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The Magazine of The Heinz Endowments

AUGUST CELEBRATION

Defying a troubled economy, Pittsburgh's August Wilson Center rises to meet lofty expectations as the preeminent showcase for African American culture in Pittsburgh

inside

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 thrive as a whole community—economically, ecologically, educationally and culturally—while advancing the state of knowledge and practice in

the fields in which we work. Our fields of emphasis include philanthropy in general and the disciplines represented by our five grant-making programs: Arts & Culture; Children, Youth & Families; Education; Environment; and Innovation Economy.

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 grant-making 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 Bannon, Linda Braund, Donna Evans, Carmen Lee, Douglas Root, Robert Vagt. Design: Landesberg Design

About the cover Designed by San Francisco-based architect Allison Williams, the metal-and-glass-encased August Wilson Center for African American Culture displays the rich artistic contributions of African Americans and offers its own panoramic view of Pittsburgh's downtown Cultural District.

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Volume 9 Number 4 Fall 2009

4

Welcoming a World

With the G-20 Summit over, Pittsburgh government and community leaders recall the triumphs and trials as they calculate the economic returns.



12

Center of Celebration

Pittsburgh's August Wilson Center for African American Culture is brimming with activities and plans—with a few challenges in the mix.

24

Top Soil

Green roofs are growing in popularity in Pittsburgh and helping to change the look of the region's environmental landscape.



2 Feedback

3 Message

32 Here & There

Welcoming, Page 4



feedback

Our Summer issue highlighted the 25th anniversary of the transformation of Pittsburgh's downtown red-light district into the region's center for art and culture. We also looked at how the nonprofit Construction Junction turns demolition waste into usable material for construction and home décor, and at how the Endowments' summer internship program helps high school graduates learn about philanthropy and their community.

Building Trust (Summer 2009)

Christine O'Toole's article "Building Trust," about the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's 25th anniversary, perfectly illustrates the vision and creativity of those who sought to convert the city's seedy red-light district into a sophisticated cultural center.

Jack Heinz and a group of smart, creative visionaries built more than just the Cultural District; they also helped to transform Pittsburgh into America's Most Livable City. As the region was reeling from the loss of the steel mills and half its population in the 1970s, Jack Heinz's bold decision to invest in the creation of a world-class cultural scene was a catalyst for the city's second Renaissance. This Renaissance laid the foundation for the administration of my father, Mayor Richard Caliguiri, and forever improved the landscape and image of Pittsburgh.

The fact that a mid-size city like ours has as many wonderful cultural opportunities as it does is not by coincidence, but rather a result of the Trust's continuing vision to pursue an ambitious programming agenda. The energy and vibrancy of the Cultural District today gives Pittsburghers the opportunity to experience first-rate performances, as well as new options for living in a revitalized downtown.

Aside from being mayor, my father had a secret desire to be a tap dancer—though from what I can remember, he wasn't much on his feet. Regardless, he often took my brother and me to see plays, the opera or the symphony. It was his way of teaching us that Pittsburgh was more than just sports and steel. I know I have enjoyed taking my children to experience world-class arts right here in their hometown.

I also know that my father, like Jack Heinz, would be enormously proud of what the Cultural Trust has created in 25 years. I, for one, can't wait to see what it does in its next 25 for an encore.

David J. Caliguiri
Consultant, GSP Consulting
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Stage Craft (Winter 2009)

"There are no small parts, only small actors," goes a familiar saying among theater folk, though it is frequently uttered with a knowing tone of disbelief. (Oh, yes, there are small roles.) Jeff Sewald's "Stage Craft" article for *h* moves me to adapt the shibboleth, without the cynicism, to "There are no small arts organizations, only small budgets."

From my own experience in the arts and as a theater arts professor, I can tell you that anyone who has managed an arts organization knows there is no direct, positive correlation between the quality of an artistic event and its budget size. If there were, we would never have heard of multi-million-dollar flops on Broadway. Nor is the inverse true: Poverty does not guarantee integrity.

Pittsburgh's small arts community proves again and again the virtues of working small: diversities of size, ethnicity and genre; risk-taking; the discovery of new voices and talents. It is our great fortune that the foundation community has, for a long time, recognized small arts organizations as artisanal providers. A key component of Pittsburgh audiences avidly seeks them out the way some of us go after local produce, homemade pies and free-range chickens.

Foundations, corporations and patrons with discretionary dollars to spend must remember that in tight times, small arts organizations need extra protection because their margin for survival is so narrow. They are our one essential luxury.

Attilio Favorini
Professor of Theater Arts
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Turning Yellow Buses Green (Spring 2009)

As described in Christine O'Toole's *h* magazine story "Turning Yellow Buses Green," the importance of retrofitting school buses with pollution controls cannot be overstated. I head Environment and Human Health Inc., a nonprofit composed of doctors, public health professionals and policy experts dedicated to protecting human health from environmental harms through research, education and improving public policy. When our group conducted a 2002 study on school bus pollution, we found that children were exposed to diesel exhaust on their school buses at levels that were five to 10 times higher than the outside ambient air.

At the time of my organization's study, buses were not retrofitted with pollution controls, and they also were allowed to idle. Our report, "Children's Exposure to Diesel Exhaust on School Buses," recommended a ban on school bus idling. This was the cheapest and easiest way to reduce some diesel exposures. Connecticut state legislators passed this law after they saw the exposure data in our report.

Our second recommendation was to retrofit the school buses with pollution controls. We knew that a retrofit program would give the school children the added protection they needed, but we also knew it would take money to accomplish. This is why it was so exciting to see the wonderful *h* magazine article about the retrofit program in the Pittsburgh area.

Congratulations to all for undertaking such important work and protecting children's health.

Nancy Alderman
President
Environment and Human Health Inc.
North Haven, Conn.

Correction: A photo caption for the "How We Spent Our Summer Vacation" story about the Endowments' youth philanthropy internship misidentified a Marilyn G. Rabb Foundation peace rally.

message



Barry Lavery

By Teresa Heinz
Chairman, The Heinz Endowments

Christine Russell and Susan Bechtold live on opposite sides of the state, but they have something important in common — something that every Pennsylvanian with a preschool child should have.

Christine, a nursing student in Pottstown in southeastern Pennsylvania, and Susan, who manages the family household in Verona in the southwest, are also busy mothers on tight budgets. Each has two children who are thriving in the statewide network of high-quality preschool education programs known as Pre-K Counts. That network, created by The Heinz Endowments in Pittsburgh and the state Office of Child Development and Early Learning, and supported by foundation partners William Penn in Philadelphia and Grable in Pittsburgh, has, according to the two women, profoundly improved their children's learning ability, and put them on track for school success.

After moving from a church day care to a Pre-K program with lesson plans and field trips — a theater trip featured “Charlotte’s Web” — Susan’s daughter Adeline blossomed. “You see her beaming about what she’s learned,” says Susan, “and you know there’s no stopping her.”

Christine says her son Joshua’s experience in Pre-K has been life changing. His teacher, Tina Brenner, noticed socialization problems and referred him to experts who diagnosed Asperger’s syndrome, an autism spectrum disorder that hampers socialization and communication. Joshua was able to get immediate help and — rather than being shunted into a special program — has been able to remain in his classroom, and to learn to socialize.

These powerful experiences explain why Christine and Susan are disgusted over attempts by some state legislators during the recent marathon budget stand-off to cut support for early childhood education.

Christine organized a postcard-campaign protest. Such citizen actions — along with unflinching support from Gov. Ed Rendell — won the day. But she wonders: “Isn’t there something that would end the debate once and for all?”

Well, now there is hard evidence that these programs work; that they are worth every penny.

Announced in Pittsburgh in October were results of a three-year study of learning gains by 10,000 Pennsylvania children at risk for future poor performance in school — one of the largest studies of this group ever undertaken in the country.

Among the significant findings were that children’s learning improved across racial and ethnic lines; projected special education placements dropped dramatically; nearly 7,000 high-risk Pre-K Counts children exceeded expected competencies at transition to kindergarten; and the skills of 5-year-olds exceeded those of age peers nationally. Complete results can be found at www.heinz.org.

But the over-arching message is this: High-quality early learning programs dramatically improve high-risk children’s prospects in formal schooling. This study should finally silence critics who complain about low return on investment and end the debate over state support for these efforts and the children they help.

In the course of our work in early childhood education — \$44.5 million in grants in the past 13 years — I have insisted on independent, rigorous evaluation. The study, funded by a \$1 million Endowments grant, was conducted by Dr. Stephen Bagnato of the University of Pittsburgh’s Early Childhood Partnerships and managed by the Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation.

It validates with numbers what mothers like Christine and Susan have seen in their own children and know in their own hearts.

When the discussion moves from the ornate chambers of the state legislature to small kitchens crowded with high chairs and booster seats, the results are obvious. The debate is not about whether to enroll, it’s about how to afford it. When Susan learned about the quality of the Pre-K Counts program run by her local Riverview School District, and that she would qualify for free tuition, she jumped.

“A few weeks after my daughter started, she was telling me the difference between ‘deciduous’ and ‘evergreen,’” says Susan.

And for those who continue to argue about the taxpayer costs, there is Christine’s son, Joshua. By keeping him out of special education, the program saved the school system tens of thousands of dollars.

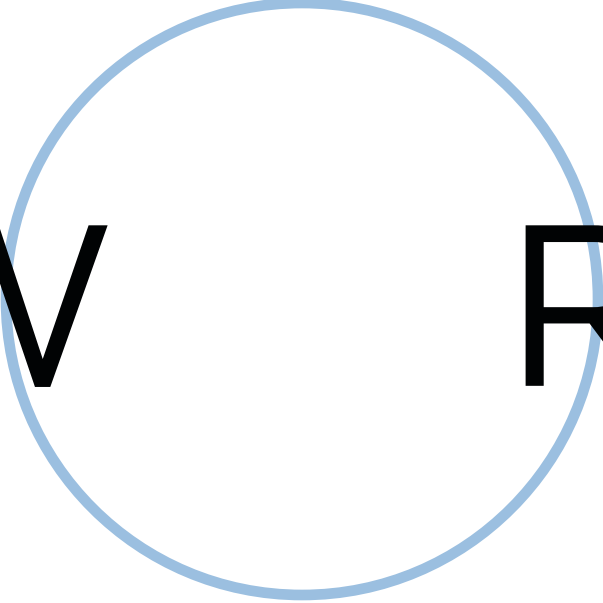
But right now, success stories like Adeline and Joshua are too rare. Most of Pennsylvania’s children don’t have access to the kind of classrooms that are changing their lives.

Heinz began funding early education pilot programs 15 years ago. Back then, compelling stories and studies outside Pennsylvania moved us to take on an enormously risky investment. The difficulty lay not in creating high-quality programs, but in bringing them to scale. There were hard lessons, and the system-building was painstaking — community by community, partner by partner.

Now, this definitive study allows us to declare victory in the debate over the value of these high-quality programs. It’s time to move forward, then, and ensure that every child in Pennsylvania can be like Joshua and Adeline, that every parent has the support that Christine and Susan needed. Their future, and ours, depends on it. *h*

This column was first published Oct. 23 in the Philadelphia Inquirer as part of the Endowments’ statewide public announcement of the result of the Pre-K Counts study.

WELCOMING

A W  RLD

THE GLOW—OR GLARE, DEPENDING ON YOUR PERSPECTIVE—OF INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION FROM THE G-20 SUMMIT HAS FADED IN PITTSBURGH, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THE EVENT HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN. NUMBERS-CRUNCHERS ACROSS THE REGION ARE TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHETHER THE MOST PROFIT FROM HOSTING THE SEPTEMBER CONFERENCE IS YET TO COME. BY JEFFERY FRASER

Although the primary stage for September's G-20 Summit was the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, the world was the audience for President Barack Obama and his guests from around the globe.



Pittsburgh venues assumed international grandeur for the summit, as was the case for the opening dinner at Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens where President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama welcomed guests such as French President Nicolas Sarkozy and his wife, Carla Bruni-Sarkozy.

Richard Piacentini had pitched Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens as a showcase of Pittsburgh progress two months earlier, hoping it might host one of the events planned for the heads of state coming to town for the G-20 Summit. Now, here they were: President Barack Obama, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the leaders of other global economic powers, mingling over cocktails and taking their first meal together in the leafiness of one of the most energy-efficient, environmentally sustainable public gardens in the world.

When notified July 29 that Phipps was chosen as the venue for the Sept. 24 summit welcome, cocktail party and leaders' dinner, Piacentini's first thought was, "This is a dream come true.

"My second reaction was, 'Oh, no,'" says the executive director of the 106-year-old conservatory. "The city will be counting on us. If something goes wrong, Pittsburgh will look bad. That was the kind of pressure we worked under."

A project manager and subcontractors were hired, walls were painted, rooms renovated and sidewalks repaired. A dining table was built of century-old oak trees felled in North Park a year earlier. Security and other details were fine-tuned to the specifications of the Secret Service, State Department and Office of the First Lady. Nothing was left to chance, as suggested by the handwritten note on a staff copy of the dinner menu that read, "No beets for the prez," to remind servers of Obama's aversion to the reddish-purple vegetable.

Around 11 that evening, after the leaders of nations had left, the head of the White House advance team approached Piacentini. "The president is happy," he confided. "You hit a home run."

By most accounts, the same can be said of the region as a whole. "We did very well in terms of taking care of the delegations that came and the press covering the story of 'Why Pittsburgh?'" says Craig Davis, vice president of sales and marketing for VisitPittsburgh, the official tourist promotion agency of Allegheny County. "That was the first story reported. Fortunately, it's a great story, and I think it was an image changer."

"Why Pittsburgh?" was initially answered by Obama, who saw the G-20 Summit as an opportunity for officials from the "Group of 20" leading international economies—19 countries and the European Union—to continue working toward solving the global economic crisis. He characterized the city as a "bold example of how to create jobs and industries while transitioning to a 21st-century economy.

"As a city that has transformed itself from the City of Steel to a center for high-tech innovation—including green technology, education, and research and development—Pittsburgh will provide both a beautiful backdrop and a powerful example for our work," the president remarked two weeks before the Sept. 24–25 summit.

Downplayed were other explanations of how Pittsburgh won the hosting honor. Some local news reports and the Wall Street Journal briefly mentioned that having the summit in or near New York City had been considered. But with the United Nations General Assembly scheduled there for the same week, adding the summit was determined to be too much and visiting foreign officials not invited might have been insulted. However, local Pittsburgh leaders insisted comments were untrue that a number of other cities turned down hosting the event before Pittsburgh was approached.

Regardless, once Pittsburgh emerged as the site choice, many agreed that it was an exciting, if stress-inducing, opportunity: hosting the world's most crucial economic forum before an



international audience and having the president of the United States validate the region's transformation and strengths.

Now that the summit is over, local leaders of all stripes—government, business, civic and community—are trying to determine whether Pittsburgh enjoyed only a transitory moment in the sun or if enough good impressions were made to yield lasting benefits, especially economic ones.

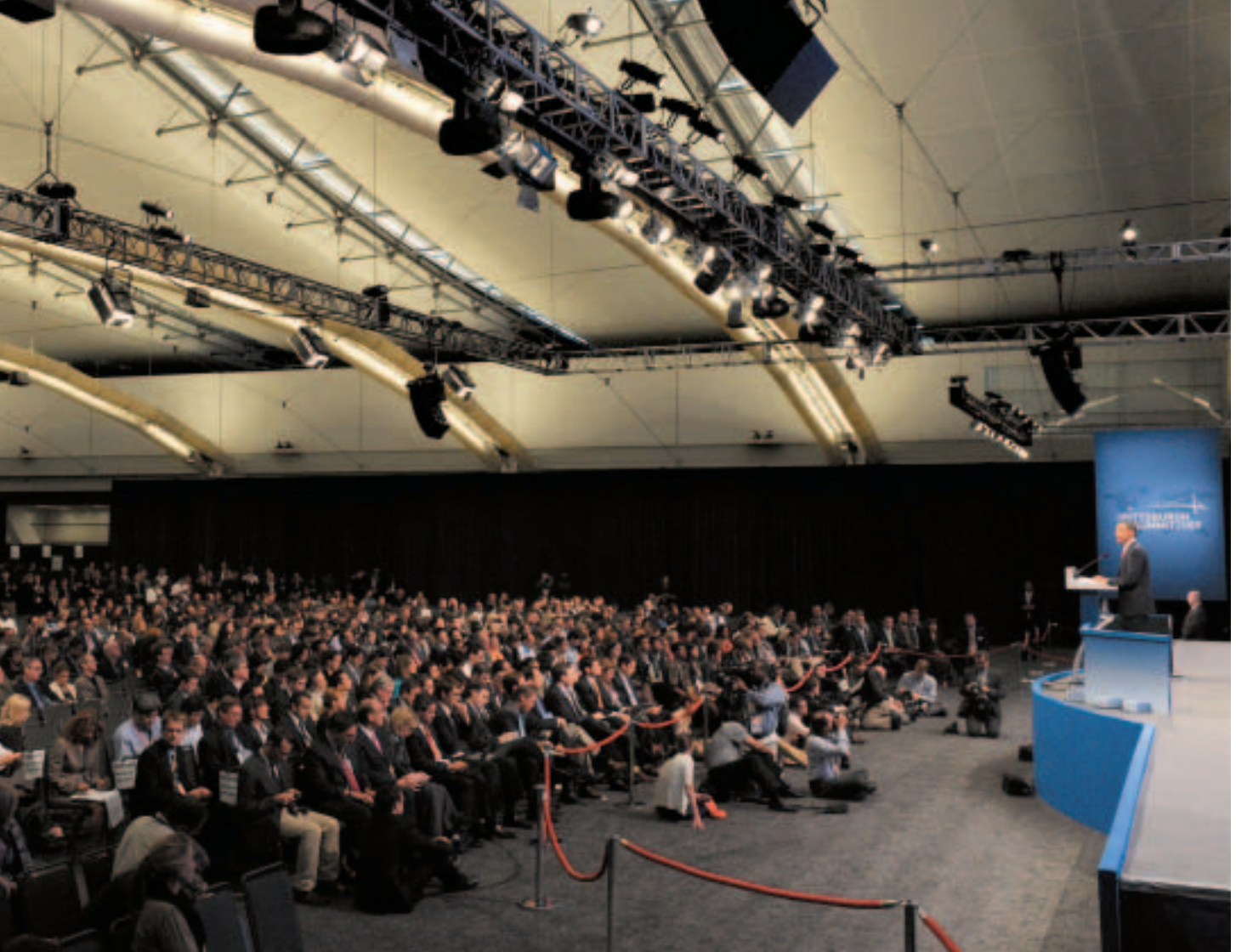
"I think a lot of economic growth and development is about positive psychology," says Christina Gabriel, director of The Heinz Endowments' Innovation Economy Program, which targets its support at advancing innovation and economic growth, expanding opportunities to a diverse population and creating a more viable economic climate. "If Pittsburgh is seen as a place that learned to turn itself around, that puts us in a position where people are more likely to invest here."

A city fact-finding commission is reviewing policies, decisions and other issues related to the summit. The G-20 budget totaled about \$16 million, with \$10 million promised by the federal government, \$4 million by the state, and less than \$2 million set aside by the city and Allegheny County. Seattle, by comparison, had budgeted \$3 million to host the 1999 World Trade Organization conference, but ended up spending nearly \$9 million. Pittsburgh City Councilman Patrick Dowd, who called for the fact-finding commission and received support for the idea from a majority of his council colleagues, says its purpose is to learn from the G-20 experience and improve the city's capacity to host other major events. A cost-benefit analysis is expected to be part of the commission's review. And early indications suggest the summit's impact was largely favorable and substantial.

The most immediate and obvious effect was the upsurge in attention the city received from around the globe. News coverage of the summit and Pittsburgh was intense and far-reaching. As of October, VisitPittsburgh had counted 6,975 stories about Pittsburgh written or broadcast by U.S. news organizations during the summit and the months leading up to it. Foreign press accounts had not been tallied, but anecdotal examples were plentiful. Many stories, particularly those done prior to the summit, painted an image of the region similar to the one offered by the White House, detailing its transition to a diversified economy, environmental progress, and the richness of its arts and culture.

Those strengths were underscored by the venues selected for major G-20 events.

The summit sessions were held at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, the first convention center in the world to earn LEED Gold Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council for leadership in energy and environmental design. The Welcome Center at Phipps was the first LEED-certified building in a public garden. Its Tropical Forest Conservatory is considered the world's most energy-efficient conservatory, and Phipps is designing its new Center for Sustainable Landscapes as a "living building" with a self-contained energy and water supply. Phipps was seen as a symbol of the city's transformation, having been opened as a terribly energy-inefficient glass house during Pittsburgh's industrial revolution—a time, Piacentini says, "when people thought we were going to conquer nature, and there was no limit to the amount of resources we could use or pollution we could release."



Top, LPI Photo/Roger Wollenberg; Bottom left, White House photo; Bottom right, Copyright © Pittsburgh Post-Gazette 2009, all rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.

“WHEN YOU THINK THAT THE G-20 COVERAGE CAME JUST A YEAR AFTER THE COVERAGE OF PITTSBURGH 250... IT HAS REALLY BEEN A ONE-TWO PUNCH IN RESHAPING THE IMAGE OF PITTSBURGH AND BRANDING THE REGION AS ‘CHANGE MAKER TO THE WORLD.’” Michele Fabrizi, president and CEO of MARC USA



International visitors to Pittsburgh included a phalanx of journalists, shown at left during Obama's post-summit news conference. Spouses of world leaders, below left, received special attention that included a dinner hosted by First Lady Michelle Obama at Rosemont Farm, the suburban Pittsburgh home of Endowments Chairman Teresa Heinz, third from the right at the table. The spouses also were treated during the summit to a performance at the Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts High School by world-famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma and CAPA junior Jason Yoder, a percussionist.

Both the convention center and Phipps have received support from local foundations, as have three other institutions that were chosen as G-20 venues: First Lady Michelle Obama hosted a luncheon for world leaders at the Andy Warhol Museum, the largest single-artist museum in the country and an institution known for its thought-provoking exhibits. The first lady also led a tour of the city school district's Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts High School, a state-of-the-art facility in the downtown Cultural District. Sarah Brown, wife of British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, was hosted by Endowments Chairman Teresa Heinz at Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC, where she toured its research institute to learn more about the pregnancy and neonatal research done there.

Together, all five venues represent an investment of about \$17.7 million in Endowments grant making alone in two decades. In addition, while world leaders were working over dinner at Phipps on the opening evening of the summit, their spouses dined at Rosemont Farm, Mrs. Heinz's Fox Chapel home.

The White House chose the locations from some 300 that had applied to be considered. Also as part of the preparations, local public officials, agencies and private organizations collaborated on short notice to iron out other details, ranging from tidying up downtown to stationing volunteer interpreters at hotels hosting foreign dignitaries and staff. Foundations joined corporations in funding efforts to help visitors learn more about Pittsburgh and its transformation.

"The foundations' role in the turnaround—which led President Barack Obama to choose Pittsburgh to host the Group of 20 global economic summit in September—may be one of the area's best-kept secrets," wrote Associated Press reporter Ramit Plushnick-Masti.

Mrs. Heinz echoed those sentiments during an interview with the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette: "There's a bond like family, inasmuch as these foundations represent peoples' interests in the community."

Perhaps the best example of teamwork for the summit was the crafting of a media strategy to focus news coverage on selected regional strengths. Planning began nearly three months prior to the summit and involved a broad public-private consortium led by the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. A set of talking points was developed to define the region, and community leaders considered likely to be interviewed were asked to fold them into their remarks. Journalists were provided background and contacts through a Pittsburgh G-20 Partnership

Web site. The result was a uniform message emphasizing such things as how the region has invested in research and entrepreneurship; how it has built on its historic strengths, such as advanced manufacturing and financial services; and how quality of life has improved through investment in the arts and environment, including green technologies.

The media strategy had its limits. It could not, for example, avert attention from the protests that took place during the summit and the controversy arising from efforts to contain them. By the numbers, there initially appeared little cause for concern. More than 100 demonstrators were arrested, most on minor charges such as failure to disperse, and no major injuries or deaths were reported. A similar number of arrests were made in April during the G-20 meeting in London. But there, a news vendor returning home from work died of an apparent heart attack after being struck with a baton by police. The Pittsburgh G-20 protests also paled in comparison to those seen during the 1999 meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle, where more than 500 demonstrators were arrested, and property damage and loss of sales to businesses reached an estimated \$20 million.

However, some efforts to control those who took to the streets of Pittsburgh have been criticized as heavy-handed attempts to stifle public dissent. Downtown, the city's 900 police officers, National Guard troops and some 3,000 additional local and out-of-town police and state troopers contained most of the protestors. The demonstrations that did occur were largely nonviolent, with the exception of sporadic acts of vandalism—mostly window breaking—in neighborhoods outside of the city's central core. Crowd-control tactics included the use of tear gas and "long-range acoustic devices," truck-mounted public-address systems capable of broadcasting loud messages or ear-piercing signals. Some 75 complaints related to police methods were filed with the city's Citizen's Police Review Board.

"It seems to me that ever since Seattle, the mindset has been that we're not going to let that kind of property damage happen again," says Witold Walczak, legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania. "During the G-20, it appeared to us that the intent was to suppress demonstrators and demonstrations in order to minimize property damage.

"The police treated demonstrators as if they were suspected terrorists. They systematically abused and mistreated these people. Most of these demonstrators were young. The message, as I see it, was if you're a young person, don't bother coming to Pittsburgh."

Behind the official scenes of the G-20 Summit were a range of less glamorous activities. Above, workers boarded up and painted the windows of vacant buildings. The imposing presence of police from around the country kept many downtown streets orderly—and empty. Below, some protests that did occur, such as the “People’s March to the G-20,” were spirited but led only to a total of about 100 arrests, most on minor charges. Other rallies took a calmer approach, like the “Gathering of One” pre-summit prayer for peace and unity, which took place at a site overlooking Pittsburgh’s downtown.

Concern over the possibility of protest-related damage and restricted access to downtown also led to many merchants shuttering their businesses during the summit. “In some ways,” says Michael Edwards, president and CEO of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, “it was very much a ghost town.”

Ken Zeff closed eight of his 11 downtown Crazy Mocha coffee shops, several because the office buildings housing them were in lockdown. And the three stores that stayed open did about half of their typical weekday business. Although sales at a few stores in other city neighborhoods were up a bit, Zeff says, “overall, it was a lousy three days of business.”

But Edwards believes that, in general, the G-20 had a positive impact on Pittsburgh’s downtown, even though it posed challenges for a number of street-level merchants. From a business perspective, there were clear winners, including local hotels, taxi and limousine services and some restaurants, particularly those in downtown hotels. On a peak day, local hotels have the capacity to book about 8,000 room-nights. During the two-day summit, they booked nearly 14,000 room-nights. “That’s a large part of our inventory,” says VisitPittsburgh’s Davis.

The steady drumming of Pittsburgh’s image as a shining example of rebirth after devastating industrial decline also offered a powerful alternative view of the city to counter, if not prevent, any less-than-positive publicity. That story was widely communicated around the world by the nearly 4,000 journalists on hand to cover the G-20 Summit. “Slowly, Pittsburgh’s transformation has captured the attention of other communities now confronted with economic crises of their own,” a Financial Times of London reporter wrote. “This week’s Group of 20 Summit will only highlight the city’s progress, signaling to cities such as Detroit and Cleveland that they can once again become vibrant.”

Writing in *Forbes*, Raquel Laneri described Pittsburgh as “the new symbol of modernity and progress,” rich with foundations devoted to the city and home to “a staggering number of green technology entrepreneurs.”

“If Angela Merkel, Silvio Berlusconi, Gordon Brown, or any of the other hundreds of foreign government officials are looking for inspiration on how to revive their economies,” *The Atlantic* reported, “they could do worse than to walk through Pittsburgh’s neighborhoods, which brim with reminders that just about everything old can be new again.”

The praise was eagerly welcomed by local leaders. “If we had hired a public relations firm, I don’t think it would’ve been

possible to achieve this,” says Bill Flanagan, vice president of corporate communications at the Allegheny Conference. “It worked because collectively we were able to get a framework that everyone was willing to support and because of the nature of this community. There were so many leaders of civic organizations, corporations and foundations who were willing to help. I’m not sure you could exercise that strategy in too many other places.”

An analysis that could put a dollar value on the publicity the region received has not been completed. But from what she observed, Michele Fabrizi believes the impact was significant and the advertising value of the media exposure could be as much as \$20 million. “When you think that the G-20 coverage came just a year after the coverage of Pittsburgh 250—which generated major coverage in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, etc.—it has really been a one-two punch in reshaping the image of Pittsburgh and branding the region as ‘change maker to the world,’” says Fabrizi, president and chief executive officer of MARC USA, a Pittsburgh-based advertising, marketing and communications agency.

Measuring the full impact of hosting the summit in dollars and cents will be a challenge. Dowd received e-mails before, during and after the summit from friends across the nation and overseas who were struck by the images of Pittsburgh as a modern, vital American city. One friend from New Orleans was surprised to learn of the region’s green economy, robust medical and life sciences industries, and educational opportunities. “She’s never been here, and she’s already heard that story and knows it,” says the city councilman. “I don’t know how you quantify that. But I know that’s what is going to change people’s perceptions and get them to recognize Pittsburgh as a place that is successful and moving into the future.”

GlobalPittsburgh, which works to connect the region and its companies and organizations with other nations, is already reporting a sharp increase in foreign delegations interested in visiting the area, including groups from 15 nations during October alone. Those visitors included green technology policy-makers from European Union nations, European journalists reporting on green technology issues and Japanese municipal officials. A few days before the summit, a delegation of Canadian government officials arrived to observe the city’s preparations. In June, Canada will host the G-20 Summit in Toronto; smaller, more secluded Canadian towns will be the sites for the G-8 and G-7 economic meetings in the coming months.



Compared with that of several other mid-sized cities, the number of international visitors to Pittsburgh has been about average, based on statistics from the National Council on International Visitors, GlobalPittsburgh's national affiliate. Staff members at the local organization now expect the annual number of foreign visitors they will host to jump from 600 to 700 this fiscal year, and they believe it is possible to reach 2,000 annual international visitors within three to five years. "Many of these delegations visit two, three, maybe four cities in the United States," says Roger Cranville, GlobalPittsburgh's president. "They often come here with low expectations, but leave with a heightened sense of how progressive this region is. They then become ambassadors for the region and help build that Pittsburgh knowledge base around the world and spread the word about how visionary our region is."

The G-20 Summit also demonstrated the region's capacity to meet the challenges of hosting a major world event. The job of preparing the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, for instance, included installing building-wide Wi-Fi; 1,800 wired Internet drops; connectivity to allow simultaneous translation of 13 languages—and disposing of 21 tons of trash, 15 of which were recycled or reclaimed. "The fact that the president chose us, and that we worked with the White House to meet all of their requirements, should give others confidence that we can meet the needs of their events as well," says Mary Conturo, executive director of the Sports & Exhibition Authority.

The extensive media coverage of the G-20 also could raise awareness among local residents of the value of the region's amenities, such as its arts and culture.

"I don't think it was lost on our civic leadership that the president and first lady decided that our cultural venues were among the things they wanted to show the world," says Janet Sarbaugh, senior director of the Endowments' Arts & Culture Program. "Hopefully, that will resonate with the community so everyone will understand that our cultural sector is a treasure."

The focus on the region's environmental progress and status as a leading center for green building kept Holly Childs on the road for three weeks following the summit, giving presentations on green building to groups ranging from the National Association of Office Properties to the Greensburg Civic and Garden Club. "There is definitely new interest in this because it has been such a big part of why the city was selected for the G-20," says Childs, executive director of Green Building Alliance, a Pittsburgh-based nonprofit. "People are calling to ask what they need to do to get more green building in their area, what are the best practices and what can they learn from Pittsburgh."

Two weeks after the G-20 Summit, the United Nations named Pittsburgh as the North American host of World Environment Day next year, once again casting the spotlight on the region's achievements and, say some, challenging the region to push the envelope of progress.

"It's up to us to keep that story going," says Caren Glotfelty, director of the Endowments' Environment Program. "We have to look in the mirror and admit that, while we love this green image, if you dig deep enough, we aren't as green as we could be. Our air quality is among the worst in the nation. There are legacy industrial issues we haven't solved. Let's use this moment to commit to making progress on those issues so we can say in 2010 that we've moved the needle." *h*



CENTER OF

San Francisco-based architect Allison Williams included several unique design elements in the August Wilson Center for African American Culture, not the least of which is its two-story, metal-and-glass sail that anchors one end of the building and represents the journeys of both Swahili traders and European slave merchants.

CELEBRATION

MORE THAN A DECADE IN THE MAKING, THE MUCH-HERALDED AUGUST WILSON CENTER FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE OPENS ITS DOORS WITH EQUALLY HERALDED EXPECTATIONS. CHIEF AMONG THEM IS FOLLOWING ITS FAMOUS NAMESAKE TO WIN BROAD AUDIENCES THAT APPRECIATE THE SPECIAL NATURE OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN PITTSBURGH. BY CHRISTINE H. O'TOOLE

Artistic statements are made throughout the Wilson Center, including along the building's grand staircase, right, above, where photographs by the late Pittsburgh Courier photographer Charles "Teenie" Harris line one wall. The center also houses practice rooms where local and visiting performers can hone their craft. Below, dancers with Philadanco! The Philadelphia Dance Company, conduct a master class in the second-floor studio for more than 50 people. The company was in Pittsburgh for a performance at the center in September.

oodies, headphones and hip-hop: Those were the common elements of a fall Saturday morning workshop in a light-filled downtown room at Pittsburgh's August Wilson Center for African American Culture. Twenty would-be scratch-and-mix artists gathered around a table full of expensive turntables, drum machines and speakers the size of a waist-high African drum for a high-energy pop culture lesson. The group was listening to a self-described "audio hustler" nicknamed DJ Soy Sos teach a class on disc jockeying.

With fresh definitions of performance, the Wilson Center—so brand new that it is still completing finishing touches, like outlet covers—is welcoming a brand-new audience. These particular visitors had just passed walls hung with vibrant photographs by the late Charles "Teenie" Harris, legendary photographer for the Pittsburgh Courier newspaper. They had walked by an interactive, multimedia exhibit of the city's African American history, captured on clusters of computer monitors, projected on large screens and able to morph from story to story with the touch of a finger. They'd peeked into the center's curved 486-seat theater, accented in purple, and climbed its grand staircase to high-ceiling practice rooms that look out onto downtown through expansive panels of glass. And now the would-be DJs, a mix of high school students, college hipsters, middle-aged moms and white-bearded R&B fans, crowded around turntables, listening intently.

"You've got to have the latest cuts, you've got to blend your beats and you've got to be professional," Soy Sos, aka Herman Pearl, told the group, as a Mary J. Blige recording thumped through the room. "What can you provide that no one else can?"

The question that Pearl posed to his rapt audience is the same one that the new center has embraced since its inception among black community leaders in Pittsburgh more than a decade ago. A broad coalition of African American community leaders, political officials, foundation



Melissa Farlow



Lois Greenfield



Above, left: Endowments board and staff members tour the center in October. Marva Harris, far left, the center's interim president, was among the organization officials who served as guides as Chairman Teresa Heinz, right center; Vice Chairman Jim Walton, far right; board member Carol Brown, who is also on the Wilson Center board; and others strolled through the building. The Endowments tour took place a few weeks after the center's opening in September that drew a packed house of local residents and community leaders, including Wilson Center board chairman and BNY Mellon senior vice president Oliver Byrd and his wife, Karla, right.

funders and cultural experts has bet that part of the answer lies in a \$40 million institution in the city's Cultural District. The other part of the answer, something that money can't buy, is to become the premiere presenting institution for the African American cultural experience in Pittsburgh—an experience so distinct among American cities that its showcasing has the power to knock down racial and geographic boundaries.

Playwright August Wilson won critical acclaim and broad audiences for tapping into the special nature of the Pittsburgh urban black experience by way of extraordinary storytelling about the struggles of people from ordinary circumstances. The characters in his plays grow in emotional intensity to become iconic figures of the times—each play is set during a different decade of the 20th century—and the stories are profoundly affected by place: In all but one play, it is the poor, segregated, but always vibrant Hill District.

What Wilson achieved through the American theater, the Wilson Center ambitiously seeks to duplicate through multiple artistic forms and cultural presentations. Its mission is to tell the stories and celebrate the lives that highlight the richness of Pittsburgh's version of a cultural life derived from the African Diaspora: a community 90th birthday party for the city's first African American meter maid; a lecture on the history of American gospel music from a Pittsburgh perspective; an evening of poetry featuring readings by national and local artists; a dance company production choreographed to the music of Pittsburgh

luminaries Billy Strayhorn, Mary Lou Williams, Phyllis Hyman and Ahmad Jamal.

“Our African American culture is rich and deep and historical and forward-looking. It's nationally and internationally recognized—but not recognized enough in its own backyard,” says Janet Sarbaugh, senior director of The Heinz Endowments' Arts & Culture Program. “The Wilson Center building is a beautiful and worthy setting for realizing that long-deferred recognition. But the national experience tells us that long-term success will only be assured by programming that attracts strong audiences.”

Born a generation after other cities' African American museums, Pittsburgh's Africentric center learned lessons from the others that were often cautionary tales. A slightly condescending 2001 New York Times report even contended that African American museums have often been founded “with more enthusiasm than savvy.”

While that perspective might be debatable, these and other younger cultural organizations have had to compete with more established symphonies, ballet companies or regional theater groups, says Claudine Brown, arts and culture director for the Nathan Cummings Foundation and former deputy assistant secretary for the Smithsonian Institution. “Some African American institutions have struggled with fundraising, because of where they entered the landscape. Most of them were founded in the 1960s as a result of the civil rights movement, and they have not been around long enough to compete with other recognized establishments.”

The newcomers share one fundamental bond with more venerable institutions: Every arts group depends on subsidies that have been severely eroded by the current recession. While the timing for launching an ambitious new cultural center couldn't be worse in financial terms, many supporters believe that providing a facility that does justice to an African American

cultural life that has been too-long ignored shouldn't depend on the perfect financial climate.

"We contributed to the creation of the center because African American culture has been profoundly significant to this city and region," says Benedum Foundation president and CEO William P. Getty. He adds that a number of Pittsburgh's African American musicians and other varied artists are giants in American culture. Because of the foundation's long commitment to Pittsburgh's Cultural District, Benedum officials believe that the district "can be greatly enhanced by this beautiful facility and the programs it can offer."

Even with philanthropic moral and financial support, the Wilson Center now faces its toughest challenge. It will have to light new fires under its capital campaign, book five-star performers at two-star ticket prices, find a dynamic permanent director and attract patrons of all races to its Liberty Avenue home.

The notion of a performing arts center fundamentally changed the perceived viability of the center. ... The history of the African American community in Pittsburgh is a story about performing artists, and **we really celebrate that contribution.** **Neil Barclay**, former CEO of the August Wilson Center for African American Culture

More than \$10 million in state, county and city monies and another \$17.5 million from local foundations, including \$7.5 million from the Endowments, gave the Wilson Center its handsome building and an anchor position in the city's cultural pantheon. There also are commitments for ongoing support, but the center's funders will expect it to work through its remaining financial problems with a detailed plan that sets a goal of increasing community loyalty and lessening foundation dependence in future years.

One important piece already is in place. The center's national advisory board has enlisted international artists with Pittsburgh connections—among them actor Charles Dutton and city natives Ahmad Jamal, a renowned jazz pianist, and John Edgar

Wideman, a similarly well-regarded author. At \$4.3 million, its annual budget is nearly 10 times the average size of other African American institutions, and its 23-person staff is both more numerous and more experienced than those at similar institutions elsewhere. But can those strengths steady the center past its inaugural season?

"Downtown was for everybody"

The 2001 news conference announcing the site of Pittsburgh's African American cultural center spoke volumes about the aspirations of its founders. Convening film crews and reporters on an upper floor of the Westin Convention Center hotel, city Urban Redevelopment Authority Director Mulugetta Birru pointed dramatically through the windows. On a triangular lot at the corner of 10th Street and Liberty Avenue clustered a clump of tired sliver-buildings that would make way for the center. Envisioned as a development that would host a theater, galleries

and a hotel over an underground parking garage, the project was bold. "Everything was possible," remembers Birru, now an international consultant based in Detroit.

Oliver Byrd, the center's long-time board chairman, senior vice president of BNY Mellon and an avid trumpet player, recalls with a chuckle, "It was like the Bible. We were claiming our spot." But the determined board would continue its Biblical journey for another eight years before it reached the Promised Land a block away.

Sala Udin remembers his first conversation about an African American institution for Pittsburgh with then-Mayor Tom Murphy in 1996. "We had a conversation by the fifth floor elevators in the City-County Building," recalls the president of

the Coro Center for Civic Leadership, then a newly elected city councilman. “We wanted to bring the NAACP convention to Pittsburgh, and we needed to demonstrate a commitment to a plan for African American culture. We needed a large institution—a museum, we were thinking. We were starting from ground zero.”

Murphy liked the idea. Birru, his URA director, loved it. Birru’s commitment to the project was “invaluable,” say Udin and others, both for the depth of downtown development experience he possessed and his passion for both the cause and the location.

“There was a belief in the African American community to [reclaim] what they had in the 1940s and ’50s,” Birru recalls, in a lilting Ethiopian accent. “Then, they stayed in their neighborhoods. But now”—with the development of the downtown Cultural District—“the famous artists were all downtown. That area [of the proposed site] was bad, but it was a critical center. It was close to the busway, where African Americans from the East End come into town. It was convenient to other communities, like the North Side. Downtown was for everybody.”

The board was determined to learn from other cities’ African American institutions. URA-funded visits showed the board that its original concept, a museum with Africentric collections, was faltering elsewhere for reasons that included lack of programming or an isolated location.

Numbers—both revenue and demographics—argued for dynamic events, rather than static collections. Blacks comprise only 12.3 percent of the population of Allegheny County, and the region’s overall population remains stagnant. In this market, repeat visitors, tourism and an audience beyond the African American community would be essential. Also, a hybrid center appeared both unique and more economically sustainable than the financially struggling museums seen on fact-finding trips.

“The notion of a performing arts center fundamentally changed the perceived viability of the center,” says Neil Barclay, who arrived in 2003 as the center’s first CEO. “The choice made sense. The history of the African American community in Pittsburgh is a story about performing artists, and we really celebrate that contribution.” By homing in on a specific identity, like Birmingham’s Civil Rights Museum or the Underground Railroad Museum in Cincinnati, Pittsburgh was finding a path to connect its programming with its purpose.

The Wilson Center offers visitors a range of engaging experiences, such as the interactive, multimedia center, right, above, where guests, from left to right, Arlene Snipe, Barbara Anderson and Carol Williams can identify or learn about the cultural contributions of African Americans from the region in the Pittsburgh Reclaim Renew Remix exhibit. The center also adds to Pittsburgh’s downtown performance space a 486-seat auditorium, where recent productions included “The Women of the Hill,” set in Pittsburgh’s Hill District.

But almost immediately, financial realities constrained the building’s design and construction. The center had hoped to follow the lead of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, which earned revenues through commercial real estate development. An underground parking garage proved too costly, however, and the proposed hotel development found no takers. While the building’s signature design element provided by San Francisco-based architect Allison Williams—a curved, metal-and-glass sail suggesting the journeys of both Swahili traders and European slave merchants—was retained, the building’s square footage shrank from three stories to two. Excavation at the site brought more bad news: Industrial pollution would require an additional \$1 million in remediation and would delay construction for a full year. While funders fed the project, the center desperately needed capital and cash.

“It was a heavy lift,” acknowledges Barclay, now director of the National Black Arts Festival in Atlanta. “It took six or seven years to pull \$10 million together, and the last piece [a balance of \$7 million for the \$41.7 million capital campaign] is still not in. The foundations got us to the next stage, but it was piecemeal.”

Board Chairman Byrd says the center set a fundraising target of \$2 million from the African American community, which is within reach with \$700,000 still needed. Early revenues have been less than expected, due to delays in opening the onsite café and a second exhibit gallery. On the plus side, Byrd notes that the facility’s rental income, driven in large part by African American community groups, will exceed expectations, while early ticket sales show that “the programming is on target and the community will support it.”

As the center strives to grow audiences and revenue, its staff expects that fully two-thirds of its funding will come from philanthropic and public sources, a mix that the Cummings Foundation’s Brown says “puts them right where they ought to be.” However, state allocations have been slashed, and Allegheny County’s Regional Asset District will reduce the center’s support from \$275,000 in 2009 to \$247,500 in 2010.

Despite those cuts, the center is sticking to a price range of \$15 to \$45 for its tickets. Marva Harris, who is heading the center while it conducts a national search for a permanent director, says that’s important. “We want more people to enjoy the incredible offerings of the organization.”



Photos by Joshua Franzos





09.17.09

The Wilson Center's September grand opening was a gala in every sense of the word. Clockwise, beginning at top left, FashionAFRICANA model Ike Graham struck a regal pose at the entrance, wearing a story-quilt skirt created by Pittsburgh artists Tina Williams Brewer, Sandra German and Dale Kelly. Inside, festivities included opportunities for guests to do their own celebratory dance at the 3D party in the second-floor studio. Model Yaru Milano, bottom right, shown receiving finishing touches from FashionAFRICANA founder Demetria Gibson Boccella, also was part of the evening's living exhibit of African American culture, along with members of the August Wilson Center Dance Ensemble, bottom center. The glow of activity at the facility on opening night, bottom left, accentuated its innovative architectural design against the downtown Pittsburgh landscape.





Photos by Melissa Farlow



As part of its community outreach, the Wilson Center makes its facilities available for private rental. Family and friends of Willa Chandler, center, celebrated Chandler's 90th birthday in the building's Education Center. Chandler, the city's first African American meter maid, also is featured in the Pittsburgh Reclaim Renew Remix exhibit.



Joshua Franzos

A local icon inspires

Even before the sail-shaped façade of the center rose on Liberty Avenue, its already-assembled staff was earning revenue from works with national appeal.

Pittsburgh's legacy in the performing arts—accented by the naming of the center for Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright August Wilson after his death in 2005—was complemented by a major collection of African American photography. Some 80,000 images by Teenie Harris, the Pittsburgh Courier's gifted photographer, documented 40 years of African American life in the city from 1938 to 1975. The Wilson Center had negotiated an agreement with the Carnegie Museum of Art to exhibit the images. The photographs also inspired choreographer Ronald K. Brown, whom Barclay commissioned to create a piece based on Harris' work in 2007. In "One Shot," Brown interprets Harris' images, projected onstage. His troupe, Evidence, has toured the production nationally since then, accompanied by an exhibit of Harris' photos.

"It doesn't just earn revenue. It puts us out in the national landscape as a performing and visual arts center—and it's been hugely successful for Ronald K. Brown," Barclay notes. "[Though] there's not a lot of it being done, more and more African American institutions are collaborating, for a potential stream of revenue."

The center's inaugural season is an ambitious mix. Three full productions of Wilson's plays, set mostly in Pittsburgh's Hill District, formed the core of a two-week examination of the haunting wisdom of his Aunt Ester character. Local actresses gave voice to real-life memories in "The Women of the Hill."

Readings, film festivals, debates on hip-hop and rap, and workshops such as the DJ session will continue. World-class performers like jazz violinist Regina Carter and electronic composer Daniel Bernard Roumaine will visit this winter, and the Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra, the center's resident ensemble, will perform a commission by jazz elder statesman Jimmy Heath. In May, the center's first group of fellows will present their work during First Voice, Pittsburgh's International Black Arts Festival.

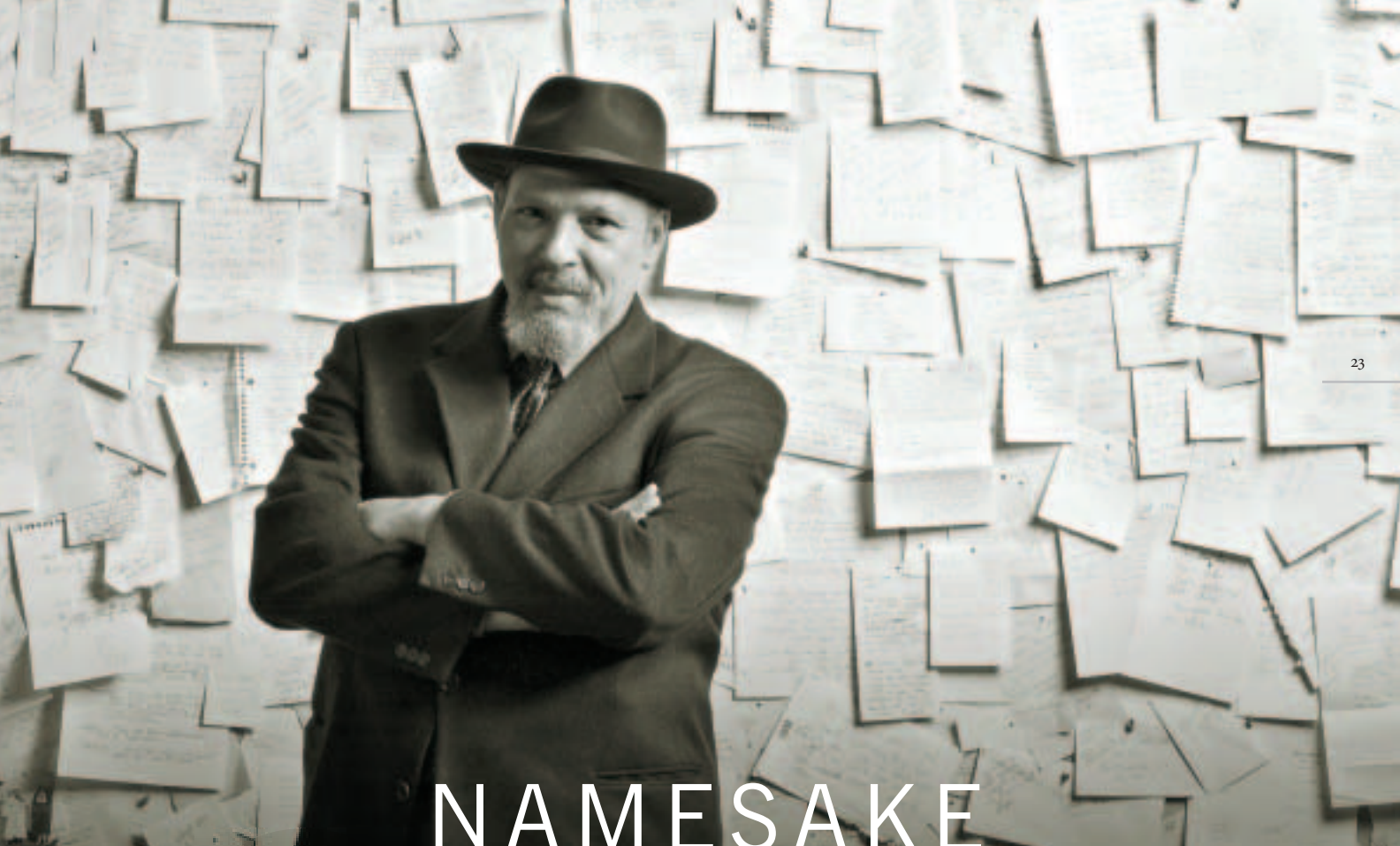
The city's Cultural Trust has admitted the center into its shared services program, with backroom and effective marketing efforts that allow downtown arts groups to cross-sell patrons. Board Chairman Byrd calls the Trust "an incredible database," but acknowledges that the Wilson audience may still be difficult to reach because, while some in the African American community are included in the database, a large segment is not.

The gulf between downtown and neighborhoods, and among opinions about which one the Wilson Center should serve, continues to exist. For Greer Reed Jones, who will form the center's resident dance ensemble this year, the facility "is creating opportunities to stay and create a professional company here instead of moving to New York, Chicago or Los Angeles."

Neighborhood-based arts groups that have served the black community for years are more skeptical, however. "The perception is that the center is more for the general public, rather than focusing on the black community," says James Johnson, who in 1982 founded the Afro-American Music Institute with his wife, Pamela, in Pittsburgh's largely poor Homewood neighborhood. "There's confusion about its intent, bringing in outside groups for programming and not including local organizations. It comes across as insensitive to the local black arts community." Johnson says that a new executive director must redouble the center's efforts to make sure its mission is in line with the local arts community.

Still, when the doors opened on Sept. 17, Udin celebrated the memory of Wilson, his childhood friend, as crowds surged into the foyer. "We wanted to build something deserving of his memory," he says, "and we did."

Wilson's niece, Pittsburgh actress and producer Kimberly Ellis, agrees. "[Wilson] always wanted a place, many places, where people could come and create, that were as accessible as a church or local bar. He'd be extraordinarily pleased with the August Wilson Center having the ability to support that creation." *h*



NAMESAKE

David Cooper

S

ix years after founding Pittsburgh's African American cultural center, its creators crystallized their vision and aspirations when they chose a new name: the August Wilson Center for African American Culture. Wilson, who died at age 60 in October 2005, not only fashioned a much-heralded dramatic universe from his birthplace, the city's Hill District, he lyrically wove Pittsburgh's black music, art and pop culture into his plays.

"We know this name gives us a lot to live up to," said then-Wilson Center President Neil Barclay at the naming announcement. "But we recognize the perfect fit between our mission and August Wilson's life, art and all that he inspired."

Wilson's memory is still alive among those who knew him as a watchful youngster.

"He was the weirdest kid in the schoolyard," Sala Udin says laughing. As the president of the Coro Center for Civic Leadership and founding board member of the Wilson Center describes their long friendship, he can view the old Hill District neighborhood across the river from his office window. The actor and political activist

remembers Wilson as a classmate at Holy Trinity elementary school in the 1950s. "No scrapping and wrestling for him. He was always watching and smiling."

Separated during the urban renewal projects that sundered their community, Udin reconnected with Wilson, a high school dropout, as the young men founded the Black Horizons Theater in 1967. The aspiring poets would gather at a smoky Hill District cafe, hung with a sign lettered "Pan Fried Fish," which stood alongside another neighborhood institution.

"August always got there a little early, and he'd be next door, sitting around at the jitney stand," Udin recalls. "He'd just be sitting there, listening to the drivers' conversations, watching, taking down notes. We wore dashikis. He always wore second-hand tweeds." Years later, Wilson would ask Udin to play the lead in his "Jitney." The eloquent work, first performed in 1982, won Wilson the best play award from the New York Drama Critics Circle in 2000.

Wilson's 10 dramas include two Pulitzer Prize winners, "The Piano Lesson" and "Fences," and span the 20th century. All reflect his passionate immersion in jazz

and blues music. "Blues is the best literature we have," he told author Sandra Shannon, currently a professor of African American literature, criticism and drama at Howard University, during an interview in 1991 for a book on his works. "Blues and music have always been at the forefront in the development of character and consciousness of black America."

He also acknowledged the profound influence of visual artist Romare Bearden, probably best known for his unique collages. Fittingly, Bearden's "Pittsburgh's Reflections," a colorful 60-foot-long tile mural, is now being restored for installation at the Gateway Center subway station a few blocks from the Wilson Center.

And the new facility will continue to explore its namesake's work. Most recently, full productions of "Two Trains Running," "Gem of the Ocean" and "Radio Golf" were brought to the Wilson Center stage in November by black theater companies in Pittsburgh, Minneapolis and St. Louis. Those and other performances spotlighted the iconic character of wise woman Aunt Ester, who appears in many of Wilson's plays.

Top Soil

Pittsburgh roofs are the new fertile turf for environmentally sustainable construction projects that aim to dig in and blossom.

By Carmen J. Lee Photography by Joshua Franzos





In the former steel town of Homestead, east of Pittsburgh, the building at 213-215 East Eighth Avenue was known over the years for housing stores with cheap goods: Woolworth's Five-and-Dime, Gil's Discount, Rite Discount. Then in 2000, it was transformed into the aptly named Five and Ten Lofts, which has four loft apartments, a commercial first floor and was capped in 2007 with a green roof, thanks to funding from the Endowments-supported 3 Rivers Wet Weather Demonstration Program. Among plants that Judith Tener-Lewis and others tend on the roof is sedum sexangulare, a ground cover that spreads into a thick carpet with tiny star-shaped flowers that blossom in June.



If you go to the roots of the sustainable development movement, the concept of a green roof wasn't about making a building look pretty. It was about thermal insulation, waterproof membranes, "evapotranspiration" and other technical details that would excite only a LEED-loving engineer. Then something happened over the years as more buildings were topped with ground cover. It became apparent that green roofs could be stylish, even glossy-brochure, coffee-table-book, garden-party-reception stylish. And more lay people began to realize that a green roof could be a union of artistry and utility, architectural creativity and energy-saving construction, that is eye-catching as well as environmentally beneficial to us all. • Travel back a few hundred years, however, and early green roofs weren't visions of beauty—just simple sod coverings for peasant cottages that stretched across medieval Scandinavian landscapes and into the pages of textbooks on European history. Yet, even from the beginning, these grass-shingled canopies proved their functional worth, helping to keep humble homes cool in summer and warm in winter.



When Heinz 57 officials decided to convert a former downtown Gimbels department store into a company office building, they wanted executives to see more than a concrete landing when they looked out their windows. The 15,000 square feet of flowering meadow that was planted later proved to have environmental as well as aesthetic value. The plant species include sedum kamtschaticum, which can tolerate various types of soil and temperature exposures.

It took German engineering to update the archaic design 40 years ago and create energy-efficient earthen coverts for the modern age. The construction trend eventually crossed the Atlantic, and now green roofs—lauded for their aesthetic as well as their utilitarian value—adorn commercial and university buildings, hospitals and private homes across the United States. Chicago Mayor Richard Daley has even made green roofs a special initiative. He has promoted their installation and turned municipal buildings into role models, resulting in more than 400 public and private green roof projects in that city totaling 7 million square feet, the most in the country.

In Pittsburgh, green roofs are growing on us. Our first introduction was, in the 1980s, to installations that were more like roof gardens. The close architectural kin were designed primarily for the eyes and souls of meeting-weary executives or body-mending hospital patients rather than for any healing touch to urban infrastructure. Such was the case for the plant coverings on the Gimbels-converted Heinz 57 Center office building downtown and UPMC Montefiore hospital in the neighborhood of Oakland, the region's educational and medical epicenter. Then building managers began noticing benefits such as increased absorption of rainwater, which lessened runoff into sewers, and cooler temperatures in the summer, especially when compared to other structures suffering from the "urban heat island" effect typical of many concrete-bound cities.

Closely tracking these trend-winds was the local environmental group 3 Rivers Wet Weather, which also saw green roofs as another useful tool in combating stormwater overflow that plagues our region's antiquated sewage system. The organization used \$525,000 in federal funding and a \$125,000



Heinz Endowments grant to sponsor a project competition in 2005 that led to the installation of green roofs on three different types of buildings: a Carnegie Mellon University engineering center, a neighborhood grocery store, and a mixed-use residential and commercial building. True to intentional green roof design, the plants on these roofs included varieties of sedums and species native to the region that could withstand seasonal changes and had root systems deep enough to soak up lots of water. And many were colorfully attractive, too.

“We saw it as an opportunity to demonstrate what could be done with what is typically considered wasted space to improve air and water quality,” says Janie French, director of green infrastructure programs for the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and former watershed manager for 3 Rivers Wet Weather.

It was a strategy well-suited to the Endowments’ goals of promoting green buildings and green building practices as ways of embracing sustainable development principles. Environment Program Director Caren Glotfelty says the variety of advantages green roofs offer urban environments—less stormwater runoff, decreased energy use, temperature-change mitigation, beautification—can help cities become healthier and more “people-friendly” for residents and workers.

Today, if you climbed into a helicopter and hovered over both rural and urban sections of southwestern Pennsylvania, you’d see nearly two dozen building-top green roofs dotting the landscape. Others are in the planning stages, though at a pace that might seem more befitting of a medieval Scandinavian village than a 21st-century American city. Still, a growing number of local business owners and politicians are starting to appreciate the journey from sod to sedum, from coarse tufts of grass to equally sturdy budding plants in shades of amber and


red. They are burnishing their reputations with “environmentally conscious” public relations points and their balance sheets with energy savings.

But moving our entire region to accept the economic and quality-of-life benefits of greens roofs may require inspiring more business and government leaders to see rooftops as untapped resources. It may mean urging them to take the next step of incorporating green roofs into a regional environmental strategy, rather than leaving such initiatives to personal or community preference. It also may involve convincing more owners of public, private and residential buildings that the long-term savings from green roofs outweigh immediate installation costs, which can range from \$15 to \$60 per square foot, depending on the location. It will take work, but green roofs that have been incorporated within attractive, verdant communities in other cities—including those in present-day Scandinavia—are already demonstrating that the effort is worth it.

“Imagine looking down from an airplane with a bird’s-eye perspective and, instead of seeing huge expanses of concrete or black tar roofs imposing themselves on our natural environments, you see moving strands of flowering, multi-colored plants,” says Linda Velazquez, publisher and editor of Greenroofs.com. “The roof now blends into the landscape as naturalistic meadow scenes or as designed gardens and parks, creating a new façade for human recreation . . .

“In an era where developing clean and renewable energy strategies and addressing ever-increasing energy consumption rates are so crucial to our economic and ecological future, we need to fully examine eco-friendly alternatives that also make economic sense in order to truly create a sustainable world.” *h*





It probably was just a matter of time before green roofs would lead to green walls, and that's what happened with the installation of the 2,380-square-foot, plant-based mural on the side of PNC Financial Services Group's downtown Pittsburgh headquarters, One PNC Plaza. As North America's largest "living wall," it contains 602 panels of regional plants that help cool the building in the summer and insulate it from heat loss in the winter, as well as create an appealing tapestry effect. Below, the green roof atop the Hammerschlag Hall engineering building at Carnegie Mellon University was another project that was part of the 3 Rivers Wet Weather Demonstration Program. It also received support from the Pennsylvania Environmental Protection Agency. Among the ground cover used for this roof is a fast-growing sedum species known as dragon's blood that blossoms with brilliant red flowers in late summer.





Plant-covered roofs also provide a unique texture and landscape contrast to the tops of buildings, particularly those in urban settings. Above, the green roof for the Giant Eagle Market District supermarket not only was part of the 3 Rivers Wet Weather Demonstration Program, but also was a feature complementing the store's successful effort to become the world's first LEED—Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design—Silver grocery store. The hearty sedums, which include sexangular shown above, share space with skylights that provide natural sunlight to help reduce the store's electrical lighting demands. Below, the new environmentally friendly wing of the University of Pittsburgh's Falk Elementary School includes a green roof that workers installed with sedum species such as album, far left. The 31,000-square-foot addition opened in September.





here & there



RIVER WALK

Although recently planted landscaping has not yet flourished as pictured in the illustration above, a paved walkway with bluestone inlays has replaced the pothole-marred strip of downtown Pittsburgh parking along the Monongahela River. Local officials and other community leaders dedicated the 2,017-foot-long Monongahela Wharf trail in November. The Endowments has given nearly \$2 million in the last two years to the nonprofit Riverlife Task Force to plan and raise money for major public improvements, including the wharf trail development.



TWO LOCAL LEADERS COMMENDED



The Bloomfield-Garfield Corp. honored McCune Foundation Executive Director Henry Beukema, right, and state Sen. Jim Ferlo during the organization's annual board of directors luncheon in

November. Both were recognized as outstanding community advocates who have worked to improve economic, social and physical conditions in Pittsburgh neighborhoods. Beukema, who also is a former Endowments program director, was the keynote speaker for the event.

Paula Martinac

PITTSBURGH SCHOOLS WIN GATES GRANT

It's official. The Pittsburgh Public Schools is receiving a \$40 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to help fund the district's efforts to improve teacher effectiveness. City school officials found out in August that the district was one of five school systems selected from across the country by

Gates Foundation officials to receive funding for proposed teacher-quality projects. But the Pittsburgh school district was not notified about the amount it would receive until November. Now school officials are required to come up with \$45 million from other sources to complete the funding for

the five-year, \$85 million teacher-effectiveness plan they developed. Also needed is the support of union members, who will have to approve new pay structures and other changes before the plan can be fully implemented.

PRE-K COUNTS—SIGNIFICANTLY

Early childhood education advocates in Pennsylvania are gearing up to implement initiatives based on the results of a three-year, Endowments-sponsored study of 10,000 at-risk children attending high-quality pre-kindergarten programs. The analysis found that substantial numbers of children raised in poverty showed marked improvement in early learning abilities as a direct result of enrollment in

programs covered by Pre-K Counts, such as the 4 Kids Braddock Center Preschool, below. Pre-K Counts is a statewide partnership of foundations and the state Office of Child Development and Early Learning that led to the creation of certified, high-quality preschool classrooms across Pennsylvania. Plans are under way to roll out child-specific data to the 21 communities that participated in the study

and to provide parents with information they can use to press for more quality preschools. Advocates also will be using the study results to support Pre-K Counts providers by educating gubernatorial candidates about the importance of maintaining the learning gains in existing programs.

Announcing the study's findings in October were Endowments Chairman Teresa Heinz; Endowments President Bobby Vagt; Marge Petruska, senior director of the foundation's Children, Youth & Families Program; Pittsburgh Public Schools Superintendent Mark Roosevelt; and Dr. Stephen Bagnato, the University of Pittsburgh professor of pediatrics and psychology who led the Pitt research team that conducted the study.



CURRICULUM OF THE YEAR!

“Right on the Money: Talking Dollars and Sense with Parents & Kids” won best curriculum of the year in the postsecondary/adult money management category of the Excellence in Financial Literacy Education Awards. The Portland, Maine–based Institute for Financial Literacy recognized the program during the institute’s annual EIFLE Awards Dinner in Philadelphia. “Right on the Money” was developed through a partnership that included Penn State Cooperative Extension, the Pennsylvania Office of Financial Education and the Endowments. The program provides free, family-oriented money-management lessons that are intended to be offered through schools, community-based organizations and libraries.

SUSTAINABLE NEW MASCARO CENTER

Renovation of the nearly 40-year-old Benedum Hall at the University of Pittsburgh recently received a psychological as well as a structural boost with the opening of the \$16 million addition that is the new home for the Endowments-supported Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation. The center, devoted to cutting-edge research and engineering for environmentally sustainable neighborhoods, is now appropriately housed in a sparkling, glass-enclosed site with adaptable lab spaces, offices with large frosted windows for natural light, an energy-recovery ventilation system, and sensors that adjust indoor lighting.

Heinz Awards honor environmental leaders

During the 15th annual Heinz Awards ceremony, Teresa Heinz, chairman of the Endowments and the Heinz Family Philanthropies, recognized 10 individuals for their leadership in developing innovative ways to protect and restore the environment. Those honored at Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., each received a monetary award of \$100,000 and a medallion etched with the image of the late Sen. John Heinz. The recipients were architect and green building advocate Robert Berkebile; zoologist and Conservation magazine founder P. Dee Boersma; ecology scientist Christopher Field; researcher, inventor and humanitarian Ashok Gadgil; Chip Giller, creator of the environmental Web site Grist; environmental health researcher Deborah Rice; environmental farming pioneer Joel Salatin; environmental health researcher Kirk Smith; Thomas “Smitty” Smith, director of the Texas office of Public Citizen, a consumer and environmental organization; and Beverly Wright, a leading scholar on environmental justice issues.



STAFF

news

Endowments Arts & Culture Program Officer Justin Laing has been elected to the board of the national Grantmakers in the Arts. The group is the country’s primary membership organization for private, public, community and corporate arts grant makers. Laing, who assumed his seat in October, will serve a three-year term.



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