

An aerial photograph of a large, historic stone building with two prominent towers. The building features Gothic-style architecture with arched windows and a central entrance. In the foreground, a paved walkway curves through a landscaped courtyard with various plants and trees. Two people are walking along the path. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. A large purple triangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text.

# Center for Community Solutions

West Chester University

**2020 - 2021  
Annual Report**



***“Neighbor is not a geographic term. It is a moral concept.”***

***– Joachim Prinz***

Emblematic of the University’s mission to develop graduates who succeed personally and professionally and contribute to the common good, the Office of External Relations works based upon the University’s role as an anchor institution within community and thus its moral responsibility to lead and serve its campus and broader community guided by sound ethical decision making and a genuine commitment to have a positive impact upon society and the lives of those who reside within it. The Center for Community Solutions (CCS), housed within the Office, is integral to the fulfillment of this aim.

CCS’ purpose is evident in its name, with the focus upon working to address community need through providing project-based, community-engaged learning experiences for students, enabling their applying knowledge and skills learned, and community partners value through achieving organizational goals and objectives with needed assistance at no cost to the community partners.

Community engagement is a *Pathways to Student Success* strategic plan priority area. To this end, the University earned the 2020 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, which is valid until 2026. The re-classification demonstrates the University’s sustained and strengthened community engagement through the dedicated service and leadership of its administration, faculty, staff, and students to help address community need. Furthermore, the newly-created Interdivisional Community Engagement Council reflects a recent charge for tri-chairperson leadership by University Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs to help coordinate, support, and lead the University’s community engagement institution-wide and achieve community engagement strategic plan goals. Thus, the CCS is central to informing, growing, and sustaining the University’s community engagement and leadership as an institutional priority and demonstrating the genuine commitment toward actualizing its public mission through serving as an anchor within community and meeting community need.

# Community Partners

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From July 2020 through June 2021, the Center for Community Solutions responded to 22 organizations' requests for assistance from WCU. We would like to thank these community partners for providing our students with the opportunity to expand their classroom experience and skills.

- ❖ A Child's Light
- ❖ Balanced Natural Skin Apothecary
- ❖ Chester County Association of Township Officials
- ❖ Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry
- ❖ City of Coatesville
- ❖ Delco Property Investors
- ❖ Delicate Designs by Amanda
- ❖ Dynamic Home Therapy
- ❖ Friends Association
- ❖ Go Green Cleaning Experts
- ❖ Greater West Chester Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Middletown Library Campaign
- ❖ Mother Compost
- ❖ Natural Lands
- ❖ Spire Broadcast Talent
- ❖ United Way of Chester County
- ❖ West Chester Business Improvement District
- ❖ West Chester Cooperative
- ❖ West Chester Fire Department
- ❖ West Chester Green Team
- ❖ West Whiteland Township
- ❖ YMCA of Greater Brandywine



# Project Highlights

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## Natural Lands

### **Maria Moressi, Research and Data Collection**

Natural Lands partnered with Maria Moressi in its goal to provide information about Tacony Park, the community, and its resources to guide park planning efforts to residents and stakeholders undertaken by the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership and Natural Lands. The project involved the development of a series of comprehensive, visual maps to communicate selected data and features of the park and its community.



## West Chester Business Improvement District

### **Emily Gowman, Graphic Information System Mapping**

The West Chester Business Improvement District (BID) partnered with Emily Gowman to identify and analyze business data within the Borough of West Chester. Emily mapped current property vacancies as well as properties for sale or lease in the Borough and worked to identify businesses interested in relocating to the District. Using Aeronautical Reconnaissance Coverage Geographic Information System (ArcGIS) technology, maps were created to fulfill the project objectives outlined by the BID.



## Mother Compost

### **Benjamin Naroden, Marketing and Social Media**

Mother Compost partnered with Benjamin Naroden to achieve cohesive branding across digital platforms, design content, and conduct social media campaigns. Benjamin contributed to the creation of mission statements and professional bios, pitched stories to the media, wrote social media content, and engaged in public relations activities.



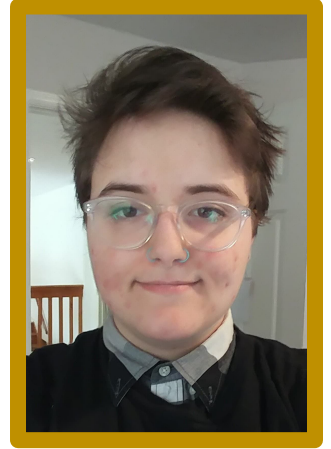
# Student Highlights

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## Maria Moressi

### December 2021, Accelerated Masters Program in Geography

Maria worked with **West Vincent Township** and the **Natural Lands Trust**. In 2019, Maria assisted West Vincent Township in converting historic files onto a digital platform. Stemming from that partnership, Maria collaborated with the Natural Lands Trust and Tookany/Tacony Frankford Watershed Partnership, Inc. on map creation for a Tacony Creek Park Philadelphia Master Plan. These maps will be a vital component toward clarifying and emphasizing the critical role of the Tacony Creek Park to the health and well-being of the local community.



## Emily Gowman

### May 2024, Marketing Major

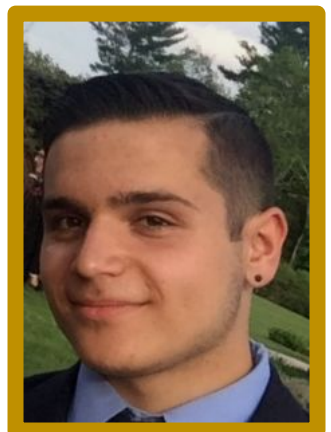
Emily recently completed her freshman year. She is a Marketing major and considering double majoring in Geography in the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) track. She served the **West Chester Business Improvement District (BID)** through GIS mapping, identifying current vacant properties and properties that are for lease or sale; she also worked to generate infographics highlighting the demographics and amenities offered by the Business Improvement District. Emily is truly passionate about the work that she does to benefit her community and help promote businesses.



## Benjamin Naroden

### May 2022, Communication Studies and Psychology Major

Benjamin has worked with **Mother Compost** and the **West Chester Friends Association for the Care and Protection of Children** through the CCS. He worked with the directors and teams of these organizations to publish digital media, host public events, and contribute to the mission and vision statements. His work in the areas of public relations and communications has supported these organizations' achievement of their goals and contributed to the betterment of the community.



# CCS Impact

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## Community Partner Feedback

“My objective with working with Kortni through the Center for Community Solutions intern program was to increase brand awareness for my natural skincare company by increasing my social media presence. Kortni has been invaluable in this effort. She has not only managed my social media marketing efforts, she has also taught me about analytics, the best times to post information, and has kept me updated on posting activity. Her efforts have allowed me to focus on formulating, manufacturing, and selling my products. I’ve enjoyed working with Kortni through this program.”

**Diann Pool, Natural Skin Apothecary**

“Being able to provide both Don and Grace minimal direction for the project of redevelopment in our Town Center and seeing what they came up with when presenting was great to see, providing a new perspective on ideas and options to the project area. Additionally, it helps that WCU Geography and Planning Department has skilled individuals to undertake a project such as this by researching and using a relatively new tool in ArcGIS Urban, showing its full potential.”

**Justin Smiley, West Whiteland Township**

## Student Partner Feedback

“Working with my partner went very smoothly. I enjoyed working at my own pace and sending him updates along the way. I enjoyed being matched with a project that was personal to my interests.”

**Dylan Martin, West Chester Fire Department Project**

“Working with Mother Compost through CCS provided me with a great opportunity to improve my professional skills, gain more professional experience, and help a business. Additionally, I got to learn a lot about the Main Line, a strong community close to WCU. Overall, CCS built a mutually beneficial connection between myself and a local business.”

**Benjamin Naroden, Mother Compost Project**

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# University Collaborations

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The Center for Community Solutions has collaborated with numerous departments and centers within the University, creating a network of mutually beneficial relationships in serving the community. The CCS team sincerely appreciates the collaboration of these entities in its mission to connect campus resources with community needs.



“As an office that manages external relationships with employers, the Twardowski Career Development Center values the relationship with the Center for Community Solutions. The ability to offer unique yet complementary solutions for employers looking to connect with students for meaningful projects and experiences is valuable. It's great to be able to seamlessly connect an employer with a variety of opportunities to engage the campus in partnership with the Center for Community Solutions.”

**Jennifer Rossi Long '05**

Senior Director, Twardowski Career Development Center



“At the core of both the personal missions [of the Center for Community Solutions and the Honors College] is student success, and we both believe collaborations and working together is the way to drive student success. My contributions include the HON 311 *Stewardship and Civic Engagement* and HON 490 *Capstone* courses as well as helping with the many Honors service projects. Our students only have four years to achieve their student learning outcomes and become part of the workforce. And they'll have their entire lives ahead of them to address the needs of the future and address positive social change needs in their communities. Experiencing community engagement projects, service-learning, and international travel help them realize they can be part of the solution for many local and global problems.”

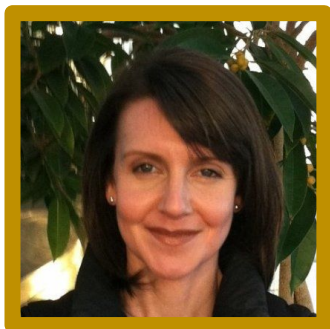
**Dr. Gerardina L. Martin**

Assistant Director, Honors College

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# Meet Our Team

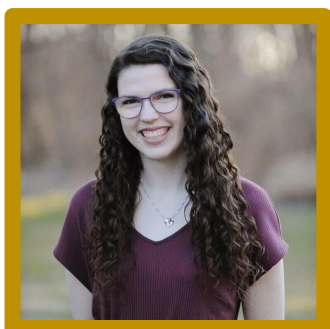
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## **Dr. Julie Dietrich**

### **CCS Director and Executive Director, Office of External Relations**

Dr. Julie L. Dietrich serves as the institution's primary government relations officer, cultivating and sustaining relationships with local, state, and federal elected officials and their offices, and a leading liaison within community. Through her position, Dr. Dietrich focuses upon executing strategic community and economic development as well as facilitating communication and negotiating partnerships among key leaders to help leverage and optimize the use of institutional assets and addressing community need.



## **Kristen Loughlin**

### **CCS Undergraduate Assistant**

Kristen is integral to the work and management of the Center for Community Solutions and interaction with and support of its community and student partners. She is a May 2021 graduate of West Chester University with majors in Early Grades Preparation and Special Education and a minor in Music and has been highlighted as an exemplar of student engagement and leadership through the Center.

## **Acknowledgement of Past CCS Team Members**

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### **Susan Argentieri**

*Spring 2016 - Fall 2020*

Susan served as the CCS Liaison and Graduate Center Event Manager. As an alumna and 30-year employee of West Chester University, her dedication to the wider campus mission and vision of the Center for Community Solutions was unparalleled. Susan established campus and community connections, enhanced existing partnerships, and provided innovative applications of WCU resources.

### **Jeanette Donahue**

*Summer 2019 - Spring 2021*

Jeanette provided administrative assistance to the Center for Community Solutions. She oversaw projects and related data, co-created website content, and contributed to the forging of new relationships between the community and University. Jeanette was a dedicated and valuable team member whose contributions enhanced the CCS's overall impact and achievement of its mission.

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# Connect With Us

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The West Chester University Center for Community Solutions serves as a link between the University and the community. For information on how you can partner with CCS, please contact the following:



[www.wcupa.edu/ccs](http://www.wcupa.edu/ccs)

[jdietrich@wcupa.edu](mailto:jdietrich@wcupa.edu)

610-436-3424

Dr. Julie Dietrich, CCS Director  
Kristen Loughlin, Undergraduate Assistant



The Center for Community Solutions serves the mission of West Chester University and the Division of University Affairs. University Affairs cultivates and maintains effective relationships with internal and external constituencies to enhance the overall visibility, reputation, and appreciation of West Chester University and its institutional priorities.

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