MONTHLY MUTUAL

THE DIGITAL SHORT REPORT

MUTUAL AID AND THE TIMEBANK BY LIZ CHAFFIN

Bring what you can, take what you need. It's your borough neighbors prioritizing each other, sharing what they know, sharing their time, and supporting the vulnerable in our community. It's hyper local. Instead of USD, you're exchanging time to make transformative change.

"***At its best, mutual aid actually produces new ways of living where people get to create systems of care and generosity that address harm and foster well-being.*** **~Dean Spade, author of Mutual Aid**

Phoenixville is already pretty good at this, with 80+ nonprofits operating in our area addressing all manner of causes. But what happens when the cause is endemic to the system we live in? Why does the number beside your name equate to the value you carry as a person and define what you can do in this life, define where you can live? There are more than 20,000 residents in Phoenixville - what could we do together for one another that is unachievable for most individuals and nuclear families acting alone?
This idea is disruption; it is foundational to mutual aid groups.
As more needs are met through sharing rather than buying, portions of economic activity move outside conventional markets.

F O R E X A M P L E

One lawn mower can serve 20 households, and neighbors can share power tools
One van can transport multiple families as neighbors share rides
One skilled electrician can help many neighbors
Parents can rotate childcare
Landlords use skill sharing networks to drop cost for renters
Food co-ops keep ingredients local and prevent Cyclosporiasis spread
(Looking at you, Taylor Farms.)

This is disruptive because it reduces reliance on large institutions as the sole providers of support. The scope of what this could be is scaled exponentially with every additional active member. You know who has been living this philosophy since 2004? ***The Phoenixville Time Bank.***

This group of plucky upstarts only wants to see their community grow instead of burn. They're looking to pass the mantle to a new generation of members, as with most groups, the pandemic changed member priorities, locations, and habits. "*Time banking is the philosophy that guides everything we do. It is built on a simple principle: everyone's time has equal value, and every person has something meaningful to offer.*" (*patimebank.org*)

It's difficult to build a community, just as much as it is to rebuild one. They've been around for 20 years, and we've been building PXV Mutual Aid for only 4 months. However, we have some similar issues: we're out here motivating Millennials and Gen Z to do the awkward thing and show up to a random space with strangers. It's inconvenient. It's offline. It can spark untold anxiety, but we're gathering for a common cause. We're energetic, welcoming, and a lil' awkward at first - just like you.

And that's how community starts, not with grand plans, but with conversations that grow into something bigger.
Sometimes this means meeting new people at Kung Fu Tea to plan a newsletter, only for the conversation to spiral into imagining whimsy boxes where people swap small trinkets simply to bring each other joy. Other times, it means being the youngest woman at the Time Bank's monthly potluck, discussing how to create a local rideshare, but a time based service instead of money. What are the insurance programs that are needed to make this possible? It's about filling gaps created by predatory car loans, surge pricing, and the lack of affordable local transportation. Can you imagine having to make an average social security paycheck of $2,092 work in this situation?
G e t o u t o f h e r e

If any of this resonates, join the Phoenixville Time Bank and bring your ideas to our monthly PXV Mutual Aid meetings at Rivertown the first Monday of every month.

PASS THE PLATE

Key Lime Pie

9” Graham cracker crust
28 oz sweetened condensed milk
1/2 cup sour cream
3/4 cup key lime juice using key limes (they’re not as large as standard limes and have a thinner, more yellowish green rind)
1 1/2 cups heavy whipping cream
1/2 cup powdered sugar
sprinkle of vanilla extract

Instructions Preheat the oven to 350° F. In a large bowl. Whisk together the condensed milk and sour cream by hand. Once smooth, add the lime juice. Whisk until smooth and thickened. Pour into the prepared pie crust. Bake for 6-7 minutes. Cool on the counter, then refrigerate for at least 4 hours.

Once ready to serve, beat the cream, powdered sugar, and the sprinkle of vanilla together until you get stiff peaks using a mixer or hand-held one. Top the pie with the whipped cream, and a full slice of lime at the center, then serve.



An early morning call for background actors had Mutual Aid memebers showing off their skillz when Rivertown Taps was featured on a morning news segment.



Our first *Basic Sewing and Repair Workshop* kicked off this month at Here and Now Crafts, where we learned to sew buttons, patches, and other simple repairs.

attention



Are you a renter in Phoenixville? Have you often wished you could share your experiences with someone so they don’t get stuck in the same run-down apartment you just left? Mutual Monthly is collecting stories to share with the community. We hope that by collecting the good, the bad, and the ugly about Phoenixville’s rentals, we can help inform community members about where to live and thrive in the borough. You can share your story anonymously, and we may feature it in the recurring Renter’s Story column of the Monthly Mutual starting in September.

Scan the QR code to submit your story!

Follow us on Instagram
@pxv_mutual_aid

PXV MUTUAL AID

AUGUST EVENTS AT A GLANCE

8/1 National Night Out | Meet your local first responders 6-9 pm @ the Rec Center

8/3 Mutual Aid General Meeting | 7 pm @ the Rivertown Taps

8/9 PXV Photo Walk | 9:30 am @ the Phoenixville Wheel!

8/10 Family Dinner | 7 pm @ Reservoir Park Pavilion

8/20 Jazz Night | (*every 3rd Friday*) 7-10 pm @ The Fenix featuring *The Pio Trio*

8/29 Phoenixville Punk Rock Flea Market | 11 Year Anniversary 11AM-6PM @ Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, ticketed. Learn more by visiting the Expo Center website.

Float Friday | Every Friday 5 pm to sunset. Meet @ Lock 60 Schuylkill River [BYO Float]

SEPTEMBER

9/7 Mutual Aid General Meeting | 7 pm @ the Rivertown Taps

9/19 Greenixville - 15th Annual Green Earth Festival 9AM-12PM @ Phoenixville Farmer's Market

9/27 Citizen Advocacy Spaghetti Dinner | 4-7PM @ Royersford Baptist Church, *ticketed*

If you're looking for even more Phoenixville events, check out Phoenixville Curated - a weekly snapshot of borough events. Visit their website and sign up for their newsletter: *phoenixvillecurated.com*

Do you have a local event you want to feature? Share it for the next Monthly Mutual: monthlymutualpxv@proton.me

AUGUST CHALLENGE
Find a local event to attend!
Share when and where to meet in the Discord, and meet up with some new neighbors.

family dinners









Pull up a chair! Our Family Dinners are off to a wonderful start, bringing neighbors together over food and conversation. We're looking forward to opening our table to more community members in the coming months. Whether you're coming for the meal, the company, or both, there's always room for one more.

