

here&there

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.

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.

Joshua Franzos

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, 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.