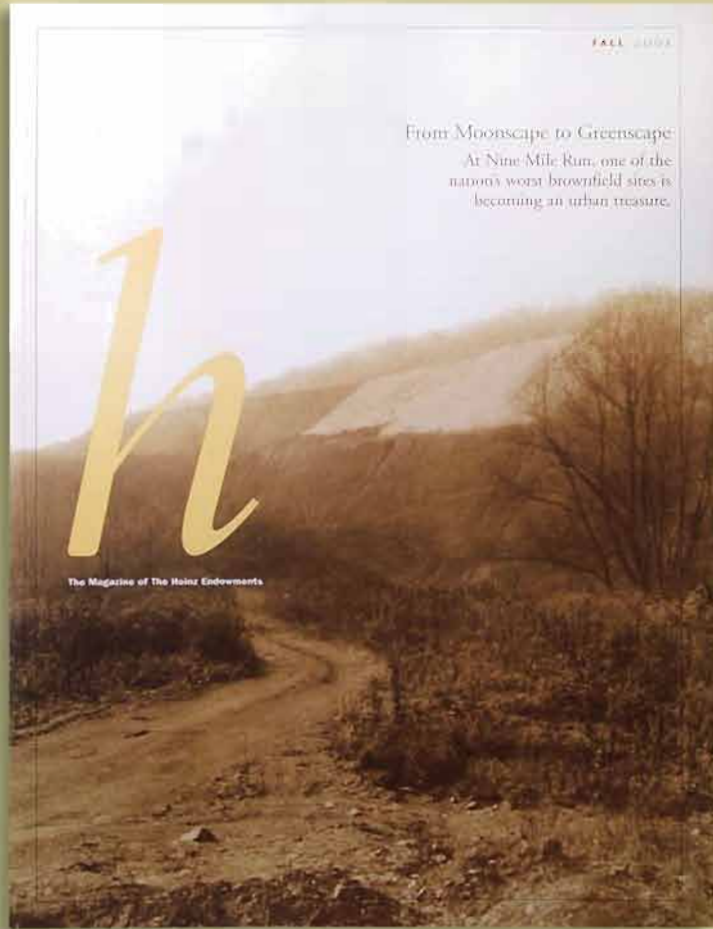


FALL 2009

From Moonscape to Greenscape
At Nine Mile Run, one of the
nation's worst brownfield sites is
becoming an urban treasure.

h

The Magazine of The Heinz Endowments



message



*By Teresa Heinz
Chairman, The Heinz Endowments*

In the fall of 2001, after a series of discussions about the need to share what we were learning from our philanthropic work, we at the Endowments created a quarterly magazine. The hope was that, as a regular publication, *h* would ensure a steady stream of instructive storytelling about what we were doing well in the Pittsburgh region and what we were doing less well.

At that time in the world of philanthropy, this idea was an outlier. The notion that a regional foundation would commit resources to report on its grant making was just beginning to gain currency. Many in the sector continued to cling to the old comfort line that good grant making speaks for itself and bad grant making does not speak at all. Foundations that reached out to explain strategies and decisions on grants were risking public reaction—even, God forbid, public accountability.

For us, these were exactly the outcomes we hoped to encourage. Now, against the backdrop of a decade's worth of letters, emails, mainstream news reporting, and community actions generated from the scores of in-depth stories and hundreds of compelling photographs presented in *h*, I believe we are achieving our goals. There is greater public understanding of our increasingly complex work and, as a result, deeper involvement from community partners. The increased interaction also reminds us that some of the best ideas for improving quality of life in communities come from the communities themselves.

Inside the philanthropic sector, I believe that *h* and the Endowments' website, with an impressive list of awards from national philanthropy and regional journalism competitions, have served as models of what foundations stand to gain when they report on their actions and commit to other acts of transparency that demystify grant-making decisions.

For all these reasons, the creation of *h* was an important growth milestone in the life of the Endowments. It also stands as an intensely personal marker for me.

As the inaugural issue was being readied for printing, the terrorist attacks of September 11 shook the world. I wrote in that first message about the memorial service in Massachusetts that my husband, John Kerry, and I attended for one of the airline pilots killed in the attacks. I watched in awe as the captain's widow, an incredibly brave woman, her

teenage daughters at her side, shared tears and smiles and hugs with a line of people that to her in her fatigue and heartbreak must have seemed to stretch forever.

We had never met before, but she recognized me. "Thank you so much for coming," she said, "because I know you understand."

Pain is intensely personal, and I didn't want to suggest otherwise. Certainly the scale of the attacks that took her husband, of what happened to him and to our nation on September 11, was—and we pray will remain—utterly unique. But yes, that soul-wrenching sense of sudden, irrevocable loss, the anguished private face of public tragedy, I understood.

Twenty years ago, on April 4, 1991, my late husband, John Heinz, was on his way to Philadelphia to conduct a hearing into allegations of fraud and abuse in the nation's nursing homes. He never made it. For reasons that can be explained but never truly understood, the plane in which he was a passenger collided with a helicopter in midair. For all of us who lost people we loved that day, and for others who were injured, the world changed forever in that moment.

In the years since these two searing events—one a personal tragedy that rippled through the country, the other a national calamity that sent shockwaves through the world—I have been reminded time and again about the recurring value of storytelling. It helps us memorialize what we have lost, celebrate what we hold dear and learn from both so that we can be better at what we do going forward.

In his final public statement as chairman of the Endowments, my late husband wrote of a new commitment to use southwestern Pennsylvania as a "laboratory" for developing solutions to problems that are national in scope. He argued that foundations, in addition to being engines of opportunity,



Lyra Nackle, 2, of Atlanta, is a testament to the enduring truth that life goes on as she walks past the Flight 93 National Memorial's Wall of Names outside Shanksville, Pa. The wall bears the name of her uncle, Louis J. "Joey" Nackle II, who died on United Flight 93. With her family, Lyra attended September ceremonies that commemorated the 10th anniversary of the 2001 terrorist strikes.

Just a few weeks after the September 11 attacks, I wrote in the inaugural issue of *h* about people in our region hungering for insights into how to build stronger communities. It was clear that the post-9/11 unifying spirit had inspired people to take maximum advantage of even the smallest opportunities.

also must be engines of learning. He believed that, by documenting and sharing the lessons they learn, foundations could greatly enhance their benefits and extend their reach.

This magazine, along with many new platforms for our grantees to tell their own stories, continues to bring life to that commitment.

In this special issue, we set aside space to explore how the Endowments' storytelling has evolved in response to the past decade's significant changes in communications practices. It is more complex work, but the potential benefits make it worth the effort.

It is important to note that, in the same issue that marks the magazine's anniversary, we continue with the storytelling: a report on the triumphs and challenges of the Endowments' years-long collaborations with the William Penn Foundation of Philadelphia; a feature about an arts education and mentoring program that uses hip-hop as a tool to teach and empower youth; an exploration of the growing numbers of sustainability coordinators working in the region; and a brief report on the September 11 dedication of the first phase of the Flight 93 Memorial in rural southwestern Pennsylvania.

It is this last one that may be most revealing about the power of storytelling. The families and friends of loved ones lost in the attacks on the World Trade Center towers in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and in the plane that crashed into a windswept field in Shanksville,

Somerset County, know the importance of reserving space to honor, reflect and learn. But they also know better than most of us that this is not a space in which to dwell.

“Life does go on, doesn’t it?” I remember the pilot’s widow saying to me in the receiving line of that funeral 10 years ago. It was more a statement than a question as she glanced meaningfully at her daughters. “Yes,” I nodded weeping, and we embraced. The lives go on, and the stories about them must go on as well.

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We in philanthropy have a special duty to do this, since we are in a privileged position to help build communities. We can demonstrate the value of working together to invest in a promising venture or in solving an intractable problem. We can champion the best new ideas that affirm the human spirit and also challenge practices that diminish it. I firmly believe that these stories—whether printed, broadcast, blogged, texted or tweeted—are the strongest weapons we have to counter the ignorance and inhumanity that breeds terrorism.

Just a few weeks after the September 11 attacks, I wrote in the inaugural issue of *h* about people in our region hungering for insights into how to build stronger communities. It was clear that the post-9/11 unifying spirit had inspired people to take maximum advantage of even the smallest opportunities. That spirit may have dissipated nationally, but I believe it is still strong in our region today.

It is with profound respect for that quality, and with equally profound humility, that we re-commit our storytelling to the cause of learning that provides opportunity and builds life-affirming communities. *h*