

# Annual Report 2020

A YEAR OF GROWTH &  
CONNECTING THE DOTS



coraopolis community development



TOMATO SEEDLINGS SPROUTING IN THE CORAOPOLIS  
COMMUNITY GARDEN, SPRING 2020



## A letter from the Executive Director

What a year it has been! As with many of our nonprofit counterparts, 2020 took us out of our comfort zone and caused us to think creatively and collaboratively in how we deliver our services. The needs presented by COVID-19 propelled Coraopolis Community Development Corporation's social services arm to a whole new level. As the one-time sole employee of the CCDC, it has been a thrill to see this organization grow into a community hub, connecting resources to those who need them, engaging our community members to be involved, and working with our small businesses to make the Coraopolis community the best it can be. In short, we're connecting the dots.

Throughout this year of uncertainty, YOU have been the common denominator. Your support, your ambassadorship of our programs, your volunteerism and your donations of your precious time, talents, and treasure is what drives us.

We have done a great deal in the past year, as you will see in this report. On behalf of our Board of Trustees and staff, thank you for allowing us to do this critical work every day.

**AMY CAVICCHIA**

*Executive Director*

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# How far we've come...

The CCDC is a small organization with big dreams. Starting as a grassroots effort in 2006 under the name of “Coraopolis Community Development Foundation,” the registered 501c3 nonprofit organization has steadily built its donor and volunteer base over the years to more than 1,500 individuals and businesses.

At the heart of the organization’s mission is the well-being and prosperity of the people we serve in Coraopolis, Neville Island, Moon Township, Crescent Township, and Groveton. The CCDC’s programs focus on providing much needed resources to individuals and families through:

- 1) the Coraopolis Food Pantry
- 2) the Weekend Snack Pack program
- 3) the Community Garden
- 4) the restoration of the Coraopolis Train Station, and
- 5) a newly expanded economic development initiative.

In summer 2019, a subgroup of the CCDC’s Board of Directors called the “Business and Economic Development Team” was formed out of the desire from business owners and property developers to see further advancement in the economic development of Coraopolis. This group has personally invested in the partial funding of a full-time Director of Economic Development - the first in the CCDC’s history - to embark upon a community development initiative to jump-start neighborhood revitalization for the benefit of local residents and business owners.

Today, the CCDC is currently made up of a staff of 2.5 - a full-time executive director, a full-time director of economic development and a part-time program manager. Like many of our nonprofit peers, we ‘do a lot with a little.’



Cara Mason  
Director of Economic Development



Hannah Lapiska  
Program Manager

# Our Programs

The **Coraopolis Food Pantry** opens its doors on the first and third Sunday of each month. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of people served through the food pantry spiked from 260 to a staggering 847 in one month. Though numbers tripled in the midst of the pandemic, the CCDC's small size allowed it to be nimble and adaptable in the midst of a crisis by quickly switching to a drive-by format, packing food boxes ahead of time, and assembling a core group of regular volunteers to lower risk of transmission. The pantry continues to operate at a 100% increase over typical service numbers. The CCDC aspires to serve its community at this heightened level of service for as long as needed.



The CCDC **Community Garden** is a member of Grow Pittsburgh, an urban agricultural program catering to Allegheny County. Not only does the Community Garden bring together members of the community to develop gardening skills, but the produce grown in the garden supplements the Coraopolis Food Pantry with fresh produce for families in need.

The **Weekend Snack Pack program** is an extension of the Food Pantry that was developed in 2019 in partnership with the local school district. In community eligible school districts, students are eligible to receive subsidized breakfast, lunch and dinner during the school week. The Snack Pack program was born with the mission to feed school children during the weekend and provides a much needed supplemental food source for local families. Currently, the Snack Pack program feeds 117 students across two school districts during the school year with a goal of increasing to serve 200 students in subsequent years.



# A Year in Review

140,000 lbs of food served



448 dedicated volunteers



8,179 guests served at the Food Pantry

**9,145 local people were assisted**

578 generous donors

12,448 in-kind donations received

117 children received weekly Snack Packs

3,632 Snack Packs packed

5 socially-distanced events



# Summary of Events

## Coraopolis Second Saturdays Concert Series

Coraopolis Second Saturdays is designed to bring people to the downtown corridor to eat, shop, and enjoy live music. The series was delayed in its inaugural year due to COVID-19, but with some adjustments and creativity, it kicked off on Mill Street in August and September in a safe and socially-distanced manner. Local bands and food trucks created a neighborhood feel. Coraopolis Borough and Police Department were on hand to ensure all protocols were followed. Second Saturdays 2021 series will take place on June 12th, July 10th, and August 14th.



## Fall Festival & Art Walk

Saturday, October 17th brought beautiful autumn weather and lots of safe, socially-distanced outdoor fun in downtown Coraopolis. This year's festival was organized in partnership with Coraopolis Community Development, Coraopolis Youth Creations, Emma Jean's Relics, and Coraopolis Borough. A new component was added to the event - an Art Walk in partnership with Pittsburgh Society of Artists. Over 20 Coraopolis businesses featured artists and artwork thon their windows and in their stores. This coincided with the PSA's new member exhibition at Gilberti Fine Art Studio & Gallery.

# CoryCares Beautification Days

CoryCares is a citizen task force who serve as helping hands to the hard working Coraopolis Borough road crew. It is a partnership between Coraopolis Shade Tree Commission and the CCDC. Our team of volunteers gathers on a quarterly basis to work on projects that help keep Coraopolis beautiful, such as litter collection, weeding, light painting, and trail work. CoryCares' first beautification day took place on Saturday, October 24th from 9am-12pm. A group of over 60 volunteers - residents, community leaders, Robert Morris students, gathered at Riverfront Park and 1st Avenue and dispersed from there, cleaning up trash and debris.



# Christmas in Coraopolis

On Saturday, December 5th, CCDC partnered with Coraopolis United Methodist Church for their 8th annual Cookie Walk. Initial plans for family activities on Mulberry Street had to be altered due to newly announced COVID-19 mitigation efforts. The event was changed to a drive-thru format and moved to the church's parking lot. Visitors had the opportunity to purchase home-made cookies (all proceeds went to the church), grab free children's activity bags, bring a letter to Santa, and say hello to the jolly old elf himself on a Borough fire truck. The CCDC also held its first annual storefront decorating contest in the business district, CoryBright, that gained participation from over 20 small businesses with over 230 votes from community members.



WINNING WINDOW PICTURED ABOVE: EMMA JEAN'S RELICS.

# Train Station Project



## 2020 MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- All design work complete
- Roof 50% complete
- Canopy 75% removed

## WHAT'S NEXT?

- Permanent utility installation
- Roof drains and stormwater management
- Rebuild the canopy
- Sidewalks

