

Vizo Financial will “Love the Hill” on the Day of Service

By Jeanne Heath, Director of Cultural Engagement & Learning, Middletown Campus

As we get ready to participate in Vizo Financial’s annual Day of Service, we are highlighting one of our volunteer organizations, Wildheart Ministries-Love The Hill, an organization that is located in the heart of Allison Hill, a disadvantaged neighborhood within Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Allison Hill, also known as “The Hill” was named after William Allison, an early Harrisburg landowner who owned farms on the outskirts of Harrisburg city. As of 2020, 16,917 people were living in Allison Hill. The many cultures represented in Allison Hill include West African, Vietnamese, Indonesian, diverse Latin American, African-American, and European-American populations. The Hill is home to many businesspeople, artists, and social justice and community activists.



The mission of Wildheart is building bridges to transform communities. They do this through valuing honor, hope, and sustainability and practically through trash clean up days, quarterly block parties, urban farming and housing redevelopment. Wildheart is an organization that does what others aren’t willing to do. They transform communities in sustainable ways by focusing on building relationships, defining root-causes to communities’ issues and offering significance to all.



Since 2017, when the organization was started, Wildheart has impacted Allison Hill in the following ways:

- Gathering 3,683 volunteers who invested 51,528 hours towards “Loving The Hill.”
- Removing 2.4 million pounds of trash from a 90 block radius, impacting over 1,836 properties and reducing violent crime by 50%.
- Securing 118 abandoned structures.

Wildheart is also partnering with the Harrisburg School District (who own the farm property) to revive The Joshua Farm, an urban farm in the heart of the city. They hope to use the farm to further serve the community by addressing food insecurity, agricultural training and entrepreneurship. They believe the farm

will be able to meet some of the practical needs of the community and work towards addressing the root concerns affecting the health of the community.

Housing redevelopment is also important to Wildheart Ministries. Within one square mile of Allison Hill, there are over 800 abandoned/vacant properties which serve to promote the decline of the community. With suitable and affordable housing at an all time low, Wildheart is committed to addressing the need to preserve the identity and opportunity that Allison Hill needs to live, work, and thrive. This may incorporate rehabilitation of homes and businesses as well as promoting new construction as well.

How can you help Wildheart “Love the Hill”?

1. Sign up to volunteer with Wildheart during our 2023 Day of Service, or another time during the year.
2. Learn more about the work of Wildheart Ministries by checking out their website, <https://www.wildheartministries.net/> or watching this short video <https://youtu.be/8ojTXdOults>
3. Consider becoming a Love The Hill Advocate by donating \$25 a month to support the organization.

Looking to be of service, consider loving The Hill!

