Millions of dollars for parks

Perhaps the most visible impact of the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation has been the creation and expansion of parks in Pottstown and the surrounding region.

The Foundation has invested about $650,000 in Pottstown’s parks, including a master site plan for Memorial Park, which has leveraged about $3.7 million in state and county funding. Improvements include the Fountain of Youth Spray Park, reorienting the baseball fields, a pedestrian path along the Manatawny Creek, a new pedestrian bridge at Riverfront Park, and a pavilion.

The Foundation has also contributed nearly $500,000 to the Schuylkill River Greenway Association.

In 2010, the Foundation paid for a study by Penn State outlining how area municipalities could employ a “circuit rider” to coordinate regional recreation efforts and seek grant funding. Justin Keller, now Pottstown’s borough manager, was the first circuit rider to be hired.

Many surrounding townships have also received funding for parks and trails, including a pedestrian trail in Upper Pottsgrove, a trail and pedestrian bridge in North Coventry, basketball courts in North Coventry, playground improvements in Lower Pottsgrove and Limerick, a pedestrian bridge over the Manatawny Creek in West Pottsgrove, a soccer field in New Hanover, and parks in East Vincent and Douglass.

The Foundation also funded a trail design in the Hopewell Big Woods in Berks and Chester counties by the Natural Lands.

LEVERAGING MILLIONS FOR PARKS — The Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation has donated more than $1 million for parks in Pottstown and the surrounding area, and leveraged millions more in grants from the state and county governments. Top, the Fountain of Youth Spray Park in Memorial Park. Above, Riverfront Park in Pottstown. Below, a portion of the Schuylkill Greenway from Pottstown to Douglassville.