

# here & there

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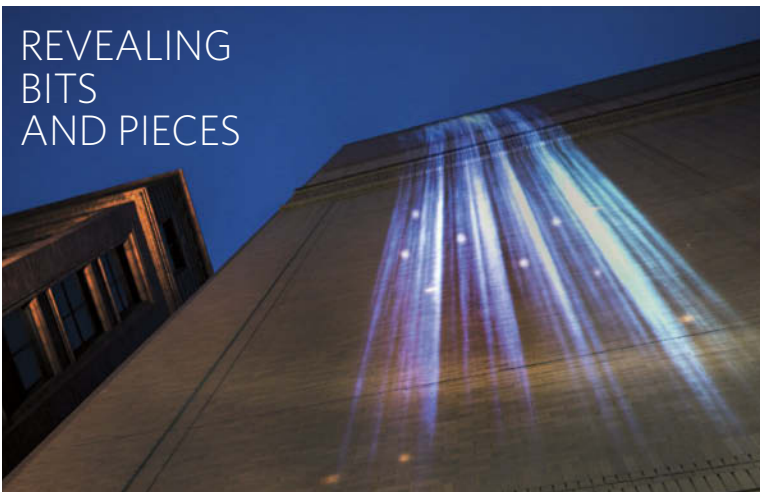


Johnny Crawford

## INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

The Heinz Endowments has pledged \$9 million in new early education funding over two years as part of the national Invest in US campaign. President Barack Obama announced the initiative in December and urged business leaders, philanthropists, advocates and public officials to build a better nation through high-quality early childhood programs for children from birth to age five. The Endowments is among the nearly 40 foundations, nonprofits and corporations that have made significant commitments in support of the campaign, which has been organized by the First Five Years Fund and its philanthropic partners. In recognition of the Endowments' groundbreaking work in early childhood development over the past 20 years, Marge Petruska, senior program director for Children, Youth & Families, was invited to participate in the White House summit launching the initiative.

## REVEALING BITS AND PIECES



Scott Goldsmith

With support from a \$50,000 grant from The Heinz Endowments' Environment Program, Pittsburgh's Office of Public Art recently brought "Particle Falls" to the city's Downtown. The art installation by digital-media pioneer Andrea Polli was projected on the façade of the Benedum Center as a large-scale, real-time visualization of air-quality data, which appeared to rush down the building's exterior like a waterfall. "Particle Falls," which has been in several cities across the world, was displayed in Pittsburgh from Nov. 17 through Jan. 2.

Jen Saffron



**Small arts, big impact** More than 120 Pittsburgh artists, arts organization leaders and arts supporters gathered in October at the Hill House Association's Kaufmann Center for "Celebrating the Unsung Majority in the Pittsburgh Arts Community," which focused on ways to promote the importance of small and mid-sized arts organizations in enriching the region's cultural fabric. The one-day event was sponsored by The Heinz Endowments and The Pittsburgh Foundation, and included discussion sessions revolving around "The Unsung Majority," a study that looks at the growth, contributions, challenges and artistic evolution of arts organizations with budgets under \$1.5 million. The research was conducted by Boston-based TDC—Technical Development Corporation—a nonprofit consulting and research group. The study was commissioned by a consortium of small arts funders, which included the

Endowments, The Pittsburgh Foundation, the Allegheny Regional Asset District and the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council.

## AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN AND BOYS

**Making stronger connections** About 50 nonprofit leaders who head programs that work with African American males in the Pittsburgh region met with representatives of the Institute for Black Male Achievement in October to learn more about connecting with each other locally and with similar organizations in other parts of the country. The Endowments' African American Men and Boys Task Force co-sponsored the event with the institute, which is a national membership network that provides guidance and support to leaders and organizations committed to improving the life outcomes of black men and boys through systemic change.

**Better life lessons** Also in October, about 150 educators and policy leaders gathered at the University of Pittsburgh for the education summit "Are Academics Enough?" to discuss promising strategies for helping black males develop nonacademic skills that can bolster success in learning and life. The event was co-sponsored by The Heinz Endowments' African American Men and Boys Task Force and Pitt's School of Social Work and Center on Race and Social Problems. Keynote speaker Howard Fuller described how individual grit, self-efficacy and resilience contribute to transformational learning. A nationally recognized education-reform advocate, Fuller is an education professor at Marquette University in Milwaukee and founder/director of its Institute for the Transformation of Learning. He is known for participating in Black Power and African Liberation movements in the 1960s and 1970s as well as for instituting a controversial private school voucher system while serving as superintendent of the Milwaukee Public Schools in the 1990s.



Renee Rosensteel

## STAFF AWARDS

Carmen Anderson, an Endowments Children, Youth & Families senior program officer, and Melanie Brown, the foundation's Education program officer, have each been honored recently for the positive impact they have made on the Pittsburgh region.

Brown was selected as one of 2014's "40 Under 40," a recognition program sponsored by Pittsburgh Magazine and PUMP — the Pittsburgh Urban Magnet Project — to celebrate young leaders who are making a positive difference in Pittsburgh. Anderson was chosen by the New Pittsburgh Courier as one of 50 Women of Excellence, which recognizes local African American women for their contributions to the community.



## STUDIES, FINDINGS AND OUTCOMES

**Air and autism** A Heinz Endowments-funded study by the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health has found that children with autism spectrum disorders are more likely to have been exposed to higher levels of certain air toxics during their mothers' pregnancies and their first two years of life than youngsters without the condition. Children from southwestern Pennsylvania who participated in the study were born between 2005 and 2009 and lived in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Washington and Westmoreland counties. Because little research had been done previously on the connection between air toxics and autism spectrum disorders, Pitt scientists report that more study needs to be conducted.

**Parent power** Another Endowments-supported study, this one conducted by Brown University's Annenberg Institute for School Reform, determined that there has been little community-based work aimed at empowering Pittsburgh parents to have more of a say in what they want in their children's schools. In response to the findings, the Endowments is investing nearly \$585,000 in efforts by 10 competitively selected community groups to train and organize parents to advocate on behalf of their children's education. The organizations will be working with Annenberg to boost parent engagement in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

**Summer learning scores** The Pittsburgh Public Schools has received some good news about its Summer Dreamers Academy, which was among five summer learning and enrichment initiatives evaluated by the RAND Corp. Funded by the New York-based Wallace Foundation, the study found that the 5,600 students who attended the summer programs, most of whom came from low-income families, noticeably improved in math. And of the five districts studied, Pittsburgh students performed the best. The results did not indicate an immediate impact on reading.

Pittsburgh school officials used federal stimulus funds in 2009 to launch Summer Dreamers, which has received support from The Heinz Endowments over the past six years, including a \$300,000 grant for this year's program. In 2011, Pittsburgh and the other four districts in the study — Boston; Dallas; Duval County, Fla.; and Rochester, N.Y. — received funding from the Wallace Foundation as part of its six-year National Summer Learning Project. Release of the RAND results followed a national survey by the Grantmakers for Education's Out-of-School Time Funder Network, which found that, for philanthropies, practitioners, researchers, educators and advocates, the four most desired outcomes for out-of-school-time funding were improved academic achievement, increased student engagement, positive youth development, and 21st-century skill building. The Endowments is a member of the network and GFE.