



# CHESTER MADE THROUGH AND THROUGH

**CHESTER MADE** is an initiative to help recognize and promote arts and culture in the City of Chester and to harness their power as a force for community revitalization. The initiative is part of a collaborative effort to support the Historic Chester Arts and Culture District and the concept of a Chester Cultural Corridor (C3) along Avenue of the States between City Hall and Widener University.

“ If you ask Chester residents what they vision for a proposed arts and culture district in their downtown, they’ll be the first to tell you that it’s got to be Chester Made, through and through. ”



## PARTNERS



Widener University



CHESTER ARTS *alive!*



GAS & ELECTRIC ARTS

ARTIST WAREHOUSE

## SUPPORTERS

Major support for the Chester Cultural Corridor has been provided by the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, with additional support from PECO and the National Endowment for the Humanities.



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES



For more information, contact Pennsylvania Humanities Council at 800-462-0442 or C3@pahamanities.org



## A PROFOUND IMPACT

The impact of arts and culture on Chester and its people is profound and multidimensional.

Arts and culture connect people to a common heritage and cultural traditions that unite young and old. The arts are a common denominator that builds respect among people across economic, racial, and social lines. They create social spaces where people feel part of a community. They also create a sense of belonging, where differences are appreciated and common ground is felt.

Arts and culture contribute vibrancy and vitality to life in the city. People value celebrations and the way the arts create social gathering spaces. This includes everything from events like festivals, the Mother's Day parade, Riverfront Ramble, and the Martin Luther King, Jr celebration to performances at Widener, to exhibitions at Art on Avenue of the States and Open Mike's events downtown, to street culture.

Arts and culture are also thriving in a new community of young artists and cultural leaders like those at The Artist Warehouse in downtown Chester and at cultural neighborhood centers like the J. Lewis Crozier Library.

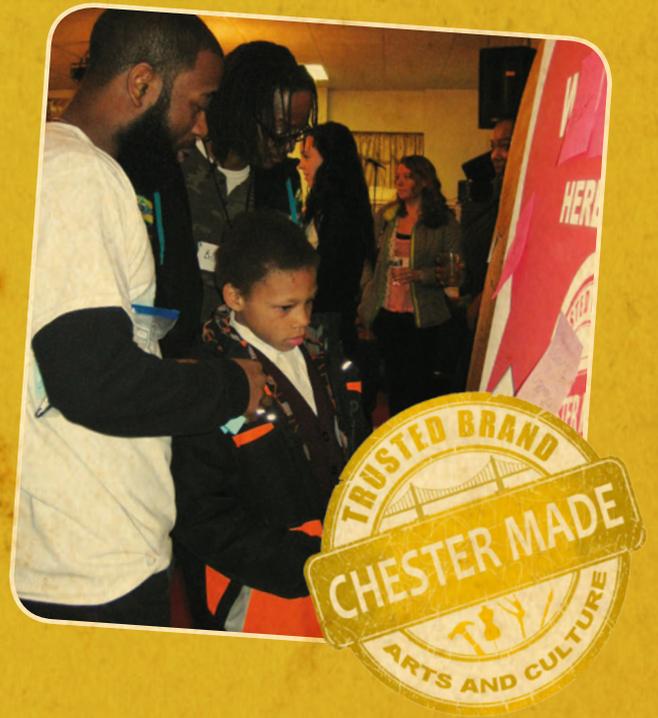
Finally, the arts are a healing force in Chester. They provide a point of hope in times of trauma and contribute to the community's resilience.

## FROM LOSS TO HOPE: CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

The story of arts and culture in Chester is one not only of pride and possibility, but also, unfortunately, of loss. Significant cultural resources, like Deshong Park and other venues that once defined the Chester community, are now deeply missed. Residents express both a sense of emptiness and a desire to revitalize neighborhoods that have suffered decline.

They recognize that arts are important for the growth and development of youth. They want to see arts education and the marching band at the high school return. They crave opportunities for their children beyond the playground. They seek artist mentors and arts role models for their sons and daughters. Finally, they want ways to bridge gaps between generations and see the potential of arts and culture as a means to do so.

Chester's residents are united in a sense of urgency. They are ready to tap the creativity latent in this community—and to move forward together.



**“ It was so encouraging to see so many people interested and so many people came out [for Deshong Commemoration Day]. There were elders — community elders, people outside the community, politicians from the state and local level. There were children... ”**



## MEMORIES AND POSSIBILITIES: STORY GATHERING IN CHESTER

A key goal of Chester Made is to frame the story of arts and culture and its place in the life of the city. It's this evolving story that will guide the progress to come.

With leadership from the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, collaborators of many kinds have helped assemble the story—or actually to transcribe it. The authors are the people of Chester themselves. Through a process called story gathering, a ten-member team, the Chester Made Ensemble led by Chester Arts Alive! and Gas and Electric Arts, met with community members, asking arts and culture related questions, and listening to what their fellow Chester residents had to say.

Last February more than 8 story gatherings were held throughout Chester enlisting broad participation. The sessions attracted over 350 residents, with over 140 stories and 120 surveys collected. Community leaders, artists, city employees, historic preservationists, students, seniors, and business owners joined in to serve as advisors to the project.

Then March through May, Widener University students under the direction of faculty and Animating Democracy, a program of Americans for the Arts, analyzed the stories, and the City Planning Department, Pennsylvania Humanities Council, and The Artist Warehouse created an online story map. The results furthered the understanding of the power and value of the arts and culture in the lives of the people of Chester and give voice to their aspirations, laying the foundation for future plans.

“There is a rich culture here even though it is a small town.”

## ARTS, CULTURE AND DAILY LIFE

During the story gathering, participants described the creative and cultural life of their community. They talked about playing music, painting, dance, and visits to museums and theater. But they also cited creativity in other contexts—expressed in fashion choices and hair salons, community gardens, food and culinary arts, the Needle Works Club at the library, even in the way a player moves on the basketball court.

Individuals' stories revealed the value of arts and culture as a source of personal wellbeing, a form of connection to the past, and a force for bringing individuals together in the community. The story gathering also demonstrated that arts and culture open people up to new beginnings and provide a way to imagine new possibilities.



## MAPPING THE FUTURE

The stories gathered in Chester helped create a Cultural Assets Map, marking places of significance across the city. This map is both a visual celebration of creative life and a visioning tool.

The information on the cultural assets map that is accessible online at the City of Chester website can be integrated into city projects and land use planning in a number of ways, including:

- Awareness and marketing—promoting culture for residents and visitors
- Economic development—facilitating entrepreneurial investment in creative cultural industries
- Planning and policy—informing decision-making relating to land use and design
- Networks and collaboration—facilitating partnerships with cultural groups and identifying opportunities to maximize assets

The process of cultural mapping is never done. There will—and should—always be new information and assets to add. The work to date, however, has established a solid foundation.



“Because there are going to be folks that are going to come after us and they are not even going to know anything about Alfred Deshong. ... To me, it is important to restore that because it is part of the character of the city.”

“We need hope. Chester is at a crossroad. That is important.”

“The arts and cultural district could be a catalyst for revitalization.”

### Support the Arts and Cultural District Today

*Chester residents value their arts and culture and recognize the important role it plays in the city's revitalization. There is hope and excitement in the promise of new artist and cultural leadership in the downtown; people believe that supporting it will help Chester to thrive and grow.*

 Like us at [Facebook.com/ChesterMadePA](https://www.facebook.com/ChesterMadePA)

 Tag your posts with [#ChesterMade](https://twitter.com/ChesterMade)





# CHESTER MADE CHAMPIONS

**CHESTER MADE** is an initiative to help recognize and promote arts and culture in the City of Chester and to harness its power as a force for community revitalization. This initiative works to highlight the creative and cultural life of the Chester community, as well as the many stories, memories, and dreams of its residents. In 2015, 8 story gatherings were held throughout the Chester community. The sessions attracted over 350 residents, collecting over 140 stories and 120 surveys. Throughout the storytelling process, we identified nearly 200 people, events, heritage sites, organizations, facilities, and businesses that help shape the creative soul of Chester – Chester Made Champions. Here is an index of champions named to date; many more remain to be identified.

Many will be featured on an online story map at the City of Chester's website. The process of cultural mapping is never done. There will always be new information and stories to share. Please contact us at [C3@pahumanities.org](mailto:C3@pahumanities.org) with your stories so we recognize all who have made a lasting impact on the creative expression in Chester.

## EVENTS

- Across Colors Cultural Festival
- Chester High Basketball Games
- Chester Park Concert Series
- Chester Youth Summit
- Deshong Park Commemoration Day
- July 4th Race/Walk
- Mayor's Christmas Luncheon
- Mother's Day Parade
- Overtown Arts & Street Festival
- Peace on the Streets Jams
- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Day of Service
- Riverfront Ramble
- The Juiceman Soul Cookout
- Unity through the Arts
- Widener University Cherry Blossom Festival
- Widener University home football games
- Widener University Spring Fling Festival

## HERITAGE SITES

- Alfred O. Deshong Memorial Gallery
- Alfred O. Deshong Memorial Park
- Boyd Theater
- Carry the Light Mural
- Chester High School
- Chester Park
- Chester Transportation Center
- Crosby Street Substation
- Crozer Park
- Crozer Theological Seminary
- Delaware Riverfront
- Deshong Mansion
- Ethel Waters Park
- Eyre Park
- Frederick Douglass Christian School
- Freeman Cultural Arts Center
- Friends Meeting House
- Great Leopard Skating Rink/  
Big C Rollerdrome

- John's Doggie Shop
- Martin Luther King Jr. monument
- Murray's
- Old Colonial Courthouse
- Old Main
- Penn Recreation Lanes
- Rural Cemetery
- State Theater
- The White Elephant
- Theatre Widener
- Third Presbyterian Church
- Toby Farms Neighborhood
- United States Postal Service Office
- Upland Park
- Veteran's Memorial Park
- William Penn's Landing/  
Penn's Landing Park
- YMCA
- YWCA

## PARTNERS



ARTIST WAREHOUSE

## SUPPORTERS

Major support for the Chester Cultural Corridor has been provided by the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, with additional support from PECO and the National Endowment for the Humanities.



For more information, contact Pennsylvania Humanities Council at 800-462-0442 or [C3@pahumanities.org](mailto:C3@pahumanities.org)



# CHESTER MADE CHAMPIONS

## ORGANIZATIONS AND FACILITIES

9th Street Youth and Community Center  
Belvedere Nursing Home  
Bethany Baptist Church  
Calvary Baptist Church  
Chester Arts Alive!  
Chester Boys and Girls Club  
Chester Children's Chorus  
Chester Community Charter School  
Chester East Side Ministries  
Chester Education Foundation  
Chester Fine Art Center East  
Chester High School  
Chester Historic Preservation Committee  
Chester School for the Arts  
Chester Senior Center  
City Hall  
Community Arts Center  
Delaware County Historical Society Museum  
Drexel Neumann Academy  
Edgemont Senior Apartments  
Entrepreneur Works  
Hedgerow Theatre  
J. Lewis Crozer Library  
John A. Watts Elks Lodge  
Ministerial Fellowship of Chester and Vicinity  
My Majestic Inc  
Providence Baptist Church  
Rotary Club of Chester  
Schwartz Athletic Center  
St Daniel United Methodist Church  
St Luke Christian Community Church  
STEM at Showalter  
The Nia Center  
The Salvation Army of Chester  
Toby Farms Elementary School  
Widener University  
Widener University Art Collection and Gallery  
Wolfgram Memorial Library  
Yes We Can Cultural Achievement Center

## CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Andre Café Acoustique  
Art on Avenue of the States  
B & C Restaurant  
Bennie's Tavern  
Blaq Rain Boutique  
Cheryl's Southern Style Restaurant  
Give me Suga  
Harrah's Philadelphia Race Track  
and Casino

Abu the Juiceman's Juic'E  
Kjy's Bakery  
Laran Bronze  
Open Mikes Internet Café  
Phatso's Bakery  
Sam & Sam Meats  
Search+Rescue  
The Artist Warehouse

## Leaders

John Alston  
Louise Barnes-Johnson  
Charlie Barnes  
Jahlil Beats (Orlando Tucker)  
Tone Beats (Anthony Tucker)  
Marcus Belgrave  
Sam Benson  
Sister Mafalda Bouzy  
Wendell Butler  
Linda Braceland  
Sam Brown Sr.  
James Butler  
Tiana Caldwell  
Hilda Campbell  
John Carr  
Joe Chambers  
Larry Chase  
Mark Collier  
Markiya Collier  
Courtlandt Craig  
Samuel Crozer  
Clamma Dale  
Bill Dandridge  
Rev. Ernest Davis Jr.  
John DeMarski  
Lisa Dennis  
Alfred O. Deshong  
Debbie DeSimone  
Paul Fejko  
Dallas Fitzsimmons  
Delores Freeman-Clybourn  
Tawfeeq Gaines  
Danny Garland  
Latifah Griffin  
Desire Grover  
Kenya Abdul Hai  
Harry Jackson  
Michael Jahlil  
Naomi Jay  
Delores "Tootsie" Jennings  
"Calypso" Howard Johnson

Tara Jones  
Martin Luther King Jr.  
Rev. Anzer Kirland  
Thaddeus Kirkland  
John Linder  
Lakesha Logan  
Denise Mathis  
Sharon Meagher  
Michael Miller  
Barbara D. Mills  
Jameer Nelson  
Donald Newton  
leasa Nichols  
Gloria Oakley  
Diane Palm  
Mary Ellen Payne  
Van Buren Payne  
William Penn  
Bobby Person  
Kim Pinder-Garner  
Monika Rhodes  
Ashli Rice  
Janet Riley-Ford  
Earnest Saunders  
Tom Sharp  
Twyla Simpkins  
Shakiyl Smith  
Linda Soto Saldana  
Avery Sunshine (Denise Nicole White)  
James Thomas  
John Thomas  
Marci Bryant-Tilghman  
Andrew Turner  
John Vanore  
Robert Vaughan  
Patricia Wagner  
Quonda Walker  
Devon Walls  
L. Ward  
Ethel Waters  
Brandi Wells  
Frederick West  
Helen Whittington  
Mary Wright

 Like us at  
[Facebook.com/ChesterMadePA](https://www.facebook.com/ChesterMadePA)

 Tag your posts with  
[#ChesterMade](https://twitter.com/ChesterMade)