

Dignity & Hope

Domenica Foundation 2022 annual report

Book arks all over Camden!



In 2022, we connected one of our newest grantees with one of our oldest to bring free books to low-income Camden-area communities.

The new grantee, Camden County Pop Up Library (CCPUL), not only brings temporary libraries to community hubs but also creates “book arks.” These wooden structures, typically decorated by community artists, bring free books to neighborhoods that don’t have public libraries.

Children from our longstanding grantee Catholic Partnership Schools (CPS) are the community artists for four of the ten book arks we funded.

All CCPUL books are donated. Our grant included purchase of Spanish-language titles, which are in high demand but low supply.

We love bringing our partners together to improve the quality of life for underserved communities!

Top: Tom Martin (far right), founder and director of CCPUL, delivered a “blank” book ark to St. Cecilia School in March. Bottom left: Tina helped design the Sacred Heart School book ark. Bottom right: CPS children filled the arks with books for other children to enjoy.



Domenica Scholarships

In 2022, we provided four-year scholarships to 18 rising ninth graders. The 10 students pictured here are now attending Camden Catholic High School. Scholarships are the backbone of our efforts to improve quality of life for Camden residents. More than 350 students have attended local Catholic high schools as Domenica Scholars.

Right: Nannsi Villa was one of 20 Domenica Scholars who graduated from four local high schools in 2022. She now attends Saint Joseph's University. Far right: We keep track of our Domenica Scholars after high school graduation! Jada Cordero, Domenica Scholar class of 2018, graduated from William Paterson University in May and is headed to law school.



Where we came from

PEPE PIPERNO, President

I grew up in Camden, where my parents settled when they immigrated from Italy. In those days, Camden was a vibrant city where people looked after each other.

My mother, Domenica, instilled the Italian value of *dovere* in her family. *Dovere*, literally “duty,” means being responsible for other people’s wellbeing and respecting their dignity.

I have been blessed with a strong family, health, guidance from caring mentors, and good fortune. Many

people in Camden today don’t have the same opportunities. I founded the Domenica Foundation to help grassroots community organizations open doors so people can thrive.

My family and I have been inspired by the activism and advocacy of Fr. Robert McDermott of St. Joseph’s Pro Cathedral and Fr. Michael Doyle of Sacred Heart Church. We mourn the loss of Fr. Michael, who died in November 2022—even as we continue to follow his example of compassion for all.

Pepe

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Dignity & Hope is our annual report to our friends and supporters.

JAN GALLAGHER

editor



Left: This is me with my mom at the groundbreaking for my company's corporate headquarters in 1990. Middle: My chats with Fr. Doyle (may he rest in peace) kept the Domenica Foundation grounded in the needs and aspirations of Camden's citizens. Right: Here I am surrounded by the future, also known as the rising Domenica Scholars of 2023.

Where we're going

ELENA PIPERNO, Director

When I was only six years old, I helped my dad deliver baskets of food to Sacred Heart Church at Christmastime. *Dovere*, responsibility to others, runs strong in my family!

Sometimes the Domenica Foundation provides an infusion of capital for a short-term need. For example, we helped LUCY Outreach build its new youth center, which opened in 2022.

Most of the time, we commit to community partners for the long term. We've been partnering with LUCY for years—and now that they have a new youth center to staff, they need us more than ever! We still support delivery of Christmas baskets to families in need. We still provide scholarships to Catholic schools, just as we've done for nearly 15 years.

And we still look for new community partners, new ways to serve existing partners, and new ways to bring partners together, as you'll see throughout this report!

Elena

Left: Christmas baskets were a tangible example of *dovere* for six-year-old me. Middle: Me and my Nonna, Domenica, circa 1995. Right: Our first ever social outing with high school Domenica Scholars was a Phillies game. So much fun!



Music teaches discipline & resilience

Playing an instrument is *hard*. You don't just pick up a violin or a saxophone and play a tune. It can take weeks to make any sound at all and months to make anything that sounds like music. Getting to "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" is a big accomplishment!

Learning to make music builds discipline, tenacity, and resilience. Playing in an ensemble teaches collaboration.

Those benefits are why the Domenica Foundation supports the instrumental music program in Catholic Partnership Schools, led by Symphony in C. Children in this program learn 21st century skills that help them in school and in life.

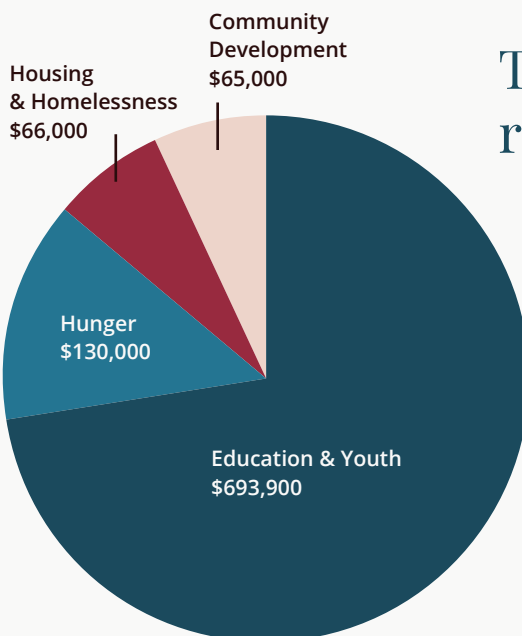
Some also discover a passion for music. Children who want to continue learning can participate in Symphony in C's youth summer camp, with scholarship support from the Domenica Foundation if they need it. That's music to our ears!



Impact 2022

The Domenica Foundation funds South Jersey programs in four impact areas. In 2022, we provided \$954,900 in funding to 18 community organizations. The bulk of our funding goes to education and youth initiatives, including Domenica Scholarships for high school students.

We are so grateful for our friends and supporters! Thank you for your care for Camden and South Jersey residents.



There's always room for more!

The Domenica Foundation is always on the lookout for new grantees. We fund grassroots organizations in the four areas shown in the pie chart.

Check out our grant philosophy at www.DomenicaFoundation.org/grants to see if your organization is a good fit!

Food for needy neighbors

Our newest grantee is Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Center food pantry. Every third Wednesday of the month, the pantry serves more than 250 families, averaging more than 11,000 pounds of food per month. Our support pays for truck rental and equipment such as dollies and reusable grocery bags.



In November, the center used our funding on a new freezer.

LUCY Outreach opens new youth center

We were thrilled to attend the grand opening of the new LUCY Outreach youth center in October. We have committed \$500,000 over five years to help fund LUCY's expansion. The new center will double LUCY's capacity to, in the words of its mission statement, "empower youth to form healthy relationships, make good choices, and develop into compassionate and socially responsible adults."



"The Steps" in the new youth center recall LUCY's beginnings, when participants met on the steps of St. Joseph's Pro-Cathedral School.



At the launch event, we met up with former Domenica Scholars and with LUCY Executive Director Kristin Prinn.

Other highlights of 2022



Fun trips to a bowling alley and a Phillies game (page 2) helped Domenica Scholars bond as a cohort of high-achieving youth.



Elena helped judge Cathedral Kitchen's pasta competition. We are long-term supporters of CK's job training and meals programs.



We took high school Domenica Scholars on a tour of Rowan University. Most students are the first in their family to aim for higher education. Being on campus helps them envision themselves as college students.

In December, we organized a coat drive for Joseph's House, which provides accommodation and support to unhoused persons, and Heart of Camden, which supports housing development and other improvements in the Waterfront South section of Camden.



Each year, Domenica Foundation sponsors gifts for the teens in Guadalupe Family Services programs. Pepe, our Chief Elf Officer, was joined by his wife Peggy and the Piperno grandkids to pick and wrap the presents.

COMING IN 2023

What's coming up in 2023? Every moment is an adventure. Here are some things we're planning:

- The relaunch of Spring into Action, our annual volunteer day. Covid got in the way, but now we're preparing to involve volunteers in projects led by our community partners. Plan now to join us on April 22!
- Spring trips with high school Domenica Scholars to two local colleges or universities.
- At least one fun outing with current Domenica Scholars like our Phillies and bowling events. A beach trip? Rock climbing? Stay tuned!