

# h

THE MAGAZINE OF  
THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS

Special Issue:

A COMMUNITY OF WE >



ISSUE 2 2017

# INSIDE

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## WE THINKERS, ADVOCATES, EDUCATORS, GAME CHANGERS

In a nation divided, it's easy to complain about conditions that are keeping us apart. It's harder to offer solutions while acknowledging the problems, and harder still to demonstrate how to heal rifts rather than just talking about the importance of doing so. In this special issue of *h* magazine, 29 Pittsburgh-area leaders describe how their work tries to build what we're calling "a community of we," a place where unity, respect and justice are priorities, and all have the chance to live to their fullest potential.

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The Heinz Endowments was formed from the Howard Heinz Endowment, established in 1941, and the Vira I. Heinz Endowment, established in 1986. It is the product of a deep family commitment to community and the common good that began with H.J. Heinz, and that continues to this day.

The Endowments is based in Pittsburgh, where we use our region as a laboratory for the development of solutions to challenges that are national in scope. Although the majority of our giving is concentrated within southwestern Pennsylvania, we work wherever necessary, including statewide and nationally, to fulfill our mission.

That mission is to help our region become a just and equitable community in which all of its citizens thrive economically, ecologically, educationally, socially and culturally. We also seek to advance knowledge and practice in the field of philanthropy through strategies that focus on our priorities of Creativity, Learning and Sustainability.

In life, Howard Heinz and Vira I. Heinz set high expectations for their philanthropy. Today, the Endowments is committed to doing the same. Our charge is to be diligent, thoughtful and creative in continually working to set new standards of philanthropic excellence. Recognizing that none of our work would be possible without a sound financial base, we also are committed to preserving and enhancing the Endowments' assets through prudent investment management.

**h magazine** is a publication of The Heinz Endowments. At the Endowments, we are committed to promoting learning in philanthropy and in the specific fields represented by our grantmaking programs. As an expression of that commitment, this publication is intended to share information about significant lessons and insights we are deriving from our work.

**Editorial team** Linda Braund, John Ellis, Donna Evans Sebastian, Carmen Lee, Grant Oliphant, Scott Roller, Courtney Tolmer. Design: Landesberg Design

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**About the cover** This special issue of *h* features the voices of people in the Pittsburgh region whose organizations or initiatives are trying to make our community more inclusive. Their experiences may differ, but they share the goal of wanting to create a more just and equitable society. The individuals on the cover are among those interviewed about how to foster this "community of we": (from left) Hamza Perez, Jocelyn Horner, Mila Sanina, Michaela Diallo, Junlei Li and H. Richard Milner IV.



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### WHO DO WE MEAN BY “WE”? AN ESSAY BY GRANT OLIPHANT

Heinz Endowments President Grant Oliphant identifies two narratives that offer different visions of the meaning of “we.” One is a story of siege and fear. The other, conveyed by those interviewed for this issue of h, is a message of community and hope.

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### THE ROAD TO WE: AN ESSAY BY ANGELA GLOVER BLACKWELL

As founder and CEO of PolicyLink, a national research and advocacy organization focused on economic and social equity, Angela Glover Blackwell has extensive experience in promoting practices and policies aimed at creating a more just society. In her essay, Ms. Blackwell details how equitable development is one way to help achieve this goal.

Essay: Grant Oliphant, PRESIDENT, THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS

# WHO DO WE MEAN

# BY “WE”?

When you come right down to it, that is the defining question of our times. When the history of this era is written, it will turn on how we answer this fundamental question: Who is inside our circle of caring, and who is excluded? Who really matters?

There are two narratives battling in America today to become the answer to that question. We think of them as political, but really they are archetypal.

One is the narrative of the siege. This storyline tells us that there is only so much dignity, opportunity and hope to go around. It positions us at the center of a pitched battle in which we and everything we care about are under attack by hostile forces whose only goal is to destroy and rob us of what is rightfully ours.

Every fable has its metaphor, and in this dark tale, it is a wall. We erect barriers to keep the invaders at bay and then turn on each other to root out the “otherness” already inside. In this narrative, we have already defined “we” too broadly, already invited in too much change. The logic of the siege tells us to shut it down and root it out, to revert to what is comfortable and known, to lock ourselves into fixed identities and old hatreds, to burn whatever resources we have because they belong to us and we can.

It is a chronicle of fear and scarcity. It warns us we live in a world of not enough and that the only way we can carve out a future is for “us” to triumph over “them.”

When the great psychologist and student of myth Carl Jung warned, “We are the origin of all coming evil,” this is what he meant, this insidious, suicidal notion that to save ourselves we must turn our backs on the world, our compassion inward, and our hostility on each other. The idea of “we” dwindles and narrows to something more like “I” — my people, my tribe, my religion, my politics.

The feminist poet Adrienne Rich nailed this a quarter of a century ago in her poem “In Those Years,” which begins:

In those years, people will say,  
we lost track of the meaning of we, of you  
we found ourselves reduced to I  
and the whole thing became  
silly, ironic, terrible:  
we were trying to live a personal life  
and, yes, that was the only life  
we could bear witness to.

Our capacity to bear witness to lives other than our own becomes sharply diminished in an era when



we convince ourselves—and allow others to convince us—that we are living inside the narrative of the siege. And the result is truly silly, ironic and terrible.

Our president tosses paper towels at American hurricane victims in Puerto Rico while lamenting not their suffering but the money they owe “us.” Political leaders who should see the massive storms that hit Houston, Florida and Puerto Rico this summer as proof of climate change instead deny the science and promise even greater subsidies for fossil fuel companies because it’s better for “us.”

Emboldened white supremacists move from online hideouts into open streets chanting racial slurs and vowing that those they hate will not replace “us.” People who see in themselves no hint of racism attack black athletes who take a solemn knee to peacefully protest police brutality for “disrespecting our flag” and being ungrateful to “us.” Legislators who offer only “thoughts and prayers” after every mass shooting blame and defund mental health services almost in the same breath yet refuse to consider the problem of guns because guns define “us.”

There is a universe in that word, “us.” Who it includes, who it doesn’t. Who is owed, who is not. Who has a place by right, who will never have a place no matter their merit.

In the storyline of the siege, “us” doesn’t include the past and the undue burdens we have inflicted on some members of our society through the legacy of discrimination and oppression. It doesn’t include the future, either, of all the children whose lives will be affected and diminished by the rising costs of avoidable climate change.

“Us” doesn’t include the refugees whose hunger, thirst, terror and misery will never be undone or contained by walls. It doesn’t include the immigrants whose talents and ideas could expand the pie we so feverishly guard as it dwindles around us. It finds scarce room for the black or brown, or the people whose religion, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation we deem “other” than our own. It doesn’t include those who protest or demand justice for their children

or a seat at the table of opportunity equivalent to what we imagine everyone enjoys inside our fraudulently inclusive circle of “us.”

This “us” doesn’t even include the people who already go to work every day building the industries of the future, the alternative energy companies that will sustain us and keep our planet habitable, the innovation businesses that will create new jobs to replace the legacy ones we all know are fading away. No, not even them. To acknowledge them would be to acknowledge that the siege is a myth and that we are captive only to our own fears.

But there is another narrative being told in America, the hopeful vision shared in these pages by just a few of the leaders we are privileged to work with every day. It is the narrative of community.

Anyone who has ever worked at a civic scale knows that community is no cuddly, vaguely wonderful thing. There is nothing tame or cute about it. It is at once glorious and hard to love. It is a rambunctious, complicated, ever-shifting coming together and pulling apart of all that is good and all that is awful in the human spirit.

But for all its gritty, messy reality, there is something transcendent about it. At its beating heart is the idea that we are better together than apart—that gathering as a diverse people is how we learn and grow, challenge old ideas and develop new ones, find the capacity to see beyond ourselves and our own narrow perspectives and needs. Science is learning what religion has long preached: It is in our relationship to others that we discover who we are, our place in the world, and our sense of purpose.

Empathy, connectedness, service to others—it turns out these are not mere lofty niceties. They are, rather, the very stuff of human progress and fulfillment, and even hold the secret to happiness. And they are simultaneously both the building blocks and the products of this thing we call community.

In the narrative of community, the notion of “we” is expansive, open and inviting. It encompasses people who live next door and people we have never met, people similar to us and people who seem completely alien. It teaches us the wisdom of the Jewish civil rights activist Joachim Prinz’s words when he said, “Neighbor is not a geographic term. It is a moral concept. It means our collective responsibility for the preservation of man’s dignity and integrity.”

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Joshua Franzos



Collective responsibility. The storyline of community challenges us to celebrate rather than shirk an ethic of giving to and paying for the society we want. It asks us to embrace our responsibilities to those who are vulnerable and new and different, not to the exclusion of anyone but rather to the benefit of everyone. Most of all it asks us to keep expanding our definition of “we,” to step away from the terrible, ironic silliness of terror-stricken self-interest and to bear witness to lives and challenges other than our own.

The polls and pundits tell us that we are a people irredeemably divided, that we have lost all common ground. It suits the siege-makers for us to believe this, but please don’t buy it. It only becomes true when we believe it.

In the refrain to his iconic song “Anthem,” Leonard Cohen urged:

Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack in everything  
That’s how the light gets in

That is the spirit of the people who every day still compose the tale of community, here and I suspect all across America. They have given up on nothing and their courage inspires. Through a thousand unsung offerings, each one a crack in the darkness, each one admitting a tiny ray of light, they help us see past our fears, past our differences, to the work yet undone, to a vision of community where “we” means all of us, where we all belong and we all can prosper. **h**

POLARIZATION  
IGNORANCE  
DISCRIMINATION  
FEAR  
EXCLUSION  
INSULARITY  
RACISM  
SEXISM  
CLASSISM  
ISLAMOPHOBIA  
HOMOPHOBIA  
ECONOMIC DISPARITIES  
EDUCATION GAPS  
RESIGNATION



## < CHALLENGES HERE IN PITTSBURGH (AND ELSEWHERE)

## PEOPLE IN PITTSBURGH FORGING “A COMMUNITY OF WE” >

As part of our exploration into creating “a community of we,” this issue of h magazine includes perspectives from leaders of different organizations and initiatives that The Heinz Endowments has supported over the years. In the following pages, these individuals identify challenges they believe exist in the Pittsburgh region, describe what is needed to establish “a community of we,” and then explain how their groups or programs are helping to make the concept a reality. While the phrase itself is just one way to emphasize the need for unity and civility in our society, the various perspectives highlight the communal responsibility for grounding lofty ideals in actual life experiences. Among the comments are recommendations for how each of us can do our part in our various networks and spheres of influence to bridge the gaps that divide us and to counter negative narratives about our region. The problems are real, but there are reasons to be hopeful for the future. They include the commitment of thoughtful and creative individuals and organizations willing to lead the pursuit for mutual respect, honest conversations and social justice, which are critical to moving forward.

# WE

THINKERS > ADVOCATES > EDUCATORS > GAME CHANGERS

Over the last few years, when tragic events took place, the most often-quoted words from [the late children's television host] Fred Rogers was "always look for the helpers." What is often not quoted was how Fred explained that. He said, "Because if you look for the helpers, you'll know that there is hope."

I think it is important to know that it is the sense of profound hope that overcomes the profound sense of grief and loss or fear and anxiety. I used to think Fred's advice was only about looking to the police, doctors and other rescuers featured in the particular news event. I came to feel strongly that it is also about having regular conversations with children and grown-ups in our neighborhoods about the "helpers" much closer to home, all around us, in our own communities.

We get a sense of hope, not only from people far away who are assisting the wounded and injured, but also people near us—some of whom we might even know—who believe in and are working to make gentle the life of this world for children and families. At the Fred Rogers Center, we follow the helpers around: the child care providers, the mentors who work in after-school programs, the child life specialists in hospitals, the crossing guards. We film what they do and have a conversation about what is meaningful about their work and how it impacts children. Fred asked us to be helpful appreciators, which I think helps build a sense of "we."

Love triumphs over hate. When we despise a neighbor because of a political campaign sign, the resentment and anger goes both ways. Draw your own conclusion: You can be on the side of love, peace or justice, or you can succumb to war, hate and greed.

— Interviewed by Cristina Rouvalis

# BE HELPFUL APPRECIATORS

> Dr. Junlei Li

THE RITA M. MCGINLEY PROFESSOR OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDREN'S MEDIA,  
AND CO-DIRECTOR OF THE FRED ROGERS CENTER AT ST. VINCENT COLLEGE





## COLLABORATE TO IMPROVE EDUCATION

> **H. Richard Milner IV**

DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR URBAN EDUCATION,  
HELEN FAISON ENDOWED CHAIR OF URBAN  
EDUCATION, AND PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

Joshua Franzos

Perhaps unlike any other place I've lived, there is a powerful ethos of "micro-community" within the broader Pittsburgh community. In some ways, this feeling of community can be seen as an asset because people really care about what is happening in their neighborhoods. But when we focus most of our attention on our own particular neighborhood, we can sometimes forget or minimize the challenges and strengths of other areas. When we move to a mindset where we are concerned about every corner of the city, we truly will move to "a community of we."

One of the things I admire so much about this city is that there is such a strong, resounding ethos of community activism in education. So many individuals, organizations and institutions are committed to working toward justice. However, in some ways, it feels like they prefer operating independently. If we were able to figure out how to collaborate, so much more could happen on our journey to improve education for everyone. As we build synergy, we need to have real conversations about the difficult questions and issues.

At Pitt's Center for Urban Education, we're really trying to listen and work with others. We have moved many of our initiatives from the Ivory Tower into the community. Much of our programming, projects and initiatives are tied to broader Pittsburgh. Forums for residents and educators put decision-makers in direct communication with those most affected. A summer forum helped about 200 pre-K-12 educators learn how to be more culturally responsive in their classrooms. That's probably one of our best mechanisms to ensure that students get an equitable opportunity to learn.

Until we have truly moved the needle on ensuring that every child has a highly qualified, culturally responsive, transformative education, we can't be "a community of we."

— Interviewed by Eleanor Chute



**W**hen we're talking about inclusion, a lot of it is educating, creating exposure, building connections and building visibility. You have to be exposed to other people who look different from you, who think differently from you, and who have different experiences from you in order to ever be able to feel empathy and understanding and connectedness and see "them" as "we."

Through the All for All initiative, we are trying to bring in as many partners as we can—community groups, government, schools, businesses and individuals—to shine a light on them, and to respond to what we're hearing from the community. We are starting to work with elected leaders across the region so that they're adopting practices that are more representative of an immigrant-friendly and inclusive community. Civic engagement, education and the workplace also play important roles in becoming "a community of we."

We know that people from diverse backgrounds experience a different version of Pittsburgh, one with limited opportunities for advancement and sometimes lacking a sense of belonging. We know it's harder to break in here. That's part of our identity, but part of our identity that needs to change.

We've heard stories from community members from different backgrounds who say that the unleashing of bias is alive and amplified. We also are hearing about the incidents of bullying and of youth not feeling safe or welcome. It was happening before, but now it's just happening more.

On the positive side, we've been encouraged by outpourings of support from community members who are eager to learn how they can contribute to building a more inclusive region.

I think the first people who really "get it" are those who appreciate that this isn't about diversity for the sake of diversity. There's an economic, cultural and simply a human benefit that is spurred by building more welcoming and inclusive communities.

— Interviewed by Eleanor Chute

# BE EXPOSED TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE

> **Betty Cruz**

DIRECTOR OF CHANGE AGENCY

Annie O'Neill



# BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

## > Ted Melnyk

DIRECTOR OF FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL EQUITY  
AT EAST LIBERTY DEVELOPMENT INC.



Joshua Franzos

**W**e as Pittsburghers need to be in environments where we get to know each other across racial and socio-economic lines. Human beings tend to gather around people they're comfortable with, whether that's people who make the same amount of money, or people who kind of look like them and think like them.

With the increased political and racial tension over the last couple of years, I think making an effort to increase unity across differences is more important than ever. To accomplish this, you just need to get to know people. And that's hard to do, because we all run around in our little bubbles. I've personally experienced that unity at Eastminster Church. Its tagline includes the description "a cross-cultural church," so for the last 15 years, I've been part of that unity—getting to know a wide variety of people, along with saying stupid stuff and hurting each other's feelings, and then apologizing.

I guess at the end of the day I believe "we" is built on relationships. That might be in the faith community, the school community or the neighborhood. We certainly like to think that our work with East Liberty Development Inc.'s Circles program is part of that equation as well. We do "we."

In Circles, we are very intentionally creating an environment to have conversations so people get to know each other, and can talk very honestly and bluntly about race and its impact in Pittsburgh. We also talk about the psychology of poverty, generational poverty and the PTSD that can result from poverty.

They're very often very hard conversations to have, but we don't feel like we can have genuine relationships unless we really tackle some of these kinds of tougher issues.

— Interviewed by Elwin Green



I think, first, if we're serious about creating "a community of we," black people and poor people and people of color need to be a priority in the decisions that are made regarding development, employment and education. They seem to be left behind, or left out of the planning process, both in leadership and in our thought process regarding how those communities are impacted by the decisions that are made.

We all see the statistics, daily and yearly, but there seems to be no real emphasis by leadership on fixing those disparities that we have. I also believe that building community will require more city-driven or sponsored activities that intentionally bring everyone together, celebrate and highlight the different cultures within the region, and serve as the model for shaping the messaging around culture, inclusion and unity.

The Alliance is an organization that is open to everyone. Our goal is to work with political officials and law enforcement, so we can create this atmosphere where black people feel safe, where black people are thriving, and where black youth are properly educated. The only way we do that is to all work together. We pride ourselves on being that bridge to help make that happen.

We collaborate with groups and organizations from different communities. We conduct joint educational workshops and networking events designed to highlight cultural awareness. We provide cultural responsiveness training for teachers in schools to assist in increasing their cultural understanding of the students that they teach and decreasing the gap in disparities we often see in school suspensions and the like.

People don't like these issues to be spotlighted, but part of our work is doing that. Until we all work together to make changing those statistics a priority, until we're real about the issues that we're facing, there's no way that we'll ever solve them.

— Interviewed by Elwin Green

> **Brandi Fisher**  
FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF THE  
ALLIANCE FOR POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

# GET REAL





# GIVE EVERYONE A SEAT AT THE TABLE

> **Zaheen Hussain**

MILLVALE SUSTAINABILITY  
COORDINATOR





### Zaheen Hussain

**F**or far too long, residents and businesses have been left out of the community development conversation and pushed out of their neighborhoods. Community leaders have the responsibility to build ways through which people can interact with their neighbors.

When we don't have relationships with those around us, we weaken our communities and enable gentrification. Poorly advertised and attended community meetings—scheduled at times that can be inconvenient for many, simply to check the public input box—can no longer be the standard.

In Millvale, we try to make sure everyone's voice is heard in our EcoDistrict planning process, guiding the community through sustainable redevelopment. One way we're doing this is through the Millvale Library Community Needs Assessment, a comprehensive survey that is helping us understand what our community members need and want for themselves and their families.

I find it inspiring that in this time of national polarization, there are groups like the Jewish Voice for Peace speaking up against Islamophobia across Pittsburgh. We need to better connect individuals and families of different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds to build relationships, instead of preaching to people what they should and shouldn't believe.

Creating “a community of we” means giving everyone a seat at the table, empowering each other and connecting with our neighbors to build relationships and empathy.

— Interviewed by Eleanor Chute

### Brian Wolovich

**E**veryone contributes in “a community of we.” We need to bring out our best selves and encourage each other to do the same. Some very simple things aren't being done right now, such as treating each other with respect and empathy, regardless of skin color, religion, ability and language. If we let racism and xenophobia go unchallenged, it can become normalized.

I think a starting point is just stepping back from some of the anger and focusing on our commonalities as opposed to our differences. I know all of our neighbors want a safe, healthy place for their children to grow up. I know everyone wants to be able to get a good job and be educated. On these points, no boundaries or any “-isms” divide us.

Somebody has to start a conversation between two people. Leaders throughout Millvale are reaching out. We're asking residents about their needs, hopes and dreams so we can design programs and investments that are responsive to what people want. We're hoping it will lead to more people appreciating that their voice is being heard and is valued.

In “a community of we,” the distance between decision-making and those who bear the brunt of those decisions is as short as possible.

— Interviewed by Eleanor Chute

# KEEP IT SIMPLE

## > Brian Wolovich

MILLVALE BOROUGH COUNCILMAN AND  
MILLVALE COMMUNITY LIBRARY BOARD MEMBER



# DIVERSIFY LEADERSHIP

> **Barney Oursler**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PITTSBURGH UNITED

**T**here is reason for distrust from people of color. They feel like they are being left behind and left out. I believe when you make an effort to reach out, when you ask people to join the struggle, and when you make sure the leaders are included in the decisions to address their needs, it is a pretty good way to create community.

Many of us don't want our city to follow so many others, where development means even more displacement and poverty for the working poor. These are the ones who are challenging the status quo and being change makers. I think those who oppose change makers are the few who benefit from others' poverty, or some who are afraid of losing what little they have and are confused about who threatens them with the words of the very rich and powerful.

If we want "a community of we" in Pittsburgh, we have to try to end structural racism, which involves building leadership for the city that includes black, brown and many other diverse communities. That's why Pittsburgh United coalition partner organizations


invite the leaders of those communities into the decision-making of our coalition. Winning progressive policies is not going to change the structural inequalities in our city—which include race, gender, class, gender identity and more—unless it is accomplished with the leaders of communities most hurt by these inequalities.

Pittsburgh United has identified leaders of color within our existing partners to support as coalition leaders, and we are building long-term relationships with organizations led by people of color. This has been effective because the staff working on different campaigns has prioritized this shift in internal leadership as a goal that is as important as external organizing.

We have had our missteps and challenges. But we are embracing them so we can change the internal and external power dynamics that hold us back from fully tackling the economic, racial and other structural inequalities that prevent our city from being a place where everyone can flourish.

— Interviewed by Cristina Rouvalis





I think there is a very beautiful dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims in Pittsburgh. Regardless of what is going on in the Trump administration, people are reaching out and trying to help each other. Ironically, the election of the new president has brought people together.

After the election, groups of 50 to 100 non-Muslims would come to the mosque every week and ask, "How can I be a Muslim ally?" They wanted to find out for themselves what our religion is all about. We are living in a time where we barely talk to each other. You go to a restaurant and you see couples staring at their screens. But when we sit down together and talk together, we find out what the other one really believes and start to build community.

Islamophobia is real. Pittsburgh is not as culturally diverse as some other major cities. There have been threats made to Muslim teenage girls that they better rip off their head scarves. But the positive side far outweighs the negative. Nobody has ignorance copyrighted. There are ignorant people in every culture, every city.

I opened a youth center called Youth Alliance of Networking and Empowerment, or YA-NE, at the Islamic Center of Pittsburgh. I teach religion only for 10 minutes so it doesn't get boring. Most of the time, I try to help Muslim youth learn how to be Muslim in American society.

Muslim youth go through spiritual schizophrenia. Around their parents, they are Muslim. But when they go to school, they play it down. I try to give them honor by letting them know it is okay to be Muslim in America and not be embarrassed. Part of being American is being true to yourself.

— Interviewed by Cristina Rouvalis

# FIND OUT WHAT OTHERS BELIEVE

> **Hamza Perez**

YOUTH DIRECTOR OF THE ISLAMIC CENTER OF PITTSBURGH



> **Dan Dalton**

THREE RIVERS SUSTAINABILITY HUB MANAGER,  
PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

# GROW TOGETHER

I was an aspiring engineer, and what I find so inspiring is how resourceful and ingenious our growers are at addressing real-world problems. Farmers function as scientists and observers and participants and artists. They are resilient people.

Agriculture and farmers in the modern era connect us to our heritage, providing a foundation for building community. I've had exactly that experience myself. I still remember spending time with my grandparents in their prolific garden. Smelling and tasting fresh foods awakens our sense memories, and observing the growing process helps rewire our brains about how the natural world functions. We need that reminder and that shared experience. We can communicate to kids that if they want to spend more time in that environment, the best way to do it is to grow something!

When children work on projects like the Edible Schoolyard, or visit the farm of a PASA member, or when families work in community farming programs, they start to understand the living world together. I remember helping to build one such garden in Wilkinsburg a few years ago, starting with big slabs of cedar wood. A woman in her late 60s and her grandchild joined us. To hand them a tool was powerful. They made a commitment: "This is my garden bed now. I'm going to watch and care for this garden and help these plants grow."

In sustainable agriculture, the community helps to cultivate itself and each other. That's how we move from "me" to "we."

— Interviewed by Christine O'Toole







# BE OPEN

> **Chaz Kellem**

SENIOR DIRECTOR, ADVOCACY FOR RACE AND GENDER EQUITY, YWCA GREATER PITTSBURGH

**W**hen I applied for my current job, one of the interview questions I was asked was how I would feel as a man in a women's organization. My opinion is that we need men to get on board with the women's movement. I'm a person of color. I'm someone with a physical disability. I've been in a wheelchair since age 8. So, I also believe we need walking people to support the disability movement. Coming together like this builds "a community of we."

Marches don't change minds. Inclusion has to be an everyday process, with small and big things given attention. For example: I was carrying stuff in a grocery store a few days ago, and a person from the opposite world stopped what they were doing to lend a hand. That matters. I overheard a group of men talking about women inappropriately. I intervened with a simple word: "Ouch." One of them asked why I said that. My response was, "I have a mom, I have a fiancée. I'd be doing them a disservice if I didn't comment. It impacts me if you degrade women."

We need clear benchmarks for our behavior every day for each person, each community. I've been encouraged by the work of the Pittsburgh Leadership Conference on diversity and inclusion and the amount of participation in our city's Summit Against Racism. These efforts elevate the level of conversation. That can make people uncomfortable, but change is uncomfortable. You have to open yourself up to begin the process.

— Interviewed by Christine O'Toole



# EMPOWER CITIZENS TO CARE

> **Illah Nourbakhsh**

FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF CREATE LAB (COMMUNITY ROBOTICS, EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY EMPOWERMENT LAB) AT CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

One of the things we need to do is create common ground between different groups. It is easy for successful people to live in places where they are insulated from the problems of others who have structural barriers to equity. We need to be aware of those problems.

I went to a talk Bill Gates gave years ago about diseases around the world. He said, “Imagine if you could live with randomly selected neighbors from people around the world. We would understand that not all problems are distributed in homogeneous bunches.” So, imagine if every street in Pittsburgh were made up of residents of every neighborhood in Pittsburgh; that would create empathy and knowledge in solving problems.

CREATE Lab’s high-tech tools are really about creating that local “community of we” by helping everyone in our communities become not only aware but also a full participant in the challenges and successes that we see throughout the community.

Technology, when used by local citizens, can invert power relationships, enabling those that are not normally in positions of power to have boosted voice, powerful narratives, and thereby positions of respect, dignity and power. This, I believe, is a critical path to creating an empathic “we” community that can further the vision of the entire Pittsburgh region.

I remember the head of the World Economic Forum describing to me his theory of impact and action. He said, “We need people to truly care.” Every technology the CREATE Lab produces is about empowering local citizens to care, not by simply informing them through a one-way vehicle, but by giving them the tools to share their feelings and their opinions and their citizen science discoveries. This helps them build in themselves an ever-stronger muscle for caring in an activated and authentic manner about all of Pittsburgh.

— Interviewed by Cristina Rouvalis



I am a proud American and a proud Pittsburgher. I was born in Guyana, and that experience informs who I am. But while being an immigrant in Pittsburgh is a powerful part of whom I've become, it's not the whole story.

What gives me hope for Pittsburgh is the number of people talking and thinking about connecting people across social and cultural barriers—about “a community of we.” It's a priority. In the East Liberty neighborhood, what Kelly-Strayhorn Theater has been working for is creating a sense of community, inspiring people to not just pass by each other and tolerate each other, but to become genuinely interested and connect.

It's important to remember that we all share in the responsibility of making a community. You don't need to be an official, elected leader in government or an organization to act like a leader. We all can take the initiative and act, starting with simple steps like reaching out and connecting with our neighbors. We all can find opportunities to lead the way in our everyday lives. The moment you walk out your door, you have the opportunity to show compassion and be kind; that's the first step to “a community of we.”

At the Kelly-Strayhorn, we believe in the power of a diverse, connected community. We have a slogan, “Together, we build community.” That includes seeing or making art together. You can find dance, music, theater and other cultural entertainment here featuring people from many identities. This helps foster a sense of unity in Pittsburgh.

We believe inspiration comes from many sources, and our goal always is to ensure that our programming reflects the diversity of both our neighborhood and our city. We want to ensure that new communities are formed, across perceived and real cultural barriers. Diversity is not easy; it requires open-mindedness and trust. You can find both at the Kelly-Strayhorn Theater.

— Interviewed by Kellie Gormly

> **Janera Solomon**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE KELLY-STRAYHORN THEATER

# FOSTER UNITY THROUGH THE ARTS



## Sheryl St. Germain

I know firsthand the devastation that losing a child to drug addiction can cause as both my brother and my son died from drug overdoses.

Reaching out empathetically to other people who have experienced the same pain and loss is a key component in building “a community of we.” I do this through Chatham University’s Words Without Walls program, which pairs graduate writing students with inmates at the Allegheny County Jail and residents at Sojourner House, a residential treatment center for addicted mothers and their children. Many of the Sojourner House residents come in addicted to heroin or crack, and have lost their children. As a co-founder of Words Without Walls, I oversee students and faculty who teach creative writing at these two locations.

I’ve also found myself connecting with other women who have lost children, some of whom I might not agree with politically, but I bond with them because they’ve also lost a child. We have to find ways to genuinely care about each other and build connections among those who are different.

Our graduate writing students read poetry and prose to the inmates and residents, and encourage them to express themselves through creative writing. We write together with the women, exploring difficult issues with respect to recovery. We try to get them to write about the truth of their situation. The writing helps them process their feelings.

Although our nation has become polarized over politics, through my work with Words Without Walls, I see more people engaged and working together. People who maybe weren’t necessarily involved in their community or politics seem to have an energy that wasn’t there previously because there is something they really care about, such as addiction.

— Interviewed by Kellie Gormly

## Sarah Shotland

Caring between institutions and people is the key to making Pittsburgh “a community of we.”

I believe leaders in the city’s institutions need to be in touch with what is happening with the people they serve. We have to actually care about each other, rather than just giving the ideas of justice or community lip service.

Our Words Without Walls program fosters this by forcing people out of their bubbles. Participating in the program as a student or teacher guarantees that you will meet and get to know people who are different from you, some of whom you’ll disagree with. And you’ll discover that many of the things you once thought of as differences are actually commonalities.

The inmates in Allegheny County Jail are the canaries in the coal mine of America, personifying societal problems like drugs and foreshadowing the future of these problems in society. But Words Without Walls helps them learn, among other things, to be respectful and civil, even when disagreeing about contentious subjects like politics.

Talking about literature gives people the opportunity to practice disagreements without becoming physical—and many of the people we work with have anger-management problems. So, I think our program helps to prepare them to better interact with others so they can contribute to building community rather than harming it.

At Sojourner House, our students work with women who are in heartbreaking situations, but reading and writing poetry helps the women cope and grow emotionally. My hope is that by doing this, they can contribute to “a community of we.”

— Interviewed by Kellie Gormly



> **Sarah Shotland**

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AT CHATHAM UNIVERSITY  
AND PROGRAM COORDINATOR FOR WORDS WITHOUT WALLS

## GET PEOPLE OUT OF THEIR BUBBLES


## REACH OUT WITH EMPATHY

> **Sheryl St. Germain**

PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR OF THE MASTER OF FINE ARTS  
PROGRAM IN CREATIVE WRITING AT CHATHAM UNIVERSITY  
AND CO-FOUNDER OF WORDS WITHOUT WALLS





A portrait of La'Tasha D. Mayes, a Black woman with her hair in a bun, wearing glasses and a dark blue patterned button-down shirt. She is standing outdoors with a blurred city street in the background. The text is overlaid on the lower left of the image.

> **La'Tasha D. Mayes**

FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEW VOICES FOR REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

# SHARE A VISION

Joshua Francis

**W**e can decide where we go from here as a community together with a mutual destiny. If we believe our destiny is mutual, is interconnected, we can decide wherever we want to go. I think it all comes down to intention.

“A community of we” could emerge from a truth and reconciliation process that begins to heal intergenerational trauma experienced by black people, indigenous people and people of color. There must be drastic policy and culture change that over-invests in the health of black people, especially black women, girls and femmes — people who express themselves in the world as “feminine” regardless of sex, gender or sexual orientation.

When I say “health,” I mean complete physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural, political, economic, environmental and social well-being. It is time for new leadership in every facet of our community — in government, nonprofits, business, foundations, health, education, employment, development, arts, housing and policing. Above all, “a community of we” requires a shared vision that is arduous and intersectional to create the greatest change possible for the future of the greater Pittsburgh region.

New Voices for Reproductive Justice contributes to creating more of a sense of “we” by boldly confronting race and gender oppression for black liberation and centering the voices, experiences and leadership of black women, femmes and girls. We address issues from sexual and reproductive health to LGBTQ+ rights, health care access, environmental justice, and ending gender-based violence and mass incarceration. Our long-term strategies include leadership development, community organizing, policy advocacy and culture change.

New Voices is excited to create physical spaces for the black women, femmes and girls we serve in the three cities where we work — Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Philadelphia — with our national headquarters opening in Pittsburgh early next year. Our standard, our bar for success, is human rights for all people, period. That’s the place where we must start to create “a community of we.” That’s the baseline.

— Interviewed by Elwin Green



> **Rev. Dr. Vincent Kolb**

PASTOR OF SIXTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND BOARD MEMBER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA INTERFAITH IMPACT NETWORK

# MAKE SACRIFICES

**P**eople of faith who believe in a loving God certainly play a big role in building “a community of we.” We need to be kind, good neighbors to others, and try to influence life to be fair and just for all citizens, not just a few.

I moved here from Jacksonville, Fla., just three years ago, but I like the spirit I see in the Pittsburgh faith community and beyond. I see Pittsburgh as one of many cities that is finding creative ways to bridge the divide and work toward common goals. This area shows a deep sense of community pride. People are proud to be from Pittsburgh—and people who have left make every effort to come back. We hope that through things like good schools, safe streets and attractive waterways, our children can both succeed here and stay here.

Paradoxically, some of the challenges the region faces compel people to think in terms of “we.” Take the federal mandate to rebuild the sewer system, a project resulting in higher sewer bills. No one enjoys rate hikes, but it gives Pittsburghers a sense of ownership. If we’re having to pay for this out of our own pocket, we’re going to want some of these community benefits in place. That contributes to “a community of we,” because people make sacrifices to invest in the community’s benefit.

At the Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network, we work to address issues such as sewer and water rate hikes, to fight for an increased minimum wage, and to fight against racism. We have been engaged in efforts across our city to improve relationships between the police and the community of color. We are helping the new school superintendent launch community schools that will provide wrap-around services for communities facing unique challenges. We try to do our part to support and build a fairer community for everyone.

— Interviewed by Kellie Gormly



I've always felt very welcomed in Pittsburgh. But I'm lucky that I'm a white woman. I think that says something about how I was accepted.

I hear from quite a few people that Pittsburgh is a siloed community, that it's still not inclusive. Being the city of neighborhoods, I think, can create a siloed perception of reality.

Also, the boomerang effect among white Pittsburghers—where they go and work somewhere else and then come back—isn't seen in the black community. If you can make it elsewhere, you never come back.

A lot of media organizations chase the same stories. We are bombarded by reactionary journalism. At PublicSource, our mission is to produce public

service journalism, to give voice to the voiceless, make people aware of what the opportunities for improvement are and how we can eliminate inequities.

One project that is ongoing is looking at the inequities black girls face, how being black and female puts you against the system, how race and gender affect the education system, and how race and gender still matter in Pittsburgh.

Taking a mission-driven view of giving voice to people who don't get a platform elsewhere is something that sets us apart. Telling their stories is important, especially in this time of polarization, when we are looking for understanding.

For us to truly be a city of the future, we need to be more self-critical and take steps beyond just saying if it's not for all, it's not for us. In this time of polarization, it's as important as ever to challenge ourselves with different perspectives and not to compromise tolerance and the values of honesty, truth seeking, reason and humanity. That is how we forge "a community of we."

— Interviewed by Jeffery Fraser

# GIVE A VOICE

> **Mila Sanina**

EDITOR OF PUBLICSOURCE





# ADDRESS AND CHALLENGE EXCLUSIVITY

> **Dr. Jamil Bey**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF URBANKIND INSTITUTE

**T**here are communities in Pittsburgh. There's just not an all-inclusive Pittsburgh community.

I think what gets us to “a community of we” is being able to share in experiences that contribute to a sense of collective hope. When people are hopeful, they engage in the community that makes them hopeful.

In order to be connected to a community, members of that community have to recognize you as part of it. You also have to acknowledge the rules and mores of that community.

In Pittsburgh, there are lots of folks who don't feel that everyone is included in the broader community. Politically, economically, socially, culturally, they don't participate. Their access to participate is restricted.

We need to address and challenge those who exclude folks from our community. We need to challenge those who maintain spaces of exclusivity—in housing, in the workplace, in recreation or play spaces—and address their need to maintain that exclusivity. We need to call that into question. What is the need to be exclusive?

At UrbanKind, we're pretty explicit about calling foul and identifying these exclusive practices and policies. We don't shy away from that. Also, we actively work for the inclusion of different voices. We work with folks who are most typically excluded—low-income residents, immigrants and African Americans—and we work with providers that serve these populations to collect, strengthen and elevate the power of their voices.

— Interviewed by Elwin Green

# OPEN UP TO HIDDEN NEIGHBORS

> **Majestic Lane**

DEPUTY CHIEF OF NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR, CITY OF PITTSBURGH

**M**ayor Peduto created our office to identify low- and moderate-income neighborhoods and increase their quality of life. I do this work because I believe the city has turned a corner to become a city for all, with a new level of coordination and shared vision. And that excites me.

Mine is a place-based perspective. But we don't grow places without growing people. So we're putting them at the center of our process. Pittsburgh has been talking about the four P's: people, planet, place and performance. But there's a fifth P: possibility. That is the belief in our ability to become an inclusive city, to achieve success, and to enable our children to be successful. Now our goal is that every child in each of Pittsburgh's 90 neighborhoods sees himself or herself reflected in the city and shares the same feeling of wonder.

Pittsburgh has survived difficult times but has not always been open to change. It reminds me of growing up in Philadelphia: We lived near other people, but we didn't live in the same place. That's changing in Pittsburgh. We're opening up to our hidden neighbors, like African Americans in Northview Heights, Latinos in Beechview and newer Pittsburghers like the Bhutanese.

I recently attended an event hosted by Young Black Pittsburgh and community leaders. It wasn't about preaching one point of view. Instead, the gathering said, "We want to connect. We really want to get to know each other." I've seen black elected officials meeting with the West End community—even though they don't represent those folks, they sincerely want to hear about their concerns and create that sense of "we."

This is a moment of change, and we're seizing it.

— Interviewed by Christine O'Toole



**A**s part of the faith community, I approach inclusion from the perspective of ancient teachings that Jews and Christians share as scripture and that Muslims embrace as important. The first is: Love your neighbor as yourself. That implies a sense of self-worth, of how you want to be treated. A second is, do not stand idle while your neighbor bleeds, which we understand as: Just because it happens to someone else doesn't mean I don't have to help.

A third concept is more modern. It comes from a Holocaust survivor, Rabbi Joachim Prinz, who befriended Martin Luther King Jr. and spoke at the 1963 march on Washington. He described how the word "neighbor" is not a geographical demarcation; rather, it is a moral concept. That is so relevant in Pittsburgh in 2017. It's hard to break beyond the isolation of the neighborhood. We want to help people change the definition of neighbor.

I have to tell you, Pittsburgh is the perfect place to do it. Mister Rogers asked, "Won't you be my neighbor?" That is simple and deep. I am terribly concerned that we have lost the impact of his ideas.

One new way the JCC is pursuing more "neighborliness" is through creating the Center for Loving Kindness, with five project areas. We're reaching out through theater arts and through conversations at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes. We want to create deliberative democracy—not just voting in November, but also struggling with issues on the ballot and how they relate to people's faith traditions. We're creating an East End gathering of clergy, which hasn't previously existed, to work with Pittsburgh Public Safety.

We have to fight a lack of trust—the idea that if you think differently from me, you're not telling the truth. We must fight that. I'm not going to sit back and give my children a lesser world.

— Interviewed by Christine O'Toole

Joshua Franzos

# PURSUE NEIGHBORLINESS

> **Rabbi Ron Symons**

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF JEWISH LIFE, JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF GREATER PITTSBURGH

# RESIST DIVISIVENESS

> **Jocelyn Horner**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, STRONG WOMEN, STRONG GIRLS OF PITTSBURGH



If you don't feel secure, safe and strong as an individual, it's hard to grow and be part of the larger community. Despite our majority in society, all women and girls face challenges by virtue of our gender. It's complicated by race, ethnicity, and other issues that hold power.

We've all heard about the so-called "mean girl syndrome." We are all capable of showing meanness to one another. How do you create allies, rather than enemies?

I believe that the advice we give young women in our program, which promotes a self-reflective, restorative approach, can be applied to anyone who wants to build "a community of we": Think of the impact your words and actions have on each other, and reflect on how it would affect you. Resist divisiveness.

It is a "Golden Rule" mindset that everyone should follow. That seems like a simplification, but it's so true. It's a right of all human beings to be heard and be recognized, to not be invisible.

I directed a mentoring program for girls in New Orleans. We brainstormed: What is the story you want to tell about yourself? What's your struggle? One young girl started talking about a half-sister she just found out she had, far away in Texas. She started to cry. Another young woman, not a close friend, put her arm around her. She said, "I know how you feel—I've lost touch with my dad and siblings. That hurts. You're not alone."

It was a simple, spontaneous interaction that brought the girl into a circle of friends. These young women took care of one another. We can all learn from their example.

— Interviewed by Christine O'Toole



# HIRE TO GIVE FIRST AND SECOND CHANCES

> **Fred Brown**

PRESIDENT AND CEO OF HOMEWOOD CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

As a schoolteacher, probation officer and nonprofit director, I've buried more than 50 black kids. I've had an intimate relationship with premature death. So I've been called to do this work to create hope in the hopeless and provide light in the darkness. I just listened to a second-year college student from our neighborhood. When asked a few years ago, "How long do you think you'll live?" he said he thought he'd be dead at 14. He didn't have aspirations of getting out of his circumstance. Now he does.

The level of resilience in our community gives me hope. At the same time, I see attempts at inclusion that are transactional, not transformational. That says to me Pittsburgh is poisoned by the notion that if we have a conversation about equity and inclusion, we've had a win — with no indication of shifting the needle toward action. To change that — to have a true "community of we" — we have to bring more people of color from vulnerable communities into leadership roles, where they are involved in hiring issues. We need a Rooney Rule (the NFL policy that teams interview minority candidates for top coaching and operations posts) for C-suite jobs citywide.

Another tangible and truly transformational step would be to help people with criminal records find jobs. Our vulnerable communities are home to 80,000 people; 46,000 are on probation or parole. If people with criminal backgrounds don't get a second chance, over half the community is ineligible to work.

I hire those people because I understand how mistakes get made. I can discern they're trying to change. As corporations take this risk, we need to ask them about their return on investment. What was the outcome? If we did that, it would make people more comfortable about trying it and expanding the idea of "we."

— Interviewed by Christine O'Toole



### Seth Rosenberg

**P**ittsburgh is hailed as a most livable city, but there are lots of people in our region who are under-resourced, under-served, being made vulnerable. I think it's a lot scarier for people in those marginalized communities.

At Dreams of Hope, we all work at respecting everybody for who they are. I don't know a better way to create a sense of "we." I'm not sure who said it first, but I agree there's a real difference between a place where someone is tolerated and a place where someone is celebrated.

In our programming, we are as inclusive, gentle and loving as we can be, and we make extremely good use of art in doing that. We teach young people to use art to tell their stories. We use art to facilitate challenging conversations around identity. We're doing programming in schools now. That was not a possibility five years ago.

I've come to appreciate you can't work for justice for a select group of people and disregard another group that's being oppressed. That's because systems of oppression—homophobia, transphobia, racism, etc.—don't work independently. They are deeply inter-related. So, if one group is oppressed, you really can't have justice for anyone.

— Interviewed by Eleanor Chute

### Adil Mansoor

**T**he people I'm surrounded by are trying to figure out how to heal, celebrate and be in community together.

Each year, our teens generate a 90-minute play that explores their lives and experiences. After the presidential election, I totally assumed the teens would want to re-write the play and make it about this political moment. Before then, we were going to focus on joy and healing. They said, "That's more important than ever." As a community in this moment of what feels like utter chaos and trauma, our job can be to remind people that we are powerful and joyful and deserve to be happy.

To build "a community of we," we need to figure out how to make our youngest talent want to stay here. How do we make it so they don't feel stuck here? The reason young folks want to leave is they feel invisible here, especially queer people of color.

We need to prioritize diversity among decision-makers across sectors in Pittsburgh. The folks in power who get to make choices, allocate funds and hire people are all far too homogeneous. We cannot become "a community of we" until the leadership represents all the different lived experiences in Pittsburgh.

— Interviewed by Eleanor Chute

### > Seth Rosenberg

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DREAMS OF HOPE

# RESPECT EVERYBODY



> **Adil Mansoor**

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF DREAMS OF HOPE

# PRIORITIZE DIVERSITY AMONG DECISION-MAKERS



People have to be healthy, and they have to be educated to do well. I believe that a city is only as strong as its most vulnerable members and that protecting their health is one of the keys to helping them do better, to break through the barriers that hold them back.

Asthma is a perfect example. Among chronic diseases, asthma is the number one reason kids miss school. A pattern of missing school sets them up for not doing well and can have a great impact on their lives.

My team started studying the prevalence of asthma among inner-city elementary school children in Pittsburgh four years ago. What we're seeing is that about 25 percent have physician-diagnosed asthma, which is very high, while the state, national and county prevalence for this age group is around 10 to 13 percent. The highest pockets of asthma are among poor children and minority children. They're the most vulnerable.

One way to help level the playing field is to keep these kids healthy and keep them in school. If we want a community that benefits everyone — "a community of we" — we have to do something about this. And we can. We have medicine to control the disease. Raising awareness of the issue and educating vulnerable populations will help.

We also have to do something about the environmental factors that we know worsen the asthma of these children. Smoking is prevalent in a lot of the communities we study. Many of the children live near point sources of air pollution. They are exposed to the highest levels of particulate matter and black carbon and have almost a twofold risk of having asthma — similar to what we see with tobacco smoke. Their asthma is likely to be more severe, which means they're going to miss more school and fall behind.

Pittsburgh is a very resilient city. People tend to work together to solve problems. Together we can raise awareness. Together, we can improve environmental conditions. If we do, we'll improve the health of these children, their future outcomes, and the health and future of our community.

— Interviewed by Jeffery Fraser

# KEEP KIDS HEALTHY AND IN SCHOOL

> **Dr. Deborah Gentile**

PEDIATRIC SPECIALIST IN ALLERGY, ASTHMA AND  
IMMUNOLOGY AT THE PEDIATRIC ALLIANCE







# HAVE COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

> **Rev. Tim Smith**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CENTER OF LIFE AND PASTOR OF KEYSTONE CHURCH OF HAZELWOOD

**P**ittsburgh is a great city to live in. I wouldn't really want to live anywhere else. But we haven't really had to deal with injustices and racism head on, where it all came to a head, like many cities in the south have had to do. Here, it's been somewhat quiet.

At some point you have to have some courageous conversations. And we have to deal with systems that tend to keep things the same.

We can't skip over the past to get to the future. We have to understand where we've come from. It's easy to say, "Those things happened, let's just move on." But people who've been invisible in this city have to become visible, and they have to be heard.

In our public school system, we have levels of access to education. Some kids get a higher level of education. Some get a substandard education. At the Center of Life, we know we can educate every kid. We know they're learning. We see that. But when kids can

get a gun and drugs easier than they can get a good education, there's a problem.

When people in under-served communities hear development is coming, they're concerned. They've seen what development has done to other communities. They've seen people displaced, have to pick up and leave, and send their kids to another school.

We have to have conversations about these things. We have to come together at the table not as different with more, or different with less, but different and equal. White people have to listen to the stories that black people have to tell—stories about inequity. Black people have to be willing to give white people grace.

Conversations bring understanding. Relationships bring understanding. We can't see each other unless we build relationships with each other.

— Interviewed by Jeffery Fraser

Pittsburgh is subject to the same racial, socio-economic stresses that are seen across the country. I don't know if we are more or less polarized than other areas. But clearly there is polarity, and it is being exacerbated and freed up by rhetoric, and that is never a good thing.

The core challenge is to recognize that other people have an equal claim to life. What this polarization and rhetoric says is that we have unequal claims to life. That's dangerous. It's unacceptable to denigrate the claims of others, say they have no status, or not recognize that they cohabitate this world.

Learning to live is learning to live with others. Giving equal claim to others in your community is a leveler—it allows “I” to change to “we.”

I think Pittsburgh is trying to honestly deal with these issues, which is not to say they're resolved. We're trying to figure out how to hear other voices to make this a better city.

City of Asylum tries to bring people together in imagining the future through creative expression and opening themselves up to others and the unexpected.

Our programs are free. Our artists are diverse, global voices, but also those we consider underrepresented voices. We're building a diverse audience. The stories told are often by artists who've dealt with threats, censorship and injustice. They're engaging moments that in a very personal way reinforce the value of a society that allows creative expression and freedom.

One key thing is getting people into the same space to share such experiences with others unlike themselves. I think that may be one of the most enlightening experiences you can have: a vivid recognition that we all share a stake in the future; that we exist in a world where people differ and we can do so without animosity; and that we may be on the right-hand side or the left-hand side of the boat, but we're rowing together.

— Interviewed by Jeffery Fraser

# ROW TOGETHER

> **R. Henry Reese**

CO-FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF CITY OF ASYLUM PITTSBURGH



Reserved





# NARROW THE VETERAN- CIVILIAN DIVIDE

> **Michaela Diallo**

TEAM LEAD, PASERVES: GREATER PITTSBURGH

Joshua Francis

**W**ith the national climate so divisive, it is important that we build cohesion and respect among people from various cultures and backgrounds. I believe the best way to help create unity is for everyone to spend time in direct contact with individuals of cultural backgrounds different from their own.

I think Pittsburgh and the surrounding areas have to grow in this regard because some sections of this region are still very segregated. I truly believe that one of the steps to creating unity and cohesiveness in this region and the nation is people from different backgrounds working together on common goals and community service projects. Veterans have this type of experience through working with a diverse group of fellow service members on a mission.

I'm a member of The Mission Continues, an organization composed of veterans and civilians who do service projects in local communities. People from all ethnic and economic backgrounds participate in those projects. I believe it's important to have people work together on efforts that are meaningful, where they talk to each other, have everyone's viewpoints heard, and see that we all have vested interests in this region. The more projects we do together, the more we learn to notice our commonalities and appreciate our differences.

I think PAServes, along with several dozen other providers in the network, is building a sense of “we” by narrowing the veteran–civilian divide. We help local employers learn about military culture, how to reach veterans and how to make their work environments more comfortable and welcoming for veterans. We're re-educating employers to see veterans as assets to their organizations, to the community and to the region.

We're also helping civilians get rid of some stereotypes they may have, such as all veterans return home broken or have PTSD, which is not the case. As an African American woman and leader in the veteran community, I try to create welcoming environments where all veterans feel comfortable and to shatter stereotypes of some people who often think of veterans as white men only. There are many, and we thank them for their service. But there are also under-recognized groups of women and people of color who have sacrificed to defend this country.

— Interviewed by Carmen J. Lee

Essay: Angela Glover Blackwell, FOUNDER AND CEO, POLICYLINK

# THE ROAD



# TO WE

The idea of “we” animates my life’s work: advancing equity, justice and fair inclusion to create a society in which all can participate, prosper and reach their full potential.

Equity is the antidote to inequality, racial division and the inability to see oneself reflected in the aspirations or anguish of another. Equity recognizes that the future of a city, a region and the nation will be secure only if everyone can fully contribute to it. Equity is an expression of mutual purpose and shared destiny.

Consider the opening sentence of the Equity Manifesto that my organization, PolicyLink, has published: “It begins by joining together, believing in the potency of inclusion, and building from a common bond.”

In this time of sharp political division, these words may sound like a pipe dream. But equity is, in fact, a pragmatic approach to solving the nation’s biggest problems and greatest sources of tension: economic inequality and racial exclusion. Moreover, equity points to clear solutions that work. Decades of successful community-change efforts have demonstrated how to build neighborhoods and cities that tap the talents and skills and serve the hopes and needs of all, particularly low-income people, people of color and other historically marginalized groups.

The road to “a community of we” is equitable development.

Resurgent cities, including Pittsburgh, are beginning to walk this road, and it’s one of the most promising trends in America today. As the nation struggles to achieve robust, broadly shared prosperity amid historic demographic and economic shifts, cities are the crucibles where ambitious strategies can and must be forged to grow an economy and a society that work for all.

Cities showcase not only the nation’s greatest problems but also its greatest strengths. Cities drive economic innovation and incubate new forms of democratic engagement. They lead the demographic transition that will produce a people-of-color majority in the United States by 2044. According to the Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program, 98 percent of the population growth in the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the past 17 years has been fueled by people of color. And cities stand at the cutting edge of policy change that fosters justice and inclusion. This change is not only the right thing to do, but also an economic imperative.

> Research shows that inequality and racial segregation hamper economic growth. But **diversity and inclusion** propel business innovation, economic mobility, competitiveness in a global economy, and the cultural vitality that draws newcomers to the urban core.



After a half-century of policies that stripped inner cities of jobs, investment and white populations, cities large and small are rebounding. But their leaders increasingly recognize that this remarkable urban renaissance will be short-lived and contained to a few of their cities' more walkable neighborhoods if they only court a young, highly educated, mobile workforce and neglect longtime residents and established communities.

Research shows that inequality and racial segregation hamper economic growth. But diversity and inclusion propel business innovation, economic mobility, competitiveness in a global economy, and the cultural vitality that draws newcomers to the urban core.

Vibrant, equitable cities anchoring strong regions are key to sustained growth and prosperity.

That is why places like Pittsburgh must embrace equitable development, implementing policies and practices that connect the most vulnerable residents to opportunities in the evolving urban economy and ensure that these individuals are able to stay in their neighborhoods as they improve.

The building blocks of such cities also include accessible jobs that offer pathways to the middle class; cradle-to-career pipelines that nurture homegrown talent; high-quality affordable housing connected



to transportation, good schools and other essential infrastructure; just policing and court systems; and expanded opportunities for democratic engagement and civic leadership. Above all, these cities need policies, planning and investments designed to ensure that no one, or no group, is left behind or pushed out.

PolicyLink's All-In Cities initiative works to accelerate and amplify these efforts and spread best practices. The initiative supports local leaders and residents in collaboratively developing a vision of an equitable, prosperous future for their cities and establishing comprehensive strategies, based on local assets and circumstances, to create and sustain that future.

Our All-In Cities engagement in Pittsburgh has been particularly illuminating and inspiring.

As technology-driven companies, investment capital and young college graduates flocked to a city once shaken economically by the loss of its steel industry base, a stark question arose: A comeback for whom? Many people felt there were two Pittsburghs—one on the rise, the other shut out of opportunity by poverty, structural racism and discrimination. Data supported the concern. Racial gaps in wages, employment and poverty widened rather than narrowed, and the entire city bore the cost. Statistics from the National Equity Atlas show that Pittsburgh's economic output would be more than \$5 billion higher every year absent racial inequities in income.

Community, business, government and philanthropic leaders realized that targeted strategies were needed to reverse these inequities, grow the economy and make sure the city's rebirth benefits all, especially the communities of color that had lived through the years of decline after the steel industry collapsed. When PolicyLink was invited to Pittsburgh to help facilitate an equitable development strategy, we discovered a hunger to address the fragmentation across the city's 90 neighborhoods, tackle persistent structural and institutional racism, and prepare a homegrown workforce for the jobs employers will need to fill.

PolicyLink, Neighborhood Allies and Urban Innovation21 convened dozens of community leaders to create a shared definition of equitable development. The result embodies the spirit of "a community of we," saying in part: "Equitable development is a positive development strategy that ensures everyone participates in and benefits from the region's transformation." The definition calls for a focus on eliminating racial inequities and making accountable, catalytic

investments to ensure that lower-wealth residents live in safe, opportunity-rich neighborhoods that reflect their culture, connect to economic and ownership opportunities, and have influence in the decisions that shape their neighborhoods.

Three multi-sector working groups then developed recommendations for strategies and policies to create strong, equitable neighborhoods, expand economic opportunity, and build community voice and power. About 200 people from all walks of life provided input on the recommendations and the equitable development policy agenda, which was released in 2016. Our work complemented and informed efforts already underway to increase affordable housing in Pittsburgh while buttressing stances taken by Mayor Bill Peduto and other leaders that disregarding residents is not the way the city will do development.

Across the city, exciting models of equitable development point the way forward. In Homewood, a 100,000-square-foot former Westinghouse factory has been redeveloped into a business incubator, with 85 percent of the construction contracts going to minority-owned businesses and much of the labor done by youth who faced barriers to employment. On the North Side, thousands of residents across 18 neighborhoods are developing a community-driven revitalization plan for improving the quality of local education, employment and place. And a community land trust is being developed in Lawrenceville to enable those with modest incomes to purchase homes in the fast-gentrifying neighborhood. Plans are in the works to expand this community-ownership model.

These initiatives and others in the region underscore a valuable lesson: A newly booming city must not only think about itself differently, it also must operate differently. By seizing this comeback moment to embrace inclusion and advance the creativity and contributions of groups that have long been left behind, Pittsburgh is showing the nation how to create a better tomorrow for all. **h**

Angela Glover Blackwell is founder and CEO of PolicyLink, a national research and advocacy organization focused on economic and social equity. To learn about cities that Ms. Blackwell identifies as demonstrating success in promoting equity and experiencing its benefits, read her article "Three Ways to Make Equitable Development Work" at [www.heinz.org](http://www.heinz.org).

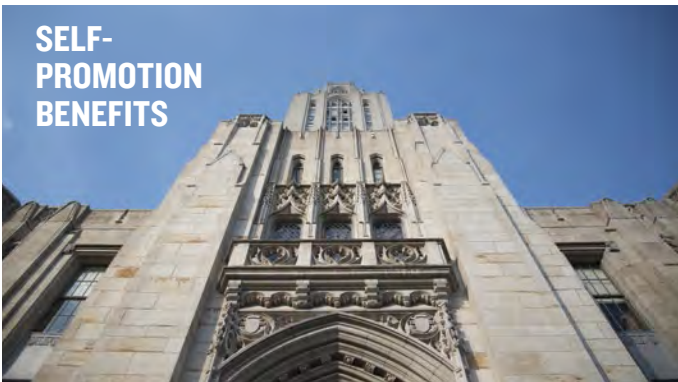
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## ASTHMA AND AIR POLLUTION

A Heinz Endowments-supported study released during this year's Pittsburgh-area asthma conference, "The Air We Breathe: A Regional Summit on Asthma in Our Community," found an alarming rate of asthma among schoolchildren who lived near industrial sources of air pollution. The prevalence rate of almost 25 percent among the students evaluated was more than double the Pennsylvania Department of Health's statewide figure of 10.2 percent for children and the federal rate of 8.6 percent for children. Lead researcher Dr. Deborah Gentile of the Division of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology at Pediatric Alliance, the region's largest physician-owned group pediatric practice, said the findings show that air pollution from industrial point sources plays a role in the high incidence of childhood asthma in the Pittsburgh region.



## SELF-PROMOTION BENEFITS



A study supported by the Endowments and the Henry L. Hillman Foundation has found that the Pittsburgh region needs to do more to promote its assets such as its top-rated universities and hospitals in order to boost population and economic growth. "Capturing the next economy: Pittsburgh's rise as a global innovation city" by the Washington, D.C.-based Brookings Institution includes recommendations such as defining an Oakland Innovation District that is centered in the neighborhood with one of the region's heaviest concentrations of universities. Oakland would be designated as the location where start-up companies and entrepreneurs collaborate closely with academic researchers. The study can be found on The Endowments' website, [www.heinz.org](http://www.heinz.org).

## MINI-GRANTS WITH MAJOR IMPACT

The Heinz Endowments' Learning team has launched a \$250,000 mini-grant program to support community-inspired projects in Pittsburgh's Hazelwood neighborhood. The initiative also marks the beginning of a broad giving strategy that combines increased community participation, an emphasis on equity and efforts to encourage partnerships that can leverage more resources. Grants of up to \$25,000 were awarded in early October to proposals that promote family and child well-being or increase innovative education opportunities for children and youth. The Endowments' Learning team plans to expand this grantmaking approach to several other Pittsburgh neighborhoods in the future.



Sean Means

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## RETURN ENGAGEMENTS

Two Heinz Endowments-sponsored projects that had been on hiatus — the Summer Youth Philanthropy Program and the Heinz Fellows initiative — returned this year. Eleven students who completed either their junior or their senior year of high school worked this summer as youth philanthropy interns for the Endowments. The teens were divided into four groups that recommended grants awards to different programs of up to \$25,000, for a grantmaking total of \$100,000. The interns recommended funding projects that support youth in Pittsburgh's Hill District, Homewood and Hazelwood neighborhoods.

As part of the Heinz Fellows program, 15 college-educated, social justice-oriented adults were awarded yearlong fellowships administered by the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Urban Education. These Heinz Fellows are mentoring students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools while receiving leadership and professional development training aimed at expanding their knowledge and involvement in urban education.

## NEW ADDITIONS

Recent additions to The Heinz Endowments staff include Scott Roller as strategic communications officer. Mr. Roller is helping to strengthen storytelling focused on the Endowments' grantmaking, community initiatives and special events. He previously worked for the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy where he was senior manager of communications and creative, overseeing the organization's public relations and marketing activities.

Mac Howison is the new program officer for Creative Learning, focusing primarily on grantee initiatives that intersect with the Endowments' Creativity and Learning strategic areas. Mr. Howison had served as senior program officer for catalytic funding at The Sprout Fund, spearheading grantmaking programs, supervising funding resources awarded through the organization's programs, and overseeing its grantee portfolio.

Shaunda Miles joined the Endowments as the Creativity area's Arts & Culture program officer, after more than a decade of nonprofit executive and arts management experience. She most recently was a publicist with Blake Zidell and Associates, a Brooklyn-based public relations firm representing artists, arts institutions and festivals.



## RETHINKING VETERANS

A major public campaign developed by the Endowments and local advertising agency Garrison Hughes is helping to promote a true understanding of the challenges faced by veterans seeking to re-integrate into the community after active military service. The campaign highlights the range of skills, qualifications and strong leadership qualities these men and women could provide businesses and communities if given the opportunity. The messaging refers individuals to a special website, [www.RethinkVets.org](http://www.RethinkVets.org), created to offer further information and resources to veterans, their families, potential employers and the public. The site features profiles of veterans and local organizations that provide support services and information about veterans' needs and abilities.

## A MONTH OF MEETINGS



October was packed with major gatherings spearheaded or otherwise supported by the Endowments. Galvanized by the events in Charlottesville, Va., the foundation organized a "Nonprofits and the Call to Moral Leadership" seminar on Oct. 3 at the August Wilson Center for African American Culture, left. Nearly 400 Endowments grantee partners explored how to make their voices heard to defend their organizations' values, and support the individuals they serve. The event addressed critical issues of racial, social and economic equity in the Pittsburgh region.




The Endowments partnered with the Climate Reality Project, led by former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, to bring the 36th Climate Reality Corps activist training to Pittsburgh's David L. Lawrence Convention Center Oct. 17-19. More than 1,700 people from around the world attended, making it the largest convening since Mr. Gore founded the initiative in 2006. Scientists and other experts instructed participants on how to organize their communities for action on the climate crisis. The Climate Reality Project has trained more than 12,000 Climate Reality Leaders from 137 countries.

Other significant gatherings supported by the Endowments included the 27th annual conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists, hosted by the University of Pittsburgh, and a Carnegie Mellon University brain conference that examined adolescent brain development. Experts in their fields came to Pittsburgh from across the country for both events. Also, a two-day community celebration in Hazelwood set the stage for unveiling a new name, Hazelwood Green, for the 178-acre former steel mill site previously known as Almono. The property, owned by the Endowments and the Richard King Mellon and Benedum foundations, is being redeveloped as a green, high-tech center with offices, housing and recreation.

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Love triumphs over hate. ...  
You can be on the side of love,  
peace or justice, or you can  
succumb to war, hate and greed. p.9

WE CANNOT BECOME  
“A COMMUNITY OF WE” UNTIL  
THE LEADERSHIP REPRESENTS  
ALL THE DIFFERENT LIVED  
EXPERIENCES IN PITTSBURGH. p.32

Creating “a community of we” means giving everyone a  
seat at the table, empowering each other, and connecting  
with our neighbors to build relationships and empathy. p.15

Inclusion has to be an  
everyday process,  
with small and big things  
given attention. p.19

We have to fight a lack of trust—the  
idea that if you think differently from me,  
you’re not telling the truth. p.29

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