Tupitza says of the intake process. “Any of our lawyers will connect them with colleagues here who can help them — it’s a team approach.” Knox’s knowledge spans industries both established (e.g. healthcare, finance) and evolving (e.g. cannabis), with an ongoing commitment toward

employee education.

In the interest of being of the utmost utility to clients, the firm has also developed three of what Tupitza calls “auxiliary services” — the Knox Law Institute (educational programming), Knox Law Public Strategies (consulting and advising to the public and private sectors), and Knox Law ADR Services (alternative dispute resolution — i.e. mediation).

“These three areas we think are very important to our legal practice, but they go beyond the traditional services,” states Tupitza.

2. Character

There’s not one single reason Knox Law was ranked among the *U.S. News* — Best Lawyers “Best Law Firms” in 2022 — there are more than 90. More than 90 employees who all have a role to play in delivering a premium client experience, which is why the firm places a strong emphasis on investing in its own.

“If you come to work here, we’re hoping that you’ll spend your entire career here. It’s not the kind of rat race where some people are going to be

years, which they in turn pass along to clients.

Beyond hiring just good people, Tupitza says Knox has striven to hire a variety of good people through its diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. “The more life perspectives you have on your team, the better you’re going to be able to attract and serve clients.” In recruiting new talent, there is an understanding that both local and outside perspectives can strengthen and add value to not only the firm, but the broader communities in which Knox Law operates.

“It’s all a part of selling Erie,” he articulates.

3. Community

Where Erie is concerned, Knox Law is already sold, maintaining a regular presence through sponsorships, non-profit engagements, and volunteer efforts.

“People don’t always realize what a great place this is to live. It’s also a very good place to work as a lawyer — you’ll be able to have a sophisticated career here,” Tupitza asserts. “You can be hands-on with a lot of things. You

“People don’t always realize what a great place this is to live. It’s also a very good place to work as a lawyer — you’ll be able to have a sophisticated career here.”

weeded out just for the sake of being weeded out. We like to hire good people, mentor them, build a good team, and be a great place to work,” expresses Tupitza.

Marketing Director Sarah Holland has seen these efforts come to bear in her near decade with the firm, saying it has “walked the walk” in creating a positive and supportive work environment. Happy hours, trivia nights, and additional off days for birthdays, work anniversaries, and volunteering are just a few ways the firm has generated goodwill amongst its staff in recent

won’t be pigeonholed and sitting in a back room for the rest of your life.” To prove that point, Knox Law invites law students to explore whether a career in law intrigues them, through its summer associates program and other opportunities.

The hope is that they too will build a compelling case for Erie, and the greater region at large, to keep locally-owned businesses and their families right here, where they can continue to be assets to us all.

Judging by the results so far, the future is bright.

Adagio Health: Providing Quality Comprehensive Care for Generations

Non profit serves Erie County's underserved from newly renovated office

For more than 50 years, Adagio Health has been caring for communities in Western Pennsylvania. With medical offices in Erie and Edinboro, the nonprofit healthcare provider offers services to women, men, teens, the LGBTQ community, women veterans, immigrant populations, and more. Many of the services offered are at no cost for patients who don't have insurance or who are underinsured. Adagio Health also accepts most health insurance, including Medicaid.

While Adagio Health has been serving the Erie and Edinboro communities for many years, they recently moved their Erie office to a beautiful newly renovated space located at 3530 Peach St., Suite 120. The Adagio Health Erie clinical team includes CRNP Andi Fair (who has been with Adagio Health since 2017), CRNP Sarah Henry-Walker (who has been with Adagio Health since 2019), behavioral health clinician Christine Crowell, and office manager Stacy Frantz (who has been with Adagio Health since 2021, but has been working in women's health for 20 years).

Every Adagio Health medical provider is an expert in women's health, includ-



Adagio Health provides a multitude of services pertaining to women's health including family planning, pre-conception care, reproductive care, cancer screening, gynecological care, vaccinations, birth control, STI testing, and more.

ing: family planning, pre-conception care, reproductive care, routine gynecological care, breast and cervical cancer screening, pregnancy testing, prenatal care (at select Adagio Health offices), all types of birth control (including the pill, IUD, implant, and shot), STI testing and treatment, HIV testing, PrEP (protection against HIV including injectable *Apretude*), and more. Each office also provides adult preventive care and immunizations including COVID-19 boosters, flu shots, MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella), tetanus, and pneumonia, diabetes and cholesterol screenings, B12 injections and more. Additional services include providing access to nutritious food and dietary counseling, behavioral health services, care navigation, and healthcare referrals. The organization prides itself on providing a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in every medical office, along with a team of health experts who work hard to ensure that each office is an inclusive space for all who seek care from Adagio Health.

Recently, Adagio Health partnered

with the RAND corporation to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment for women veterans in Western Pennsylvania. Results of this first-of-its-kind regional analysis will be published in late February 2023. Currently, Adagio Health is recognized by Psych Armor as a Veteran Ready provider, and the organization has made veteran care a priority over the last several years.

Adagio Health Erie is located at: 3530 Peach Street, Suite 120, Erie, PA 16508. Hours are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Same day appointments or telehealth visits are available by calling 814-453-4718. Walk-ins are also welcome. For more information visit: adagiohealth.org/Erie

Adagio Health Edinboro is located at: 118 East Plum Street, Edinboro, PA 16412 – a 5-minute drive or 14-minute walk from the PennWest Edinboro campus. Hours are Monday – Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m, Friday 7:30am – 1:30 p.m. Same day appointments or telehealth visits are available by calling 814-734-7600. Walk-ins are welcome. For more information visit: adagiohealth.org/Edinboro



Adagio Health has recently moved into the newly renovated building at 3530 Peach Street and their highly trained and experienced staff are on hand to offer comprehensive care to their patients.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Sarah Reed Children's Center

Creating career foundations for regional mental health professionals

Sarah Reed Children's Center has been supporting internships for students in the Erie area for over 40 years, many of whom have become leaders both within Sarah Reed and at other organizations throughout the community. Since spring of 2021, over 25 students at the bachelors and masters degree levels have completed internships, not counting doctoral and post-doctoral interns. Providing a strong, clinically-focused foundation for students to increase their knowledge and skills has been a goal over the years. Another positive benefit of the internship program has been creating pathways for interns, leading to jobs and career opportunities throughout the organization. This is evidenced by the fact that the CEO, directors, supervisors, and numerous staff throughout the organization got their start as an intern many years ago and remain with Sarah Reed today.

"My recreational therapy internship at Sarah Reed allowed me to have a different outlook on life. I always knew I wanted to work with children, but never considered this specific population before," states Shelby Scott, former Slippery Rock student. "During my internship, I was challenged to think outside the box and create programs and interventions that fit the needs of the children here." Shelby was hired following an internship, and is currently a recreation specialist in the Residential Program.

Founded in 1871, Sarah Reed Children's Center serves over 900 children in all counties of Pennsylvania as well as the southern tier of New York. Operating out of seven facilities, Sarah Reed provides outpatient therapy, acute and regular partial hospitalization services, residential treatment, school-based and alternative education programs, as well as community-based services to several area school districts.

A recent collaboration with Gannon



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(left) Recreation Specialist, Shelby Scott. (right) The internship program at Sarah A. Reed Children's Center (SARCC) provides a multitude of benefits for the organization and the interns, alike. Pictured here are three current social work students from Gannon, assigned to the Residential Treatment Program.

University and Community Care Behavioral Health resulted in paid internships for three social work students for two semesters beginning fall 2022. Amara Devericks, Caelan "CJ" Scholl, and Grace Clark are working as clinical care staff while fulfilling Gannon's internship requirements, and are involved in everything from self-care and wellness routines, to group activities that promote positive peer interactions. Clark noted that Sarah Reed offers a unique internship environment, providing the opportunity to practice trauma-informed care in every part of a child's day. "The opportunities for growth as a student and a professional are endless," Clark commented. Devericks added, "I have learned to love each child, finding

ways to help them love who they are too." Devericks continues, "One of the amazing things about working at Sarah Reed is the inclusivity of children in the LGBTQ+ community."

The positive impact that Sarah Reed has on children and adolescents would not be possible without the many dedicated professionals, staff members, and interns committed to this cause. Internships at the Children's Center play a major role in supporting critical services to the community. Interns bring a different perspective, new ideas, and energy to the treatment environment.

For information on internships and paid internship-work opportunities, please contact the Human Resources Dept. at 814-835-7642

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Impact Corry: Reinventing Rural with Connectivity and Community

Erie County nonprofit creates huge impact for their small city

By Liz Allen

There's more than one third-class city in Erie County embracing a first-rate effort to remake itself.

That's what I learned on my 35-mile, 50-minute drive from Erie's west side to a 139-year-old building in downtown Corry. This historic structure features tin ceilings, brick walls, burnished wooden doors and a treasure trove of unique antiques repurposed for practical uses.

But a visit to this well-preserved commercial structure at 4 South Center Street, which houses Impact Corry and the Corry Community Foundation, is not an exercise in nostalgia. Rather, it's a way to learn about Corry's current success stories and to get a glimpse of the community's specific, achievable plans to improve connectivity, revitalize neighborhoods and expand and link green spaces, among other goals.

Collaboration is a key principle in the work that Chuck Gray does as Executive Director of Impact Corry. The Corry Community Foundation, the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, and other organizations have helped assist Impact Corry financially. And there are many reasons why Impact Corry and the Corry Community Foundation, which aids 24 other nonprofits, share offices. "Our organizations have a coworking/resource-sharing arrangement, but the collaboration goes much deeper than that," said Gray. Shelby Scouten, executive assistant to the foundation, "volunteers to take minutes at Impact Corry meetings," Gray explained. "We proof and edit for one another, we share and overcome challenges together, tell truths together. Shelby is one of the most socially savvy people I have ever known. I count on her insights, advice and perspective," she said.

Gray can also turn to a corps of volunteer "champions" who step up to make sure that Impact Corry listens to Corry residents and delivers on their ideas and priorities. These #PositivelyCorry cham-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The 139 year old building that stands at 4 South Center Street in Corry serves as the headquarters for Impact Corry, an organization dedicated to revitalizing the City of Corry.

pions include Wendy Neckers, owner of the Painted Finch Gallery, 32 North Center Street. Neckers opened her fine arts gallery in 2012 and added Epiphany's Emporium, in the adjoining space at 34 North Center, in 2017. Neckers views Corry as "a place of dreams" where dreams are actually coming to fruition. "I'm excited to see the possible changes and the changes that have already happened through Impact Corry," she said.

Valerie Beckerink, Neckers' sister, manages Epiphany's Emporium, which specializes in handcrafted, one-of-a-kind artisan pieces. The family is originally from Clymer, N.Y., but Corry is home. "It's a lovely place to be and we just have to reinvent ourselves and to invite people to enjoy it with us," said Beckerink. The two retailers and other Corry businesses have outdoor café tables and chairs all painted in the

same fresh shade of green. The coordinated color scheme signals that Corry is a place to "come have a coffee and sit and chat for a while," said Neckers.

Revitalization plans may not come with color palettes but they share common themes. For example, Charles Buki, the consultant who wrote "Erie Refocused" for the city of Erie, also prepared the comprehensive plan for Corry. In both plans, he found that the cities were dealing with blighted neighborhoods, empty storefronts, and the loss of core industries. You could also say that the two cities share some manufacturing DNA. Climax Manufacturing Company in Corry built geared locomotives designed to transport logs, coal, sugarcane and other goods from the 1880s until 1930, according to the Corry Historical Society. GE Transportation in Lawrence Park, just across the Erie city

line, rolled out its first locomotive in 1912; Wabtec, GE's successor, continues to build locomotives here. NuBone Corset Co. was founded in Meadville in 1908 but business really blossomed after it moved to Corry in 1910. Then, in 1920, NuBone relocated to East 25th Street in Erie, according to the Erie Times-News; it closed in the 1960s.

With its annual Corry Climax & Corsets Arts & Innovation Festival, which debuted in 2021, Corry is capitalizing on trains and underwear, the two industries that helped make it famous.

But Corry's turnaround relies on much more than a fall festival with a clever, alliterative name. And Impact Corry's tagline makes clear that this project's sense of place is different from urban Erie. It reads: "Reinventing Rural through collaborative community, economic and civic development." Since Corry's strategic plan was completed in 2021, Corry has invested \$8,654,447 in five focus areas: strengthening the city's fiscal balance sheet, activating the city center, ramping up connectivity, linking and improving green spaces, and revitalizing neighborhoods. Every dollar invested in Corry returns \$14.47 to the community, according to Gray, and Impact Corry has \$20,957,810 in pending funding requests.

Gray outlined numerous accomplishments in all five sectors. For example, a new Airport Authority and Board now operates the Corry-Lawrence Airport, so that the city doesn't incur airport costs. The city's North Hills Municipal Golf Course had been losing money but with a new commission overseeing the course, it's making a profit. Both changes have eased pressure on Corry's city budget. To meet demand for technology and skilled workers, Corry is implementing universal Gig Fiber Optic Internet and transforming the former Corry Memorial Hospital into the Corry Area Technology Center and Hub (CATCH). Impact Corry is also working to secure broadband connectivity for the Corry Area and Union City school districts.

"We believe in transformation," Gray said. "Ideas become real at the point of action." "I thoroughly believe we in Corry



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Plans are in the works for the new Corry Rails + Trails Park which will be constructed on the site of the old Oil Creek Railroad station and yard, once again linking the past with the future.

are poised for a renaissance," she added. And what would the Renaissance be without magnificent art and beauty? Indeed, during my visit to Impact Corry office, the lightbulb went off about why economic development, innovation and artistic creativity go hand-in-hand. Reusing a historic building and filling it with repurposed antiques, including doors that serve as office dividers and an old wooden railroad luggage cart to display brochures, helps to communicate that "this is Corry," said Gray. "We're beautiful. We just have to realize the beauty is here."

Kitty-corner from the Impact Corry office at the intersection of Center and Main Streets, the new Corry Rails + Trails Park will arise in phases on the site of the old Oil Creek Railroad station and yard. Along with green space, trails and a brew pub, there is a design for a glass gazebo. Filagree butterflies will alight on the roof. Their wings will flap when visitors pump swings below. When they look up at those delicate butterflies, they will see that they resemble fancy, custom-made NuBone corsets.

LIZ ALLEN hopes to return to Corry soon, perhaps for "A Hometown Corry Christmas" on Dec. 2 from 5 to 10 p.m. You can reach her at lizallenerie@gmail.com.

Meet Chuck Gray

Charles "Chuck" Gray, executive director of Impact Corry, has experience as a grant writer, planner, management consultant and entrepreneur. She also worked as artistic director of the Struthers Library Theatre in Warren, her hometown.

Returning to Warren after having jobs around the country, she saw the warning signs that Warren was no longer the community she had grown up in. "It used to feel like everything was going well," she said. Until it wasn't.

She could have left. Instead, she stayed, determined to do "anything I can" to help Warren. Now she is employing her talents for visualizing change and documenting progress at Impact Corry, with the website, impactcorry.org, and in tactile displays at the Impact Corry office.

On burlap bulletin boards, she maps out progress to fix up blighted properties with a color-coded map, showing 42 projects completed, 14 in progress, 82 on the waiting list and three neighborhoods left to tackle.

She documents progress with before-and-after pictures of commercial and residential rehabs.

She keeps handouts for the public clipped to another bulletin board on topics ranging from reviving business districts to strengthening innovation in rural hubs to reducing blight on your own block.

And to understand how she translates ideas into action, check out the postcards and notes she has posted on another wall, where her words of inspiration and resolve include these: "Believe in yourself," "See the beauty in the everyday," "Clean up what you have" and "Extol the wonder of local resources."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Chuck Gray, Executive Director of Impact Corry, stands near a repurposed wooden door inside their organization's headquarters.



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