

IMPACT



**What
does
positive
change
look like?**



CREATING

a Vibrant Community

What does positive change look like? The answer isn't a single person, organization or effort—it's many.

Centre County is full of people working together to improve lives, enhance our shared spaces, protect the environment, and more. In this magazine you'll read about six of the many nonprofits Centre Foundation supports. Some of these groups help members of our community find stability and self-reliance. Others bring enjoyment of the arts and science into our lives. Still others enhance the quality of our lives by advocating for a safer, healthier region.

Those people and the positive change they create need support. That's where Centre Foundation comes in.

At Centre Foundation, we enhance the positive changes that are happening in our community. We provide financial support to many of our regional nonprofits. More importantly, we allow individuals to support nonprofits in personalized, sustainable ways.

We don't make the positive change; we make it better.

Our goal is to help donors reach their philanthropic potential. That's why we provide so many ways for donors to support the causes and organizations that resonate with them. Like all Centre Foundation's nonprofits, the groups described here benefitted from these strategies. They set up endowment funds, received grants, or benefitted from specific events like the Giving Circle or Centre Gives. Here are just a few of the

ways that Centre Foundation lets donors make a greater impact:

Endowment Funds. Endowment funds have always been a cornerstone of how Centre Foundation supports the community. These funds offer long-term financial support. Nonprofits know they can rely on grants from endowments year after year. Donors know that their investments will make an impact now and into the future. Donors can create donor advised funds so they can make personalized grant recommendations each year; or they can create designated funds which specify particular nonprofits which will receive funding for the long term. Each fund is tailored to effectively and efficiently meet the goals of both donors and nonprofits they want to support. Someday, we hope that every charitable organization has a major endowment fund so nonprofit leaders can focus on making an impact instead of fundraising.

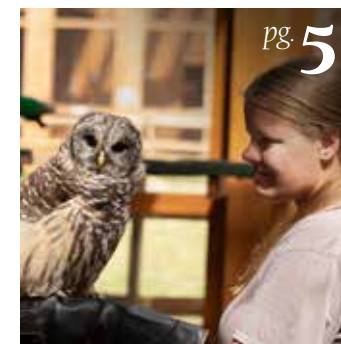
Grants. In addition to grants from endowment funds, Centre Foundation offers a variety of granting programs supported by discretionary funds held by the Foundation. Created by donors who understand that Centre Foundation has a deep knowledge of community needs, these funds allow the foundation to make grants based on those needs as they change over time. Grant programs such as Centre Gives and Centre Inspires were created by such funds,

and they allow Centre Foundation to provide innovative and effective opportunities for all local nonprofits. Another granting program, Giving Circle, maximizes the power of individual donors by combining gifts and then allows those donors to be directly involved in the process of grant selection.

These are just a few of the ways that Centre Foundation supports and extends the impact of individual donors. In the following stories, read about how these strategies support the great work of Discovery Space, Strawberry Fields, and the ACRES Project. Learn how the Nittany Valley Symphony has become a second home for its members, and how the Bellefonte Art Museum is revitalizing downtown Bellefonte. And take a ride with CentreBike toward increased cycling safety and awareness.

We hope that you enjoy these stories and glimpse what is possible when people are supported in our vibrant community. As inspiration unfolds and the culture of giving deepens in our community, we all benefit from the positive changes. 🌱

FEATURED STORIES



Discovering What's Important

How one nonprofit is fostering science education, learning and exploration.



For many children, summer vacations at the beach consist of building sandcastles and splashing in the waves. For Michele Crowl, Executive Director of Discovery Space, one childhood vacation sparked deeper curiosity.

“I remember sitting on the beach and watching the waves when I overheard my family members discussing high tide and low tide. I asked, ‘Why does the moon up there have anything to do with the water in front of me?’ From that moment on, I remember being curious about things, but it wasn’t until later when I realized that science was the answer,” says Michele.

Michele’s curious nature didn’t stop after her childhood. When she returned to Penn State to obtain her PhD in Science Education, she heard rumors about the potential opening of a science center in State College.

Driven by her curiosity and love of science centers, Michele contacted the Borough, scoured the web, and eventually connected with a group of dedicated community members who would soon open Discovery Space in 2011.

Discovery Space’s mission is to provide engaging experiences that spark creativity, curiosity,



Frankie, Ruby, and Ellie Kaufman enjoy some of their favorite experiments at Discovery Space. The science museum currently has over 1,200 family memberships.

and imagination through interactive exhibits and hands-on programs. As of June 2019, the nonprofit had over 1,200 families registered as members.

“I’m really proud that we’ve had so many families coming here for many years,” says Michele. “Some families come just for summer camps. Some families come just to explore on their own, but there’s one family that has been involved with us in several different capacities since we first opened.” That family includes Stephanie Herzberg, Aaron Kaufman, and their three children, Ellie (12), Ruby (10), and Frankie (6).

“All of our kids have exhibited a curiosity about the world and how things work, so I don’t think it’s a coincidence that, in a way, they all grew up at Discovery Space,” says Stephanie.

Aaron agrees. “One thing that has kept us coming to Discovery Space after all these years is that we have kids of all ages, but Discovery Space has activities that they can all relate to and be inspired by.”

Frankie first started participating at Discovery Space through the Baby Explorers program, in

which children from six months to two years old explore science through books and movement.

“People asked me if I thought their kids were too little, but I told them that as long as their kids could sit up, then they could participate,” says Stephanie. “At that age, it’s all about exploring their world.”

Ellie and Ruby’s favorite program is GLOW, Girls Leadership Opportunity Week, which provides opportunities for girls in middle school to meet with female leaders in STEM fields and to explore possible career options.

As the Kaufman children grow, they can remain involved with Discovery Space through The Rivet, an initiative geared towards teens and adults that was supported by Centre Foundation’s \$100,000 Centre Inspires grant in 2018.

The Rivet is a community makerspace that connects multiple generations, hobbyists, and entrepreneurs to the skills and equipment they need to create new products, prepare for careers in STEM, and pursue their creative interests. From woodworking to 3D printing, Riveters can learn how to make just about anything.

“We are grateful for this community with people who would have never met otherwise,” says Michele. “We called it The Rivet because it’s all about making connections, and those connections have grown very quickly since we first launched.”

The Rivet and other Discovery Space programs are sustained by an endowment fund, the Discovery Space Fund, and other Centre Foundation granting programs. In 2018, Discovery Space received a combined \$124,903 through these funds and grants.

By providing a wide range of programs and activities, Discovery Space has ignited the curiosity of people of all ages in Centre County and surrounding communities.

“Whether our kids choose to become scientists or not, having confidence and understanding that nothing is beyond their ability to comprehend is foundational,” says Aaron. “They’re building their understanding of the world. It’s going to help them in school, and it’s going to help them in life.” 🌱

Mary Krupa (right) working at Shaver's Creek. ACRES helped her realize her goal of working with animals. Russell Schaufler (below) has also been supported by ACRES.



Inclusive Experiences. Inspirational Results.

Empowering careers for people with autism.



As children, we were often asked, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Mary Krupa always knew she wanted a career working with animals. As an adult on the autism spectrum, however, Mary has had to overcome obstacles in her way of achieving this goal.

According to Autism Speaks, 50,000 teens on the spectrum enter adulthood each year and consequently age out of school-based autism services. Since autism is a lifelong condition, many adults are left with limited resources.

“I graduated from Penn State in the winter of 2016 and basically had a year or so with nothing to do,” says Mary. “It wasn’t a great situation for me mentally. The anxiety started coming back.”

Recognizing the difficulties faced by Mary and other adults with autism, former autistic support teacher Bella Bregar and her lifelong friend Cathy Prosek founded the ACRES Project.

The ACRES Project is a Centre County nonprofit working to foster independence, self-advocacy, and work/life skills for adults with autism. Centre Foundation supports the ACRES Project through an endowment fund, the ACRES Project Fund,

which helps the nonprofit grow to meet the needs and facilitate the dreams of individuals, like Mary, who are on the autism spectrum.

“The one thing I wanted as a teacher was to have a classroom that felt like a safe place for students to visit,” says Bella. “My classroom was a safe haven, and that’s what I wanted for adults who were out of school, too.”

The ACRES Project’s programs are uniquely designed by adults with autism for adults with autism, although anyone is welcome.

“We don’t ask for a diagnosis when you come here. Not everyone has a diagnosis or wants a diagnosis, but everyone wants to fit in. That’s what we want,” says Bella.

One of the programs offered by the ACRES Project is their Work-Based Learning Program, in which job coaches help clients identify their career interests and obtain temporary paid work experiences in local businesses.

“The goal of this program is to allow our clients to foster the skills necessary to work as independently as possible, even if this independence looks different for each person,” says Megan McGrath, a Penn State intern with the ACRES Project.

For Mary, the Work-Based Learning Program helped her transition from volunteering to a paid internship at Shaver’s Creek Environmental Center.

“The internship helped me expand a little more. Since all of the birds at Shaver’s Creek have disabilities, they are unable to survive in the wild but still need to know how to use their beaks and talons,” says Mary. “So I created enrichment binders to help staff and volunteers better understand how to meet the needs of each bird.”

Jason Beale, Animal Care Director at Shaver’s Creek Environmental Center, adds that hiring someone on the autism spectrum is no different from hiring someone without autism.

“It’s about putting the person in a situation where they can effectively apply their skills to meet both personal and professional goals,” says Jason. “As an employer, you need to provide clear expectations, necessary training, constructive feedback, and lots of positive reinforcement for a job well done. I’ve really enjoyed getting to know Mary and watching her grow over the last several years.”

In August 2018, Centre Foundation’s Giving Circle members voted to award a \$10,000 grant to the ACRES Project, expanding the Work-Based Learning Program.

“Our original workplace program would only allow us to provide services to people ages 14 to 21,” says Bella. “We found that very few grants were available for people over the age of 21, so we decided to apply for the Giving Circle grant. It really helped get us started.”

The ACRES Project used the funds to create workshops on effective communication and job interview skills and to continue funding Mary’s internship along with several others.

With a degree in English and a minor in Wildlife and Fisheries, Mary appreciates her opportunity at Shaver’s Creek and strives to someday hold a permanent job in wildlife conservation.

“I like working here,” says Mary. “It’s fun. It’s a nice environment to work in and has given me a lot of experience, but I think it might just be the first step in my career.” 🌱

Giving Care *and a* Place to Live

Because stability
shouldn't be tied to a lease



Fran McDermid (left) Sherry Skelton (above) are staff members at Strawberry Fields. Sherry has also benefited from the organization's programming.

“Everybody has gifts, and when you get them in the right place, it’s magical.”

Forty years ago, Sherry Skelton attempted to take her own life, an experience that forced her to confront her anxiety and PTSD. “I didn’t know I had a mental illness until I got slapped in the face with it,” says Skelton. Now, she draws on those experiences to help others who are struggling with mental illnesses.

Since 2011, Sherry has worked as the first full-time Peer Support Specialist at Strawberry Fields, a Centre County nonprofit that offers a continuum of services, enhancing the lives of individuals with developmental delays, intellectual disabilities, and mental illnesses.



Leslie McKinley (left) and Jeannie Shuey (right) have been supported by Strawberry Fields.

800

Families and individuals served in early intervention, mental health case management and residential services in 2017

Sherry's road to recovery, however, did not come without its challenges. During the Great Recession in 2008, Sherry became homeless and moved into Centre House, a shelter operated by Housing Transitions.

"Centre House was a great place. They were very supportive and caring," says Sherry. "One day, though, representatives from Strawberry Fields came to present to us. They were looking for another member for their Fairweather Lodge."

Founded by George Fairweather in California in 1963, a "Fairweather Lodge" offers support for adults with mental illnesses. Lodge members share household responsibilities and costs while helping each other throughout their recovery. Today, more than 90 Fairweather Lodges exist throughout the United States.

Strawberry Fields opened the first Fairweather Lodge located in Centre County in 2007.

"Most mental health programs have an end date or are considered to be transitional," says Cindy Pasquinelli, CEO at Strawberry Fields. "The

fundamentals want to keep people and beds moving. But the beauty with the Fairweather Lodge is that there is no end date."

The Lodge also features minimal staffing and no fees for members except for upkeep of the property.

"Throughout my four years at the Fairweather Lodge, I learned that I wasn't the only person out there that felt abandoned, forgotten, and mistreated," says Sherry. "Eventually, my self-esteem started going up and up and up."

Cindy says, "The most important thing is that Sherry hasn't forgotten where she came from. That's what makes her so powerful with her peers. She has become a role model for so many."

In addition to helping Sherry find meaningful employment, Strawberry Fields also provides employment opportunities at two of their locally owned businesses: Scraps & Skeins and Good Day Café.

Scraps & Skeins is a creative reuse shop that sells fabric, yarn, and other knitting and

24/7

Strawberry Fields offers 24/7 crisis prevention and intervention support

sewing supplies that have been donated by the community. The shop exclusively employs adults facing mental health challenges.

"Having a job is so important because it gives people purpose," says Cindy. "Everybody has gifts, and when you get them in the right place, it's magical."

Good Day Café, recipient of Centre Foundation's \$100,000 Centre Inspires grant in 2017, is a coffee shop that employs people with intellectual disabilities and mental illnesses.

"Before Good Day Café, Strawberry Fields was an organization without a face in the community,"

says Cindy. "When we were awarded the Centre Inspires grant, it gave us the opportunity to share with the community what we as an organization do."

In addition to receiving Centre Inspires funding, Strawberry Fields also participates in Centre Gives, raising \$15,209 in 2018 and \$16,931 in 2019.

The nonprofit also benefits from the Eugene and Lydia Herman Family Fund, an endowment fund at Centre Foundation which supports Strawberry Fields' mission of enhancing the quality of life and promoting the individual growth of people with disabilities.

Although Sherry's path to social work was nontraditional, she found her niche and feels good about what she has accomplished for herself and for others.

"I used to walk around the office with my head down because I was always afraid," says Sherry. "Now, I look at people. That's an achievement." 🌱

The
SWEET
SOUND

Of

COMMUNITY

For 52 years, the
Nittany Valley
Symphony has been
using music to bring
people together.

*Anisha Prabhu is a violinist
with the symphony and
a State College Area High
School junior.*





James Dunn (above and below right) plays french horn; Ellie Lewis (below) plays violin.

Harmony is what makes a symphony beautiful—not only the harmony between instruments but also between musicians.

When members of the Nittany Valley Symphony perform together, they intertwine their diverse backgrounds and levels of experience to create perfect harmony.

“This is a volunteer community orchestra,” says Roberta Streb, Executive Director of the Nittany Valley Symphony. “We have our professional musicians who sit in principal positions and lead their sections, but the rest of the orchestra consists of volunteers.”



One of these volunteers is Ellie Lewis, current board chair and violinist who has been performing with the Nittany Valley Symphony for nearly three decades. In 1991, she and her late husband, Jack, moved temporarily to State College to be closer to their son who was attending Penn State.

“I have a home with the symphony,” says Ellie. “My closest friends are in the symphony or involved in some way. It’s a big extended family.”

In fact, the string section is so close-knit that many of them gather for lunch each month to celebrate anyone who had a birthday.

“I think there’s one month when there isn’t a birthday, but they still get together to celebrate,” says Roberta. “Instead of exchanging gifts,

they give each other cards and pass around an envelope to raise money for the symphony. They raise almost \$1,000 each year, just by having birthdays!”

Ellie says, “The cards are quite interesting. Usually they are humorous, but when a new person joins the group, the cards are very serious until that person catches on.”

Welcoming new people into the group, especially younger musicians, is a passion of the Nittany Valley Symphony.

Prior to each of their five concerts, the symphony welcomes various youth music groups to form their own ensembles and perform while listeners find their seats.

Diana Stimmel (below) plays viola.



Active members

80

(Including 4 original members)

“I have a home with the symphony.”





Practice makes perfect: the symphony practices regularly to prepare for its five annual performances.



Bob LaBarca has been a local music educator and plays principal trombone in the symphony.



“We’ve had many wonderful musicians,” says Roberta. “The opportunity to play in front of an audience really gives them a boost.”

During their February concert, the symphony invites a high school musician to perform a movement of a concerto with the orchestra. This musician is selected among contestants in the Ann Keller Young Soloist Competition, which honors the woman who founded the Nittany Valley Symphony and perpetuates the love of classical music for generations to come.

In 2005, The Nittany Valley Symphony created an endowment fund, the Nittany Valley Symphony Fund, which provides ongoing support for their world-class productions and programming.

Additionally, the Nittany Valley Symphony is always a favorite during Centre Gives, raising \$31,056 in 2018 and \$31,004 in 2019.

Several members, including Ellie, have also chosen to support the Nittany Valley Symphony by establishing endowment funds.

As a way to honor Jack’s legacy and his lifelong interest in classical music, Ellie established

the Jack Lewis Memorial Tuba Chair Fund at Centre Foundation in 2015.

“While in high school, Jack was always fond of the tuba and played in an award winning brass quartet,” says Ellie. “So this fund supports the principal tuba chair of the Nittany Valley Symphony in his memory.”

In 2018, Ellie also established the Elinor C. Lewis Second Violin Chair Fund, which supports the principal chair of the second violin section, of which she is a member.

Since its founding in 1967, the Nittany Valley Symphony has often become a second family for its musicians.

Roberta says, “One of our professional musicians said to me once, ‘When you play in certain orchestras, you play for them; when you play in the Nittany Valley Symphony, you play with them.’”

Ellie agrees, “After Jack died, people thought that I would go back to New Jersey where I lived all my life. I have a life here now, and I don’t want to leave it.” 🌱

Raised during Centre Gives 2019

\$31k

Home is where the ART IS

One small
museum doing
big things for
their community

*Helen Sundquist, with children
Elliott (2) and Libby (6),
approach the art museum in
historic downtown Bellefonte*

Snoopy, Garfield, and Bugs Bunny were just some of the cartoon characters that Lori Fisher would meticulously draw as a kid.

As I got older, my cartoon characters became still-life, portraits, and other images that piqued my interest at the time,” says Lori.

Today, Lori continues to pursue her passion for the arts and serves as Deputy Director of the Bellefonte Art Museum for Centre County, where she curates exhibits of art from nearly 200 local artists and artists from around the world.

“A favorite part of my job is to hang the work of other artists,” says Lori. “I love being alone in the gallery with art surrounding me and hanging a show that is complementary to the work itself and to the artist.”

Founded in 2008 by Patricia House, the Bellefonte Art Museum is located in the Linn House on North Allegheny Street. The house was originally built in 1810 by Philip Benner, a pioneer ironmaster in Centre County.

“Art can be a great way to rehabilitate a community, especially if it has historic properties,” says Patricia, “and this place was just waiting for something to happen.”

The Bellefonte Art Museum provides enrichment to the community through diverse programming that includes interactive art shows, poetry readings, and cultural exhibits. One of these exhibits is now permanently installed and remembers the role of the region in the operations of the Underground Railroad.

“We found old plans of the building that showed that there was a dwelling in the attic, so we tore down some walls, crawled through the attic, and found this room,” says Patricia. “It’s both haunting and beautiful and has awakened people in the community.”

Although small, the Bellefonte Art Museum has become a mighty force in the revitalization of Bellefonte, helping it to evolve into a destination town for many.



Curated artists
200

“Art can be a great way to rehabilitate a community, especially if it has historic properties.”

8k

Over 8,000 people visited the museum in 2018, including on Bellefonte First Sundays which see about 200-250 visitors each month



The Sundquist family enjoys an installation of works by artist Melinda Curley in one of the museum's galleries.



In recent years, the nonprofit has received funding from Centre Foundation's Giving Circle members to support both the annual Imagination Celebration and its Art of the Americas exhibit. The Bellefonte Art Museum also participates in Centre Gives, raising \$18,806 in 2018 and \$18,368 in 2019.

Additionally, the Bellefonte Art Museum established an endowment fund, the Bellefonte Art Museum for Centre County Fund, to celebrate the museum's 10th Anniversary in 2018. This fund supports the primary mission of the museum, which is to make the arts accessible to all.

Grant money that went to the Bellefonte Art Museum through Centre Gives, the Giving Circle, and endowment funds totaled \$21,806 in 2018.

"I'd really like to continue to build our endowment fund," says Patricia. "The museum has been doing so well; it needs to be saved for years to come." 🌱

Pedaling Towards Positive Change

*“There are a lot of dreams
about how good cycling can be.”*

The state law of Pennsylvania requires that motorists allow four feet between their vehicles and cyclists when passing. While this might sound like a simple task, modern technology is preventing some motorists from giving cyclists the space they need to remain safe.

“In newer vehicles, lane assist is a feature that gently tugs vehicles back into the driving lane if they begin to drift over the median,” says Tristan Avelis, President of CentreBike. “Although this feature helps drivers stay in their lane, there are obviously times when drivers need to go out of their lane.”

Understanding the implications of lane assist is just one of CentreBike’s many goals. Founded in 2000, CentreBike is a



Left to right: Paul Rito, Michele Chernega, Dana Miller, Tristan Avelis, and Jim Serene support local biking.

Bike lights donated by CentreBike to Centre County bicyclists

500

membership-based nonprofit that raises awareness of safety concerns, while also promoting cycling as a means of recreation and transportation.

“One of the biggest concerns we hear is that drivers can’t see cyclists in the dark,” says Paul Rito, Treasurer of CentreBike, “so in the last couple of years, we’ve given out more bike lights to combat this issue.”

CentreBike also partners with other local cycling organizations to help with events and initiatives.

“Along with Penns Valley Pedals & Pints, we organized and co-sponsored the first annual Ride of Silence,” says Tristan. “This is a really great event that commemorates those who have been injured or killed while cycling. The ride also brings attention to the fact that there are cyclists here in Centre County who do their best to follow the laws.”

Local townships and municipalities have been very supportive of CentreBike’s initiatives over the years and recognize that both motorists and cyclists share a dream of safe transportation for everyone.



The Centre Region has been awarded a bronze-level bike-friendly community award from 2012-2016 by the League of American Bicyclists.

49%

Percentage of Centre Region road mileage that is bicycle network

“There are a lot of dreams about how good cycling can be,” says Tristan. “You can go all the way through Bill Nye’s vision of having bicycling highways, or you can just make sure major roads have protected bike lanes. My dream is for Centre County to have a marked bike lane on almost every main road.”

Centre Foundation supports CentreBike’s initiatives with an endowment fund, the CentreBike Fund, which was established by anonymous donors in 2015 to help facilitate the vision of a more cycle-friendly community in the Centre Region.

CentreBike also participates in Centre Gives, raising \$2,122 in 2018 and \$2,848 in 2019.

Grant money that went to CentreBike through Centre Gives, endowment funds, and donor-advised funds totaled \$4,263 in 2018.

“We are so appreciative of the donors who established the CentreBike fund,” says Paul. “It has allowed us to concentrate on providing services and help to other cycling organizations that we couldn’t have handled financially before the endowment.” 🌱

OUR MISSION

To inspire and facilitate a culture of giving to create a vibrant community

Executive Director's Message

Change: it is an integral part of all stories. This magazine is full of stories about different people, different organizations, different areas, and different needs. But highlighted in each story is the power of change. Centre Foundation has been working for more than 35 years to inspire change that makes a positive impact in our lives and in our community.

The heart of that work in the community has always been the generosity of the people who live here. Within Centre Foundation, the heart of that work is our staff and board of directors. Each member of our staff and board embodies a passion for this place that we call home. Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." I am always inspired by her words, and I never doubt that the small group at the heart of Centre Foundation is a powerful force for positive change.

I hope these stories have given you a glimpse into our work and the joy we find in the changes that we make. We would love to help you create your own story of change.

Please join us in making Centre County a more vibrant community.

*Molly Kunkel
Executive Director, Centre Foundation*

Left to right: Centre Foundation staff members Carrie Ryan, Molly Kunkel, Kerry Tolton, Lauren Petrone, and Rachael Hartman stand next to 3 Dots, a vibrant downtown space that hosts artistic and innovative experiences and has been supported by the Centre Foundation.



Awards & Recognition

We are proud to share the accolades we have recently received, none of which would have been possible without the support of community members like you.



Centre Gives—Voted “Best Fundraising Event in State College” for five years in a row by *State College Magazine*



Voted one of Central Pennsylvania’s “Top 100 Organizations” for four years in a row by *Pennsylvania Business Central*



Centre Foundation has been accredited for having organizational and financial practices that are in compliance with the National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations.

Want to Get Involved?

Let’s collaborate; join us to make a greater impact in our community!

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On the cover: Anisha Prabhu is a violinist with the Nittany Valley Symphony and a local high school student.

On the back cover: Diana Stimmel is a violist with the Nittany Valley Symphony and a local professional.