One Community Impacting Many

How philanthropy is helping Penn Staters imagine, collaborate, and invent their way to a better world
Are you ready to show your Penn State pride? On December 3, 2019, Penn Staters will have the chance to raise their voices as a part of the University’s fifth #GivingTuesday event. Last year, over $700,000 was raised from more than 6,500 gifts in less than forty-eight hours—a record show of participation. With support from alumni and friends like you, this year’s celebration of the people, programs, and community that make Penn State special can be the loudest yet.

New this year, supporters can help build early momentum and incentivize event-day participation by sponsoring matching gifts or awards online at givingtuesday.psu.edu/challenges. Questions about #GivingTuesday can be sent to givingtuesday@psu.edu.

WE ARE looking forward to hearing your voice on December 3!
Community is at the heart of our University. Penn State is built on a desire to enhance the lives of those who call our Commonwealth home—from our founding gift of land to the land-grant mission we have upheld for more than a century and a half. The University’s current campaign, A Greater Penn State for 21st Century Excellence, challenges us to deepen and broaden this commitment—to reach communities across the globe and to invest in solutions to pressing problems on local and international scales. And with support from alumni and friends like you, we are continuing to demonstrate just how powerful our community can be.

This issue of We Are magazine explores how private support is integral to Penn State’s impact on the communities we serve. You will see how philanthropy, paired with the University’s investment in entrepreneurship, is spurring jobs and innovation across the Commonwealth. You’ll learn how an exciting new vision for the arts at Penn State will create a cultural destination for scholars, students, and the public. You will read about how University faculty are coming together across colleges and campuses to fight the substance misuse crisis in America, and you’ll meet undergraduate students inspired to use their time and talent to improve the lives of families here—and of communities 7,500 miles away.

With private support, we are one community, impacting many. And with continued investment from Penn State’s alumni and friends, the University’s legacy of improving lives through teaching, research, and service and our legacy of coming together to do good for the world around us will continue long into the future. Thank you for all that you do for Penn State.

Rick Sokolov ’71 Lib
Chair, Executive Committee
A Greater Penn State for 21st Century Excellence
In 2015, President Barron committed $30 million in University funds to launch Invent Penn State, an initiative to drive economic development in Pennsylvania. One of the signature programs is a statewide network of twenty-one innovation hubs that offer accelerator classes, coworking spaces, mentorship, and more—all at no cost—to entrepreneurs and business owners like Matthew Roda '19 (featured right). Through the Greater Penn State campaign, alumni and friends have joined with Invent Penn State, committing more than $67.3 million to promote local economic development projects, including the innovation hub programs and work spaces, with many gifts matched by University funds.

Every innovation hub is eligible for up to $1 million in University matching funds for private gifts. So far, three have received full $1 million naming endowments:

- Happy Valley LaunchBox powered by PNC Bank
- Altoona LaunchBox supported by the Hite Family
- Hazleton LaunchBox supported by Pasco L. Schiavo, Esq.

To learn more about University matching funds available for select economic development initiatives, please contact Heather Winfield, director of campaign imperatives, at hbw11@psu.edu or 814-867-2099.

To date, innovation hubs have:

Engaged 1,529 students
Created 90 jobs and internships
Provided legal advice to over 300 ventures
Supported 72 new product development projects
Graduated 91 start-up teams from accelerator programs
Assisted 1,792 entrepreneurs in formulating business plans
LaunchBox Spotlight

Matthew Roda's innovative start-up, Reflexion, is changing the landscape for athlete performance and brain health by providing fast and comprehensive brain training. The company has designed a machine—a six-foot-wide panel equipped with blinking, touch-sensitive lights—for athletes to monitor hand-eye coordination, reaction time, and peripheral vision, alongside a software service to track training and injuries. Reflexion received critical support from the Happy Valley LaunchBox powered by PNC Bank, including $15,000 from the LaunchBox's Shark Tank-style competition, “The Investment.” To learn more about Matthew's Penn State experience and Reflexion, visit: impact.psu.edu/story/better-concussion-detection.

Penn State has been phenomenal in support for Reflexion. Beyond the grants and awards we’ve received, the advice and resources have been incredible. I do not believe we could have gotten where we are without the Happy Valley LaunchBox.

—Matthew Roda ‘19
Last spring, fourteen students in the Schreyer Honors College left the U.S. pulling suitcases of supplies for girls in Kenya and Tanzania. Three weeks later, they returned carrying experiences that would last a lifetime.

These Schreyer Scholars traveled to Hekima Place, a children’s home in Kenya, and the Secondary Education for Girls’ Advancement (SEGA) Girls’ School in Tanzania. In both locations, the Scholars helped with the facilities’ daily operations, taught lessons on reproductive safety and self-defense, and forged meaningful connections with young women overcoming societal challenges in earning their educations and improving their lives.

The trip was led by Dr. Michele “Mitch” Kirsch and funded through donor support for the Schreyer Honors College travel grant program. Kirsch, who retired last spring as the Schreyer Honors College’s associate dean of student affairs, organized the opportunity after several Scholars took personal volunteer trips to the two countries and returned inspired by the people they had met. Thanks to gifts from alumni and friends, trips like this one continue to create transformative experiences for Penn State students and impact communities across the world.

—Dr. Michele “Mitch” Kirsch

Faces of Philanthropy

We know our students are smart, but no classroom will ever match the kind of learning you get when you’re actually immersed in another culture. I hope they remember these experiences for the rest of their lives. That’s my goal.

—Dr. Michele “Mitch” Kirsch
What about this travel experience was most meaningful for you?
At the SEGA Girls' School, teachers prepared students for the unique challenges facing women in the country, like arranged marriage and lack of financial autonomy. We had the opportunity to participate in some of these lessons, and I was so inspired by the young women's bravery and strength.

What sort of supplies did you take over in your suitcases?
In Tanzania, we distributed handmade, reusable feminine hygiene kits produced by the nonprofit Days for Girls. Without access to simple tools—items available to us in corner convenience stores—many girls are forced to stay home from school for a week each month. Over time, missing so much class makes it impossible to keep up, and most are forced to drop out of school. The kits can be used for five years, but I know the impact will last far longer.

How did the trip change your perspective?
I got to see how privileged I am, but also appreciate the different ways people live. I've learned how important it is to not impose my own values on other people. Different does not mean less.

What would you say to donors who support Schreyer travel grants?
Their gifts have funded so much more than just this trip—probably more than we'll ever know. I learned a lot, but more importantly, our hygiene kits and the information we shared will stay with the women and get passed along. This was truly a two-way learning experience.

For more of our conversation with Jessica, visit: raise.psu.edu/a-global-perspective.
When Penn State’s Museum of Art opened in 1972 with a modest collection, few could have predicted how successful it would be. Fueled by philanthropic support, it has since grown into today’s Palmer Museum of Art, a beloved campus and community resource that maintains a permanent collection of more than 9,500 works of art. Yet that very success now presents a challenge: its current location can no longer accommodate its collection or effectively meet the programmatic needs of a twenty-first-century art museum.

Penn State is planning to meet this challenge by constructing a brand-new University Art Museum within The Arboretum at Penn State, a transformational undertaking that promises to create an array of exciting new opportunities for art and nature lovers of all ages.

“The new art museum will serve as the cultural gateway to the University,” says Erin M. Coe, director of the Palmer Museum of Art. Pointing to the planned building’s significantly increased exhibition spaces, new educational areas, and location on the northeast corner of campus, Coe explains, “It will greatly expand public access to our growing collections in an exceptional setting while offering innovative and engaging experiences for our students, the community, and visitors from around the world.”

The task of designing this facility has gone to Allied Works Architecture, an award-winning architectural firm with extensive experience in the design of innovative arts, cultural, and civic buildings, including academic art museums and art schools at higher education institutions. Their mandate at Penn State is to design a museum that is integrated with the Arboretum architecturally and which enables and inspires collaboration between the two. Penn State President Eric J. Barron, whose vision for a cultural destination at the University has been a driving force behind the project, says, “Situating the Art Museum within the Arboretum will create a cultural...
Barron notes that the Palmer Museum is not only one of the finest university art museums in the country; it is also one of the best ways that Penn State fulfills its commitment to service. He believes that the new University Art Museum will take that service to the next level. “The complex will further our strategic goals of advancing the arts and humanities and—because cultural opportunities also create economic opportunities—of driving economic development,” says Barron. “In doing so, it will beautifully enhance Penn State’s positive impact on the communities we serve.”

That relationship with the community has long been a reciprocal one. More than 80 percent of the permanent collection has been donated or purchased with donated funds. And when the time came for a major expansion in 1993, it was made possible by a fundraising campaign led by its namesake benefactors, and community members, James and Barbara Palmer.

Destination

The new project is no different: a major philanthropic campaign will seek to supplement the University’s investment in the museum. To launch construction, the University’s goal is to secure at least $13.9 million in private gifts by spring 2020, and its success in doing so will determine how fully the vision for the facility can be realized.

“The new building will present a number of philanthropic naming opportunities,” says Robin Seymour, director of major gifts for the College of Arts & Architecture. “As Penn State’s art museum begins this exciting new chapter, I look forward to working with potential donors to craft gifts that help make the building a reality while enhancing a lasting legacy of support for the arts in our community.”

For more information, contact Seymour at qzq1@psu.edu or 814-863-7751.
Today we are facing the worst drug crisis in the history of the U.S. An estimated 72,000 Americans died from a drug overdose in 2017, almost double the number of motor vehicle deaths, and Pennsylvania is among the hardest-hit states, ranking third in the nation for overdose deaths. The devastation goes beyond individuals to their families, friends, employers, and communities.

Penn State is committed to leading the fight against this epidemic. The University is marshaling the full range of its resources in education, research, and outreach across the Commonwealth to combat the crisis with powerful solutions. Two current initiatives highlight Penn State’s response: the Consortium to Combat Substance Abuse (CCSA) and the Douglas W. Pollock Center for Addiction Outreach and Research.

The CCSA is an interdisciplinary initiative that connects faculty from across the University and invests resources toward building a future free from addiction. The CCSA is both drawing upon existing faculty talent and hiring new faculty members to strengthen Penn State’s expertise and enhance its capacity to translate scientific evidence into effective policies and programs.

A key initiative of the CCSA is its Community Fellows Program, through which University faculty are building partnerships with organizations on the front line of the fight. For example, College of Health and Human Development faculty member H. H. Cleveland has partnered with Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance to work with patients in recovery, and Kristen Goessling at Penn State Brandywine is reaching Philadelphia youth affected by the opioid crisis through the Saving Our Lives Collective.

The Pollock Center, recently established at Penn State Harrisburg with a $2.5 million gift from the Douglas W. Pollock Foundation, will address two areas of the problem within central Pennsylvania: it will provide targeted assistance to veterans of the U.S. military and their families who are facing addiction-related challenges, and it will help to bolster nonprofit community organizations in their efforts to more effectively address challenges associated with substance misuse. At the same time, the center will serve as a catalyst to enhance communications and align the efforts of numerous agencies and organizations addressing substance misuse.

These are just two examples of Penn State’s commitment to helping our communities overcome the ravages of substance misuse. The University is investing heavily in this effort, and with philanthropic support, Penn State expertise can reach even more of the people and communities hit hardest by this epidemic and can help to ensure a brighter and healthier future for the citizens of Pennsylvania and beyond.

To learn how you can get involved, please contact Heather Winfield, director of campaign imperatives, at hbw11@psu.edu or 814-867-2099.
LOCATED ON THE CAMPUS of what is now Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, the Federal House (above, left) was originally built in 1838 as a family home for Thomas Bonnell, a cobbler, and his wife, Eva. Together, the couple raised nine children in their modest home, while also feeding stagecoach travelers and providing a “safe house” for slaves moving along the Underground Railroad.

In 1988, then owners Larry and Kathryn Smith generously donated the Federal House to the University. And today, with philanthropic support, renovations to the Federal House are underway to create a new home for the Susan Hirt Hagen Center for Community Outreach, Research, and Evaluation (CORE). The project will retain the original Federal House structure and connect it to a new, modern building (rendering above, right). The enhanced space will allow CORE to expand its programming and annually support more than 3,000 Erie youth in navigating the challenges of early adulthood, continuing the legacy of the Federal House as a source of hope for those who call the region home. To learn more, visit: behrend.psu.edu/feature/behrend-renovate-historic-federal-house.
A husband and father of two, **Greg Bayles ’19** enrolled at Penn State Altoona in hopes of turning an education into a career that would provide more for his family. As a sophomore, he joined the Sheetz Fellows Program, a leadership development organization established with a gift from local business leaders Steve and Nancy Sheetz, and quickly discovered his passion—serving his community. Now a recent graduate, Greg is an alum of the Division of Development and Alumni Relations internship program, served as president of the Sheetz Fellows Program, and has logged 100 hours of community service with over twenty local organizations. As he enters life after graduation, Greg is inspired to use his leadership skills, devote his time, and dedicate his dollars to better the lives of future Penn Staters, his neighbors, and his family.