



Branch Newsletter

November-December, 2025

By the Communication, Press & Publicity Committee

Membership meetings changed because of holidays

Our regular general membership meeting dates for November fall on Thanksgiving and Christmas. So we have changed the dates. We will meet on Thursdays, Nov. 20, and Dec. 18, at 7 p.m. at the Ricketts Center, 658 Beech Street.

The public is invited. For those who can't make it, here's a Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84995648174?pwd=QlAyaHZkWIJXZWk1T3FWcHNFVnJOQT09> Meeting ID:849 9564 8174 Passcode: 937480

Happy holidays to all!

*Whatever holiday you celebrate,
may it be meaningful and joyful.*

We are eager to see everyone in the New Year and we are looking forward to making exciting plans to fulfill our mission of inclusion, racial equality, social justice, and civil rights.

Branch addresses cuts at hospital

The branch is saddened – even alarmed – by the recent decision of Tower Health to close the ICU, the cancer treatment center and the endoscopy center at Pottstown Hospital. This will end inpatient surgery. Some 131 administrative and clinical jobs will be lost.

If this move follows the trajectory of hospitals in Delaware County and elsewhere, we fear it could mean the closing of Pottstown Hospital altogether. This would be devastating not just for those who need medical care at the hospital, but for the whole community. **Continued on next page**

Branch addresses cuts at Pottstown Hospital

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We are adamant that Pottstown needs a fully-operational hospital. And we have vowed to do whatever we can to help that happen.

“It’s my opinion, as the President of the Pottstown NAACP and a cancer patient at Pottstown Hospital, that this move is discriminatory to the vulnerable people of this population and discriminatory to the people of Pottstown,” said branch President Johnny Corson in a video released by the nurses’ union.

“This hospital is here because of the sale of Pottstown Hospital and all the work that’s being done to support this hospital. For it to just be ripped out from

underneath of us, it actually pisses me off. I’m upset that they’re giving us just 60 days to find ways to get treatment. This is life and death. Just imagine the toll this is going to take mentally. Stress is one of the worst things that a cancer patient can deal with. Tower, you just put undue stress on a lot of sick people in this community who relied on you, who counted on you, and who believed in you.”

Corson is writing to elected officials and others, and we expected many members to attend a rally on Nov. 17 outside the hospital, organized by Pottstown Hospital nurses and community leaders.

Otherwise, plans are developing. Stay tuned.



NAACP youth chapter formed at Pottstown High School

We welcome the 39 students at Pottstown High School who have formed the first ever High School Chapter of the NAACP at the school.

Their advisor, Regina Astheimer, said they were concerned about some injustices they were seeing, and they wanted to do something about it.

“They are gung ho,” said Astheimer.

The theme for their November meeting was “Don’t Give Up on Your Dreams.” Three speakers – Mark Gibson, Pottstown’s first Black firefighter; attorney Destinee

Astheimer-Jones; and Emanuel Wilkerson, who works for a Philadelphia City Councilman – talked to the students about what it took, about the obstacles they had to overcome to be successful.

In the works are plans for a spirit week to explore unity and community, plus a Black History Month festival with foods from different cultures.

The students gave out 200 goodie bags at a Trunk or Treat event at the high school. They’ll help with Toys for Tots and at a Thanksgiving lunch for seniors at the Jefferson Apartments.

“We’re doing a lot, and I’m proud of them,” Astheimer said.

Officers of the group are: Omaria Miller, President; Kaylee Morris, Vice President; Rooney Salazar, Secretary; Zaniyah Trott Wright, Treasurer.

The branch donated the \$10 per student membership fee. We welcome contributions from anyone who would like to offset this expense or sponsor more students with additional membership. If you’d like to help, please email pottstownnaacp.2288@gmail.com

Budget cuts discussed

The branch co-hosted a town hall on Oct. 15 to discuss the impact of federal budget cuts and the delay in approving a state budget. Other co-hosts were State Reps. Joe Ciresi and Paul Friel. The state budget has since been approved.



WIN Committee news

The WIN (Women in the NAACP) committee got an infusion of \$300 with its participation in Boscov's Friends Helping Friend event.

Among other community efforts, the committee provides a monthly donation to the Salvation Army's family shelter and participates in a community dinner every Wednesday at Mission First.

Thank you to all who participated.

Road to Reading reaches milestone

With the delivery of 96 bi-lingual books to the English as a Second Language teacher at Rupert Elementary, and 175 books to the Pottstown Cluster food pantry, the Road to Reading program has officially topped the 25,000 book mark.

When an anonymous donor who is interested in literacy came to us in 2023, offering a large sum of money if we would distribute books to disadvantaged children, ages 0 to 8, in Pottstown Borough, we had no idea where it would lead. Pottstown has a poverty rate of about 20 percent, and only one in three third-graders can read at grade level. What would happen if you saturated the town with books? What would happen if they became part of a child's norm, not just something they saw at school?

We now give books to and through about two dozen entities, and December promises to be especially busy, with Christmas parties for disadvantaged kids, a Toys for Tots event and more.



Above: Road to Reading co-manager Bob Bauers takes delivery of 22 boxes of books that came via tractor-trailer.



At left: Later, students from the Hill School helped label the nearly 2,000 books.