

Downingtown Area Historical Society

Strategic Plan

The Downingtown Area Historical Society's Strategic Plan will help our organization function more efficiently and achieve our stated mission by working to set our goals, examine our paths set to achieve our goals and setting a measurement to track our accomplishments. Our strategic plan will allow our organization to react better to opportunities and hopefully predict needs before they occur.

Our Mission

The mission of the Downingtown Area Historical Society is to keep history alive for current and future generations by recording, preserving, interpreting and promoting the rich history of the Downingtown area. Our goal is to preserve and protect one of the earliest and most significant structures in Chester County for use as a local history museum, research center, historical education facility, a place for community events, and a permanent home for the Downingtown Area Historical Society.

Specific Goals and Actions

The goals of the Downingtown Area Historical Society are-

Goal #1-To provide a safe environment and proper care for all of our collections.

Action #1 Continue to use the best archival methods for dealing with textiles, documents and photographs. In addition to storing them in special, acid-free boxes, a permanent record, either by photograph or scan, needs to be part of the accessioning process.

Success Measurement # 1—Periodically check the boxes and what is in them, to make sure nothing is deteriorating or that humidity has entered into our specially designed room. Also, checks should be made on random items to ensure that items can be retrieved easily, if required to do so.

Action # 1a —Continue to build the clipping files, which encompasses a family data base, comprised of 33,000 news articles on over 11,000 families, along with our topic files (articles on schools, churches, businesses, organizations, athletic teams and scout troops), currently numbering over 3500 cards. Both indices are currently available online on our website.

Success Measurement #1a—currently, several internal groups have been established to access information for these files, as well as provide the labor for building the files. Success will be

determined by interest shown from the public, measured by inquiries received, as well as sustained interest by those working on these files. We can examine on a yearly basis how this number has grown.

Goal #2-To build programs and increase public awareness.

Action #1- Continue and grow the Hist-O-Gram , an online newsletter sent weekly to about 1,000 subscribers, who are a combination of local readers and those who have moved out of Chester County, but wish to stay connected. The Hist-O-Gram is a marketing tool, which supports fundraising campaigns and membership drives.

Annual Restaurant Raffle with a focus on restaurants located in historical locations in Chester County.

Sunday clipping session of newspaper articles that will be archived

Additional monthly Tuesday evening clipping session of newspaper articles that will be archived

Presence at community events such as Good Neighbor Day, Fall Fest, and East Brandywine Community Day

Success Measurement #2- Examine if we have added programs and if attendance/participation has increased.

Goal #3-To implement an emergency plan and train all volunteers as to how to carry it out.

Action #3- Design an emergency plan and call list. We will conduct a program for all volunteers on how to carry out our plan.

Success Measurement #3- Yearly review of our plan. Create a log of all volunteers and review that they understand the plan.

Goal #4-To continue to upgrade technology

Action #4- Create a list of future needs for our technology, including but not limited to: software, computers, security and photography.

Success Measurement #4- Yearly review of the list of technology upgrades

Goal #5-To build the board of directors so that we can form committees that can increase our programs.

Action #5- Actively pursue and engage those that may desire to serve on our board of directors

Success Measurement #5- Review our board of directors and committees

Goal #6-To preserve the Ashbridge House

Action #6- Create a list of preservation work, including financial estimates by qualified contractors, that need to be accomplished to continue to preserve Ashbridge House

Success Measurement #6- Yearly evaluation and prioritization of work need to continue to preserve Ashbridge House

Potential Obstacles

The largest obstacle that may occur in the achievement of our strategic plan is the lack of resources that are available. Needed resources can be broken into two main categories:

Financial

Human