SUMMER 2004

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The Magazine of The Heinz Endowments

the new 5th

A composer creates his dream symphony.

inside

Founded more than four decades apart, the Howard Heinz Endowment, established in 1941, and the Vira I. Heinz Endowment, established in 1986, are the products of a deep family commitment to community and the common good that began with H. J. Heinz and continues to this day.

The Heinz 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 grantmaking programs: Arts & Culture; Children, Youth & Families; Economic Opportunity; Education; and the Environment. These five programs work together on behalf of three shared organizational goals: enabling southwestern Pennsylvania to embrace and realize a vision of itself as a premier place both to live and to work; making the region a center of quality learning and educational opportunity; and making diversity and inclusion defining elements of the region's character.

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, Nancy Grejda, Maxwell King, Maureen Marinelli, Grant Oliphant, Douglas Root. Design: Landesberg Design

About the cover Our graphic twist on a concert violin expresses the impact of a new symphonic work by Pittsburgh composer Leonardo Balada, Symphony No. 5 *American*. The musical piece was completed during Balada's year-long fellowship with the Pittsburgh Symphony, made possible through the Endowments' Creative Heights Program.

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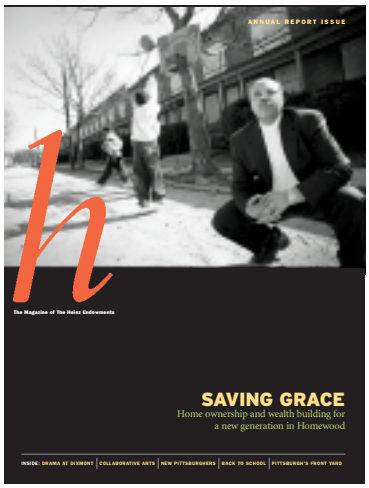
Park Lot, page 22.

feedback



From Annual Report Issue

Sprawl Standoff

I want to thank The Heinz Endowments for continuing to encourage dialogue regarding the creation of livable communities that involve not just completing a project but, instead, establishing great new places or enhancing those that already exist.

Those of us involved on the for-profit side of this work are in a unique situation to see that a large percentage of the market — people who desire to shop, work and ultimately live in particular locations — are substantially ahead of private developers, government officials and policy makers who are supposed to provide quality places. In the Traditional Neighborhood Development sites developed by our company, we have been successful in anticipating market demand. As a result, we have been required to conduct lotteries to sell middle- and upper-income housing located on brownfield sites and designed for 10 units per acre.

Although the discussion about smart growth usually occurs in the context of achieving quality development in strong-growth areas, I believe that in slow-growth areas such as western Pennsylvania, developing quality places is the only way to improve our region's competitiveness. It is precisely because of our slow-growth pace that we have the opportunity to build on our strong neighborhood fabric, rich history and geographic compactness to avoid the "disposable" label given to too many projects in high-growth locations.

It is important to note that in the developments that I have been involved with that come closest to meeting objectives relating to quality, communities and governments have been partners with developers so that all parties can focus on creating long-term value, rather than fighting over the last up-front dollar. When communities and governments help lower the cost and quicken the timing of development, they increase their leverage with developers to demand projects of higher quality.

It also is important to note that foundations and philanthropic initiatives add a third leg to the public–private partnership equation. Foundation support can prime the pump and encourage governments and developers to invest in higher quality physical infrastructure and public amenities by assisting in the financing, design or implementation of desired projects. The foundation community's commitment to the City of Pittsburgh's new North Shore Park is testimony to the effectiveness of involvement by philanthropic sources.

Mark C. Schneider
President
The Rubinoff Co.

No Place Like Home

Jeffery Fraser's story on foundations' efforts to support international diversity in the Pittsburgh region aptly illustrates the vital role immigrants play in the workforce and the enormous contributions they make to the economic vitality of rural hamlets and urban metropolises across the United States.

The Heinz Endowments' grantmaking approach demonstrates a keen understanding that — in order to benefit fully from international migration — a community must invest in building a system to welcome immigrants, support their integration into the social and economic fabric, and embrace their cultural and linguistic diversity. By affording newcomers the opportunities to become full, participating members, communities like Pittsburgh will reap much more than the economic benefits. They will have families who want to put down roots and invest their time and energy, working side-by-side with longtime residents, to improve the quality of life in their community.

Like The Heinz Endowments, several foundations in both established and emerging new immigrant gateways — from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation in Miami to the Dyer-Ives Foundation in Grand Rapids, Mich. to The Colorado Trust in Denver — have developed support systems for immigrants. These funders are recognizing the pivotal role immigrants and refugees play in building culturally rich, economically vibrant and socially cohesive communities. This fall, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees will bring them together with diverse foundation colleagues to share perspectives and insights and discuss best practices and lessons learned in their immigrant integration efforts.

We invite other philanthropic, civic and political leaders to examine the potential benefits of international migration in helping them build strong, vital communities. More than contributing their brains and brawn, immigrants also offer their hopes, dreams and a vision for a brighter future. These are exactly the ingredients that Pittsburgh and other once-thriving communities need to reverse demographic and economic decline and begin the process of rebirth.

Daranee Petsod
Executive Director
Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees
Sebastopol, Calif.

message

By Maxwell King
President, The Heinz Endowments

We generally use this opening message to discuss a theme relevant to the magazine's current issue. In this case, however, I feel as if I ought to use this message to reflect on a recent string of attacks against The Heinz Endowments. We are a public-trust institution, and nothing is more important than our reputation and the ethical behavior upon which it is based.

Late last year, a group called Capital Research Center issued a report alleging that the Endowments was secretly funneling money to "extremist" groups. The crux of CRC's argument has been that, by funding various projects through an entity known as the Tides Center, the Endowments in effect is freeing up money for an affiliated but separate entity, the Tides Foundation, to pursue a purportedly radical grantmaking agenda.

CRC receives major funding from foundations and donors known for their conservative agenda, and its mission is clearly to bring a conservative viewpoint to bear on civic dialogue. The Endowments has no argument with that, as we believe that the nation is enriched by a diversity of perspectives and vigorous public debate.

But in this case CRC's claim was flat-out wrong, and its motivation for advancing its claim was primarily a political one. Many of the nation's leading foundations, as well as the federal government, use the Tides Center to provide administrative oversight and back-office services such as payroll and benefits to nonprofit ventures that are too new, too small or too temporary to merit creation of their own separate nonprofit organizations. The money from projects funded through the Center is strictly controlled, and the Endowments' funding has been used exclusively and entirely to support environmental and youth programs in the Pittsburgh region.

Still, these facts did not prevent CRC's allegation from gaining a wider audience. It quickly became a staple for the Internet conspiracy-theory mill, where increasingly bizarre emails are still making the rounds alleging Endowments funding of everything from Arab terrorist groups to Saddam Hussein's legal defense team to radical Hispanic secessionists fighting to give Texas and California back to Mexico.

Fortunately, news organizations have generally seen through this "whispering campaign." After a trio of Florida congressmen held an August press conference accusing the Endowments of paying to wire "Castro's Cuba" to the Internet, a FOX News reporter who contacted our office described the allegation as "specious." Numerous news organizations have reached similar conclusions after conducting their own independent investigations. The most thorough of these examinations, by FactCheck.org, a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, dismissed the charges as "vitriolic" and "bogus."

Very few foundations will ever face the media scrutiny that comes with having a chairman (Teresa Heinz chairs the Howard Heinz Endowment; James M. Walton chairs the Vira I. Heinz Endowment) whose husband is engaged in a hotly contested presidential race. But the Endowments' experience underscores three important lessons for a sector that is increasingly coming under the public microscope.

First, transparency matters. When the allegations against us arose, it helped that the Endowments had a well-established track record of openness. We issued regular annual reports, wrote about our grants in a quarterly magazine and made a complete description and history of our grantmaking available on our website. Those resources put the lie to the charges, which responsible journalists then dismissed.

Second, accountability is not optional. The accusations against us have been unfair, but we accept an obligation to rebut them. The foundation sector's vast resources make it a fair target of public inquiry. The public has a right to know how foundation resources are being used, and for their part foundations have an obligation to use them as wisely and effectively as possible.

Third, only the highest ethical standards will do. High-profile ethical lapses at several organizations have hurt the foundation sector. Had the Endowments been guilty of any similar abuses, they would have come out quickly when the public spotlight was suddenly trained on us — and destroyed the reputation of this institution as well as the family legacy it embodies. What protected us was an enduring commitment to ethical practices, which is why we have helped lead the charge for a strong code of ethics for the nation's foundations.

For much of their history, foundations enjoyed kid-glove treatment from the public and the media. Those days are gone, but that change is not unwelcome because it forces the sector to become better. The Endowments' time in the public spotlight, which is not over yet, has not been pleasant. Still, we welcome the opportunity it has brought to talk about our work and to advocate for transparency, accountability and high ethical standards. Armed with those three principles, the Endowments and other foundations will be able to look the American public in the eye and proudly say that we are good stewards of America's noble philanthropic tradition. *h*

Heinz Endowments President Maxwell King is chairman of the Ethics and Practices Committee of the Board of the Council on Foundations. Previously, as editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer, *he was chairman of the Values and Ethics Committee of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.*

TIRELESS WORK

A YOUNG ROWER-WRITER DISCOVERS THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF A SMALL IDEA. BY NAT STONE PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANA LEIGH DOLNEY

On a summer afternoon in Pittsburgh, the 28-foot pontoon boat, *Anna Hubbard*, edges its way along the shoreline of the Allegheny River, across from the new architectural jewel, the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. The tired boat putters along, stopping frequently along the shore.

Crew members wearing chest-high waders and lobsterman-grade rubber gloves stand ready to do their grungy work each time the boat stops along a section of riverbank.

On the forward deck are two 55-gallon barrels, emptied of dank water and hauled off the bank. Next to the barrels is a 1960s refrigerator. There are two car batteries, three rusted wheels and a large section of mud-soaked, shag carpet.

Lengths of metal pipe protrude beyond the bow, and a crushed shopping cart is half buried beneath a tangle of thick, worn rope once used as a tugboat's docking line. A dozen car and truck tires, including two from a semi trailer, lie in several stacks.

For the *Anna Hubbard* and its eclectic crew—the helmsman is a 12-year-old boy from Millvale —it's one more load of river junk brought aboard during scores of trips in the summer 2003 inaugural run of the Tireless Project.

The prospect of a boat and volunteer crew spending an entire summer fishing tires from Pittsburgh's section of the Ohio River was only a rowing daydream until Three Rivers Rowing Association Executive Director Mike Lambert, Environment Program staff from The Heinz Endowments, and I developed a plan for recycling collected waste.

Lambert told me about a local company, Recovery Technology Group, that was using a new technology for a more efficient separating of rubber tread from steel mesh. The salvaged rubber was being re-used as an improved form of Astroturf, as well as for padding children's playgrounds and athletic running tracks. We also developed a list of recycling outlets for other riverbank trash.

With a direct route from riverbank to recycling centers in place, the Endowments awarded a modest $14,000 grant to establish the *Anna Hubbard*'s summer voyage as a model for what might be accomplished in other communities that border inland waterways around the country.

"When you look at the amount of clean-up that was accomplished from this one small project and you see the community awareness generated from the publicity around it, the impact from the dollars spent is tremendous," says Caren Glotfelty, director of the Endowments' Environment Program.

The community education component, says Lambert, who has been directing rowing programs on the city's rivers for 20 years, is not so much about the cleanliness of Pittsburgh river

Lobsterman-grade marine work gloves dry on a line stretched across the deck of the *Anna Hubbard*. Right, top: Just one small section of the Ohio's riverbank shows the daunting task faced by Tireless Project workers. Right, bottom: Tireless Project leader and the story's author, Nat Stone, tosses metal barrels into a dumpster after a long day on the river.

water, which has improved markedly in the past two decades, than about the importance of citizen involvement in keeping it clean. "This project has given people an idea of how much of a negative impact tires and other riverbank trash can have on a water system that is basically in good shape and getting better each year," he says.

Four years earlier, in April 1999, with the goal of better understanding the condition of the country's rivers, I set out from New York City to row a boat on a circuit of the eastern United States, from the Brooklyn Bridge and back. I headed north on the Hudson River, west on the Erie Canal, and by way of the Allegheny, Ohio and Mississippi, through to the Gulf of Mexico. After rounding Key West, I followed the eastern seaboard back to New York.

In the weeks before my trip, I tried to prepare myself for some nightmare scenery based on a 1980s childhood in which I read about well-publicized pollution disasters decimating wild animals such as the American bald eagle and destroying natural habitats and scenery. I imagined rowing past deadened riverbanks and over rainbow sheens of spilled oil. I pictured sections of the Erie Canal as ecological wastelands, and wondered whether I would need a course of antibiotics after rowing the Mississippi between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, where the river frontage is packed with petrochemical industry refineries and referred to locally as "Cancer Alley."

But once I started rowing northward, I discovered that the Hudson River Valley retains much of the beauty captured on canvas by Thomas Cole and the Hudson River school of painters some 150 years earlier.

Even the Erie Canal, cleaned of decades of pollution, is now a lovely channel through pastoral valleys and post-industrial brick towns and cities. And in Wellsburg, W.Va., the mayor told me of the untreated sewage and oil slicks that typically had sullied his town's section of the Ohio River. Now, he said, such pollutants have nearly been eliminated through enforcement of federal environmental protection laws.

As it turned out, the waterways I traveled from the Brooklyn Bridge and back offered repeated examples of environmental reclamation from decades of pollution.

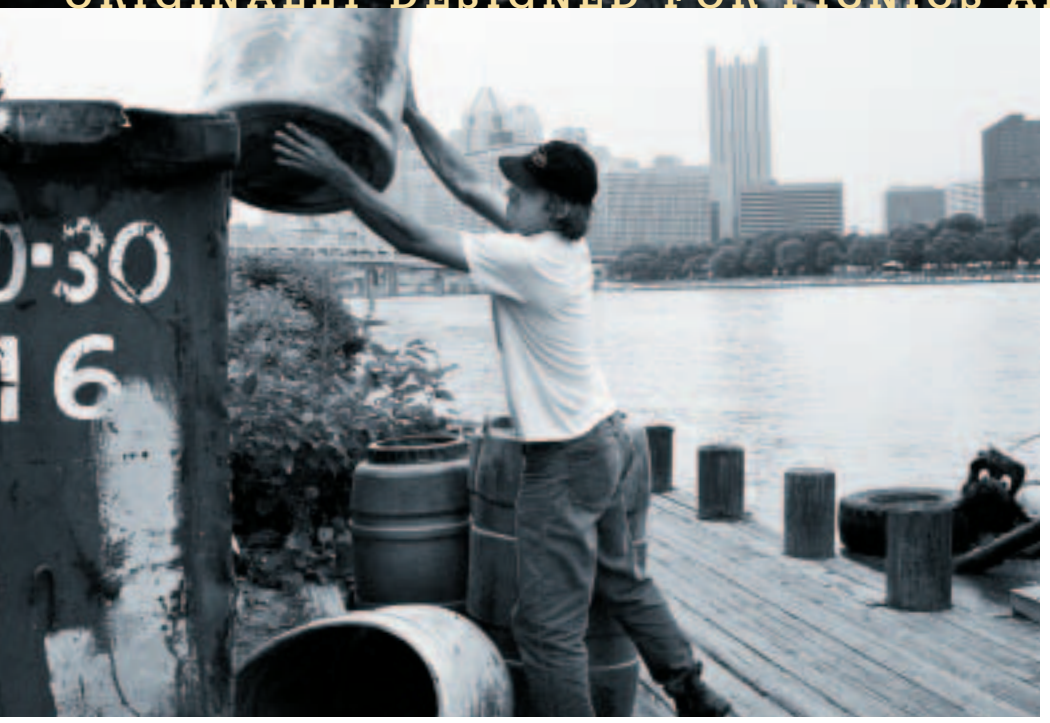
THE FORWARD DECK OF THE 1970s-ERA PONTOON BOAT WAS

One exception, though, was the section of my trip down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh, where I saw riverbanks littered with old tires — from the small doughnuts used as spares on cars to the exclamatory rubber Os of the big rigs. Further downstream, where steep, city-side riverbanks give way to natural beaches exposed by the river's low summer flow, tires were scattered at the water's edge. I counted them at several points as I rowed, and, in one section, I tallied more than 100 on one riverbank during a minute of rowing. The likely source was tire company workers dumping discards in a scheme to avoid recycling fees. Though studies are under way to determine whether the rubber itself poses any dangers to a river ecosystem, the visual blight caused by hundreds of thousands of tires along its banks still defines the Ohio in my mind as "the River of Tires."

While rowing past, I imagined the live-aboard workboat I might someday launch to clean the riverbanks. In the years after my rowing adventure, I stayed in contact with Three Rivers' Rowing's Lambert, who had been my host when I rowed through Pittsburgh. He, too, had wondered what could be done about the tires, but our discussions about a clean-up project dead-ended against the fact that, since an efficient way had yet to be developed to separate rubber from the steel belts in most tires, a landfill would have to be created to take them. That

Nat Stone documented his 1999 rowing trip on inland waterways through the eastern United States in On the Water: Discovering America in a Rowboat. *He is now working on a documentary film project on environmental and social issues explored during a recent paddling trip down the Rio Grande. He lives in Zuni, N.M.*

ORIGINALLY DESIGNED FOR PICNICS AND SUNBATHING,



would only be transferring a trash problem from river to land.

Then, in the winter of 2003, we discovered River Technology Group. With the recycling center on board to accept the tires and with arrangements made for certified landfills to accept other trash, the Endowments, Green Treks Network, a Philadelphia-based multi-media producer of stories on the environment, and the Ingram Barge Co. of Nashville, agreed to fund Tireless. Even with that support, the project would rely heavily on volunteers from the Pittsburgh community, with a focus on youth leadership. "The project's emphasis on engaging young people interested in being on the rivers appealed to us," says the Endowments' Glotfelty. "This was an opportunity to use the boat as a way to draw the community into the environmental issues beyond the story of pulling tires and grocery carts out of the river."

Marietta College student and varsity oarswoman Megan Rogers signed on as a full-time crew member, and we purchased a 1970s-era pontoon boat. Its forward deck, originally designed for picnics and sunbathing, was cleared for work. The blue indoor–outdoor carpet was removed, and the exposed plywood deck was painted battleship gray. As part of the boat's humble commissioning, two nameplates were cut out of scrap plywood and painted to read *Anna Hubbard*, in memory of the couple who built a houseboat and drifted it down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers in the late 1940s. Anna and Harlan Hubbard had been among the last of the American shantyboaters,


Betty

Typically, we loaded the boat three times each day. And while to the unfamiliar eye — and nose — it might seem like foul work, each haul presented at least a few treasures in modern archaeology. We were able to see period shifts in economics and aesthetics.

Top left: Tireless Project workers remove debris from the Beck's Run Passage along one section of the Monongahela River. Middle: Volunteers came out from every quarter of the city to help clean the rivers. Here, members of the Allegheny County Garden Club chip in with several artists, a college champion rower and a freelance writer to haul debris off the boat. Right: Jeff Pfoertner, the 12-year-old from Millvale, who turned one day of volunteering into a summer-long position as pilot of the *Anna Hubbard*.

river residents who had lived simply in houseboats along the same network of rivers now targeted by the Tireless Project.

At the ceremony in which the *Anna Hubbard* was officially named, blessed and launched, a bottle of local Pittsburgh ale was poured over the bow and deck. Included in the small crowd gathered to see her off was Pittsburgh's mayor, Tom Murphy, and Jeff Pfoertner, the 12-year-old whose sense of curiosity about the world often led him down to the banks of the Allegheny, where he would talk to fishermen and watch coal-laden barges glide by.

As we prepared to cast off from the dock, he asked if he could join us and we took him aboard. As it turned out, he remained with us for the rest of the summer, a key member of the crew and exactly the type of young person we had hoped the project would attract. Jeff comes from a low-income neighborhood; he had been struggling in school, and the project offered structured outdoor work with adults willing to guide and encourage him.

With a summer mop of red hair, blue eyes and a quick smile, he eagerly stepped from the boat onto muddy riverbanks to retrieve beached flotsam and jetsam. By the end of the second week, Jeff had become proficient in piloting the awkward work boat, even when it was weighed down with "goods" and difficult to maneuver. His white Tireless Project shirt, our only gift to volunteers, was filthy by the end of each afternoon, but was always bleached clean when we met him at the dock the following morning. After several trips on his own, Jeff began to show up with his older brother, Matt, and younger sister, Renee. The three were the first to arrive at the dock each morning, and the last to go home at night. "I just liked working," Jeff said of his Tireless experience. "That's like a job for me. I just love it, cleaning up the river and spending time on it. Someday I want to work on a tugboat."

Typically, we loaded the boat three times each day. And while to the unfamiliar eye — and nose — it might seem like foul work, each haul presented at least a few treasures in modern archaeology. We were able to see period shifts in economics and aesthetics.

Not all of what was pulled from the water ended up in dumpsters. Sometimes our crew included Pittsburgh artist Bob Johnson, who, long fascinated by river refuse as worthy art material, had been cleaning waterways in the region long before our project. Among the finds that eventually made their way to a scrap yard to be compressed into "Rivercubes" were plastic school chairs, a barrel, two tires on rusty wheels, the remains of a shopping cart, an old wooden lawn chair and assorted lengths of rusted metal. The artistic dredging and compressing continued through the summer until Johnson had created a dozen cubes, sculptures for the Throwaway Age. Several of these sculptures were exhibited at Point State Park during this summer's Three Rivers Arts Festival.

Another artist, photographer Dana Dolney, signed on to document the project as part of her own continuing work with "found" objects. But her insights extended beyond the camera lens. "I saw change and transformation," Dolney remembers. "Sometimes it was… a littered riverbank turned spotless. But I saw change in the crew as well. I did not see a single person leave the dock and return unaffected. Sometimes we have to clean up others' messes, and there's reward in that."

Our main mission was fishing for tires, but it was often the most difficult. We discovered that the well-dredged riverbanks in a city like Pittsburgh tend to be steeper than in more rural areas, and cause tires to settle into deeper water. Some tires were found nearly buried in gravel and mud and had to be wrestled free. Others, like tractor-trailer tires with steel rims attached, were filled with water and mud, and weighed several hundred pounds.

By the end of the summer, some 60 volunteers had logged in more than 1,300 hours to remove about 65,000 pounds of tires and debris. Some 500 car and truck tires were recycled, many of them likely to be reincarnated into turf builder for Heinz Field and other professional football stadiums around the country.

Despite these accomplishments, much more clean-up work remains for Pittsburgh's rivers. "It's like cleaning out an old house," says Three Rivers Rowing's Lambert. "The workload in its entirety seems overwhelming. But I believe that, as we complete a few seasons, we'll get to a point where a little bit of maintenance each year will take care of Pittsburgh's waterways, and we can expand the project to river sections beyond the city."

So in the spirit of Lambert's hopeful vision of the future for Pittsburgh rivers, my memories of our summer on the water go beyond trash-filled dumpsters and despoiled shorelines. There is Jeff's confident look as he nosed the *Anna Hubbard* into shore; the swirls of river water hinting at the powerful currents below; the great blue herons scouting the river under the shade of overhanging trees; brick-home-dotted hillsides sweeping toward the river; and towboats framed against a Pittsburgh skyline as they float thousands of tons of freight down the Ohio River.

But most of my enduring memories are of the Tireless crew, including Jeff, who found meaning and responsibility on board the *Anna Hubbard*. The pride and confidence he gained from pitching in on the grunt work to achieve a greater good will surely serve him well in the future.

More than a year after that Tireless summer, Jeff told me, "I shut my eyes and wish I was back on the *Anna Hubbard*, jiving [with the crew] and hauling tires."

I told him that I often have the same wish. I am reminded by Jeff's enthusiasm that, regardless of the aesthetic improvements to Pittsburgh's riverbanks, we each took some life-improving lessons from the river that summer as we "jived" our way through the muck.

Receiving these lessons, knowing at least one young life is transformed and that parts of a river are restored: that's not a bad catch for one summer's fishing. *h*

A Heinz Endowments artist-support program is the first note in a

Leonardo Balada, the Carnegie Mellon University composer and teacher of music composition, studies his notes just a few hours before the world premiere of his Symphony No. 5 *American* with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

HIGH FIVE

long-time local composer's creation of his dream symphony. BY MICHELLE PILECKI PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANNIE O'NEILL

Composer Leonardo Balada shares notes with guest conductor Hans Graf, the Austrian-born music director of the Houston Symphony and the man who will lead the Pittsburgh Symphony through Balada's Symphony No. 5 in its premiere performance at Heinz Hall. The two are meeting for the first time at rehearsal, with little more than an hour reserved for playing Balada's piece.

The bundle of cables gaffer-taped down the right aisle of Heinz Hall requires some careful stepping from Pittsburgh Symphony–goers heading for their seats on the opening night of this fall weekend subscription concert. Some raise eyebrows as high-fashion stilettos step gingerly over the cable; others giggle as they skip over in sneakers. But that cable itself—running between a sound console in the back of the hall to 15 microphones and eight speakers on stage—represents an even bigger step for the symphony and a new program for The Heinz Endowments.

A world premiere is always cause for some high stepping. Symphony No. 5 *American*, by Pittsburgh-based composer Leonardo Balada, is the culmination of thousands of steps by hundreds of people during two years, crystallized into a performance of 22 minutes. This massive collaboration — like the mass of cables — is made necessary because the new symphony not only stretches the palette of sounds from the classical orchestra with modern playing techniques, but also goes beyond with the live, electronic manipulation of those sounds.

The *American* is something the PSO audience has never before heard or seen, starting with an angry cacophony marked by harsh strings and tumultuous percussion, punctuated by a wistful trumpet note that seems to split and blend in mid-air, then resolves into strings almost receding into a melody reminiscent of a Negro spiritual, echoed by a flute. This perks up with a lively square dance of a third movement, highlighted by a violin accompanied by what almost sounds like a banjo, though there's not a banjo to be seen.

The music evolves, as *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* classical music critic Andrew Druckenbrod describes it, "from the panic of war to the solace of community to the joy of living." The path from inception to stage followed a similar evolution: while a transition not quite from panic, certainly one from difficulties into a joyful living art form by way of a communal effort. For the audience, the only clue of this effort is the program note: "Commissioned by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, with the support of The Heinz Endowments' Creative Heights artist residency program, in partnership with the Carnegie Mellon University School of Music." The story of how a new symphony comes to life rewinds from Heinz Hall's back stage to the Carnegie Mellon campus to the art-filled home of the composer, where music is penciled onto paper one note at a time.

Creating a new work of quality music is difficult and risky, but the 70-year-old Balada embraced the opportunity. A Creative Heights grant would cap his rewarding career as a teacher of music composition at Carnegie Mellon and as an internationally recognized composer. But his dream project presented special challenges.

His proposed piece would use technologies totally new to him; the very language of music itself would be more complex in this production. But Balada is a fixture at a university equally respected for its work in the arts and in computer technology.

Michelle Pilecki, former executive editor of Pittsburgh Magazine*, has covered the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and the region's arts community for years. Her last story for* h *centered on an Endowments-funded community group fighting sprawl in the western suburbs.*

Tom Furey tends to a computerized sound board wired into Heinz Hall for the performance of Balada's work. Developed by an electronic processor, the new sounds produced by the board are supposed to complement symphonic sounds. Middle and right: Symphony musicians rehearse Balada's piece only a few hours before the evening performance.

"I THINK THE ORCHESTRA IS A FANTASTIC OF THE GREAT

"If I had not been at Carnegie Mellon, but at someplace else, I wouldn't have had that idea," says the Spanish-born Balada, who has been on the Oakland campus since 1970. "But knowing that I was in the right place, it came to me, this idea of using this cooperation."

Electronic-music composer Roger Dannenberg clarifies the scope of the challenges Balada chose for his new symphony. "The way you develop sonic images is, you listen to music, and you recreate the sounds," says Dannenberg, a senior research computer scientist and artist in Carnegie Mellon's School of Computer Science and School of Art. "With electronics, if you're creating new sounds that no one has ever created before, how can you imagine exactly what that's going to be?"

Dannenberg would help Balada create those sounds to add to his musical palette, building on the avant-garde and traditional playing techniques that he has used in his many orchestral works, chamber pieces and operas. But what of the editing and polishing of the final composition, given the typically tight rehearsal schedule of a world-class orchestra?

"Experimenting with a symphony orchestra is probably not a good idea," agrees Alan Fletcher, head of Carnegie Mellon's School of Music. So Balada suggested that the Carnegie Mellon Philharmonic play the piece first. It would be a win–win situation for everyone, Fletcher says, using the ensemble as "something of a laboratory for the composer," while the students "can see how a brand-new work evolves… the problems and the changes and the experiments and the adjustments."

Communicating all that is always a challenge given the abstract nature of music itself. For example, a prominent string passage in the *American*'s first movement is a tremolo (a fast, vibrating sound) played *col legno* (with the wood side of the bow) behind the bridge (on the short, high-pitched part of the strings). "Some people call it the Balada pizzicato," the composer says. "It's a very metallic sound. At one point, I had

all the strings — violins, violas, cello, bass — doing this takata takata takata. It's rather painful and angry, sounding something like how Picasso's *Guernica* looks."

That's neither hyperbole nor coincidence. The Spanish Civil War — the brutality of which is symbolized by the firebombing of the peaceful city of Guernica, immortalized in Picasso's masterpiece — is a predominant childhood memory of Balada's and a theme in several of his compositions, including his newest symphony. Barely a year after the destruction of Guernica in 1937, the then–4-year-old Balada was running to the subway with his grandmother to dodge the bombing of his native Barcelona. It was a memory that was re-awakened when Balada attended a music conference, Orchestra Tech, in New York, barely a month after the destruction of the World Trade Center. "It was terrible," Balada recalls of his visit to lower Manhattan. "The taxi driver was crying."

Technology, 9/11, Guernica — those ideas were brewing inside Balada when the Endowments' Arts & Culture Program staff was seeking proposals for a new program that would help artists produce a work in partnership with a professional arts organization (see "Creating Collaboration," p. 21). Several composers had approached the Pittsburgh Symphony, recalls artistic administrator Robert Moir, but Balada's ideas intrigued him the most.

The Creative Heights' panel was equally excited by the Pittsburgh Symphony's proposal to commission the Balada piece with electronic enhancement of live acoustic music. "As far as I know, [that's] pretty unheard of in the orchestra world," says Kerry Spindler, the Endowments' Arts & Culture Program officer. And since encouraging artistic partnerships is key, it was important to include the Philharmonic to "field test" the composition. "It so perfectly met all the goals set by the initiative," Spindler says.

The Balada partnership qualified for the program's highest grant, $40,000, "which certainly didn't cover the entire cost of the project," says Spindler, describing the symphony work as the most costly of the five inaugural projects announced in February 2002. She was referring to the Pittsburgh Symphony's financial investment in scheduling Balada's piece for the regular subscription season. While Balada describes the piece as a work that moves "from the abyss to the heavens," the bean counters needed the Creative Heights grant to make sure it would be paid for when it settled back to earth.

With the financing secure and the performance date scheduled, the next step was for Balada to get to work and begin adding to his sonic palette.

"We met in Roger's studio, talked about the effects we could get," Balada says. Most of the time was spent making sounds. Dannenberg set up a microphone and played a few notes on an instrument, then sent those notes through a sound processor, trying out such effects as delay, reverb, equalization and pitch change, separately and together. "An effect may work really well

INSTRUMENT. IT'S ONE ACHIEVEMENTS OF WESTERN CULTURE."

Leonardo Balada Composer

Left: Concert-goers who hear Balada's new symphony for the first time are treated to a sharp break from the two classical works on the evening's program. Below: Balada, calm and unassuming, acknowledges enthusiastic applause from conductor Graf and the audience at the conclusion of the world premiere performance.

with a trumpet, but you try that with a violin or a cello and it doesn't work," he continues. "He went into composition with a set of sounds that he knew he could use."

Balada had a lot of ideas about what he wanted: not electronic music, but music using electronics that could still work without electronics. "I didn't want to write a piece where technology was the end of the piece, but another inflection, another chord," he says. "I think the orchestra is a fantastic instrument. It's one of the great achievements of western culture. I like the way it sounds." So why add the technological element? "Because I want to try to think differently. I wanted to give a surrealistic quality to the orchestra."

But for all the layers of partnerships and collaborations of this symphony, the act of composition itself is solo. "I tell my students: Composition is like architecture. Nobody helps you. You have to build it note by note," Balada says. He spent the better part of a year, April 2002 to February 2003, struggling through the carpentry, drawing inspiration from a variety of musical sources, including his own.

"The first movement is more typical of what I did in the '60s, like 'Steel Symphony' and 'Guernica,' very abstract," he says. "Some sounds will recall bells, like funeral bells in a minor third, a sad sound." For the second movement, he drew upon Negro spirituals, as he had done for his 1968 "Sinfonìa en Negro: Homage to Martin Luther King," but there using African rhythms in an abstract way, here creating "an expression of hope that something good will happen," he continues. The final movement he calls "a surrealistic square dance," using a theme from his 1982 opera, *Hangman, Hangman!* as a motif. Putting "ethnic things on top of those avant garde sounds" to create a unified piece is "very dangerous," he admits, but it's a signature of Balada's third, and current, period.

Symphony No. 5 is scored for 93 instruments, 14 of them "enhanced": two violins, viola, cello, flute, trumpet, clarinet, piano, harpsichord, chimes, xylophone, vibraphone, harp and glockenspiel. That means 15 microphones, including two for the piano — to be placed for maximum sound quality, compounded by the delicacy of classical instruments. "We met three or four times at the recording studio at Carnegie Mellon to rehearse with different groups," says recording engineer Riccardo Schulz, instructor in recording technology and a specialist in recording, editing and mastering classical music. Preparing for the Philharmonic's September reading of the symphony in Carnegie Music Hall required several days and his entire crew of eight students. "We needed every hand we could get," Schulz remembers.

The Philharmonic's read-through is the first time anyone actually hears the new symphony — and when they make sure it's what Balada intends to hear. "We want to discover what the sound problems will be before we start the rehearsals with the Symphony so we're not hung up on technological problems," Dannenberg says. The process seems painfully slow as the orchestra plays six measures, or a dozen, then stops on command as the balance is checked, a microphone moved, an electronic effect adjusted. Then the passage is repeated. Maestro Juan Pablo Izquierdo, professor of music and director of orchestral studies, asks about tempo, and then checks with Balada on an interpretation. Balada, meanwhile, is up and down, following the music on his score and frequently waving his arms to stop. Sometimes the problem is obvious even to untrained ears: too loud, feedback, interference. Often, it's more subtle — not quite what he wants. If the problem can't be fixed immediately, Dannenberg makes a note.

About 100 students are involved in this experiment, says music school head Fletcher. "We have the luxury of a really first-rate orchestra and people who are themselves committed to this kind of work." The Symphony's Moir is here, too, thanking the students and inviting them to the world premiere. "The clock starts," he notes of the growing momentum. A Pittsburgh Symphony subscription concert has four days of rehearsal, total, and there are three other pieces on the program. "By the last rehearsal, it has to be right."

"We have to be super-prepared," explains Andrés Cárdenes, concertmaster and Rachel Mellon Walton chair, and violin soloist in the third movement. That means studying the score to troubleshoot problems early. It can also mean unusual preparation, as in the symphony's principal keyboardist, Patricia Prattis Jennings, using colored tape to mark piano strings that the music requires her to pluck directly on the soundboard.

The first "day" of rehearsal — actually one hour for the Balada symphony — brings together the composer and the conductor. Hans Graf, the Austrian-born music director of the Houston Symphony, Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine and the Calgary Philharmonic, is appreciative of both the music and the challenges it offers.

With Balada is Lucas Richman, resident conductor for the Pittsburgh Symphony. He's the designated "middle man" when someone has a problem or a question. He and assistant conductor Daniel Meyer provide two more sets of expert ears during rehearsal. "We know how the orchestra sounds and what works and what will not work in the hall," Richman says.

Meyer is part of the three-man team at the console, following the score and reading the sound cues. "I can't expect the conductor in the front of the hall to turn around and cue us," Dannenberg says. Sound engineer Tom Furey operates the

mixer. "His job is getting the sounds from the microphones to me, and sounds from me back to the speakers," Dannenberg explains.

Using manually controlled off-the-shelf processors is, he admits, a relatively low-tech operation for a computer scientist, but failsafe. "The most important thing is to avoid catastrophe, and computers have the property that they're terrific at automation but they have catastrophic failure modes. If you're in the middle of a performance, all you can do is shut everything down. The effort to make sure that didn't happen would turn this into a huge engineering project," Dannenberg says. "In my own pieces, I'm highly dependent on computers, but I'm not working with 100 live musicians who will kill me if there's a catastrophe."

As with the Philharmonic, the first reading proceeds in fits and starts, replaying passages as speakers are moved, effects adjusted, more questions asked of the composer. The orchestra barely makes it to the end of the piece, and there still hasn't been a complete, continuous run-through, three days before the world premiere. As the musicians leave the stage for lunch, Balada, Graf and Dannenberg confer to prepare for the next — and final — rehearsal on the morning of the premiere.

The recording of the performance, overseen by Lucas Richman, "is quite good," says Balada, who hopes it can be used for a CD release.

"I'm looking forward to doing it again sometime, but I need a long rest," says Dannenberg. Toward the end, he was literally dreaming the piece, "and when the clock sounded, I thought it was a cell phone. I thought, 'Oh, no, a cell phone is going off during Leonardo's work.' "

Will Symphony No. 5 *American* stand the test of time? "It's not for us to decide," the Houston Symphony's Graf says. Concert schedules are often programmed years in advance, and whether Balada's newest symphony enters the repertoire is impossible to predict, he says. Nevertheless, "Leonardo has his well-deserved success." Contemporary music is always a hard sell for audiences, but more palatable when it's a concerto or solo piece for a star. "People would go for a 'star' more than the music. It takes much more courage to write a symphony."

And especially this symphony, says Cárdenes. "It's not Leonardo of 20 years ago or 10 years ago or 50 years ago," he says of Balada. "He's a mature composer. To write music that's somewhat controversial and pushing the envelope, I think that's a great thing for a man of his age and maturity and standing."

"IT'S IMPORTANT TO SUPPORT COMPOSERS AND ALLOW NEW MUSIC TO BE CREATED. THAT'S WHAT KEEPS ART ALIVE."

Lucas Richman Pittsburgh Symphony Resident Conductor

While the first hour of this rehearsal again includes frequent interruptions for questions and repetitions of various passages, the rise in the level of assurance is palpable. The performance is smooth, and after a short break, after only two hours total rehearsal time, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra performs Balada's *American* symphony straight through for the first time.

It is flawless.

After the premiere performance that night, the final bows and standing ovations are greeted with various mixtures of satisfaction, relief and anticipation by the artistic team. "We were still working on it this morning, still adjusting," Balada notes in the pre-concert lecture on Friday. But he is pleased.

Post-Gazette critic Druckenbrod did not fall in love with the work, but he respects the piece and the choice of a local composer. "… Orchestras cut their own throats if they do not support new music, even if it upsets some patrons," he observes.

Educating audiences to the necessity of commissioning works is the answer, says the Pittsburgh Symphony's resident conductor, Richman. "It's important to support composers and allow new music to be created. That's what keeps art alive. If we're simply re-creating monuments of the past, then live performance would become a dead art, a tribute to dinosaurs." *h*

CREATING COLLABORATION

In a novel Endowments residency program, individual artists get the spotlight while high-profile organizations play a supporting role.

Behind the production of Leonardo Balada's new symphony — what he refers to as a milestone in a life-long musical evolution — there is Creative Heights, a still-evolving program of The Heinz Endowments that has freed artists to produce defining works that otherwise might never have moved off an artist's wish list.

Creative Heights, a residency initiative now in its third year, is filling a niche in what the foundation's Arts & Culture Program officers refer to as Pittsburgh's "total arts ecology."

"We like to steal that word from our Environment colleagues," says Program Director Janet Sarbaugh. "It's a great phrase to ensure that people consider more than great buildings and performing arts spaces and galleries when they think of a city's arts scene. It's a label that covers more than the big arts organizations. It includes smaller organizations; it includes audiences," says Sarbaugh.

"But at the center of that ecology is the artist. Without the artist, we have nothing."

For the Endowments, Creative Heights has become a key mode of artist support. Modeled on the Creative Work Fund in the San Francisco Bay Area, the program's goal is to pair an artist with an institution, but making the project completely centered on the artist's work. It's designed to provide a period of immersion for the artist to advance an idea to the point of a public presentation of the work.

The program, which has awarded a total of 13 grants in its three years of operation, is not limited as to artistic medium. The only boundaries are that the lead artist and sponsoring organizations must be in the Pittsburgh area, aiming for the production of art for local audiences, and that an artist partner with an arts organization. In addition to Leonardo Balada's commission of a new work for the Pittsburgh Symphony, past awardees include inter-active artist Tim Kaulen for work with the Pittsburgh Children's Museum to create giant inflatable sculptures; and Indian classical musician–composer–vocalist Charu Collur, joining with Srishti Dances of India to create new music.

"The amazing thing about the program is that it gives a lot of freedom to the artist — more than any other program I can think of in the region," says Kaulen, who is nearing the end of his fellowship. He points to the workshop artists at the Children's Museum as a group that is experienced in working with artists. "They are gems, really. They respect the core of what an artist is trying to communicate the whole way through. They'll shape it, troubleshoot and experiment to help you get it to a result that's going to work in public. It's an incredible experience."

Under the program, the Endowments make grants to sponsoring organizations, that use it to support the artist and the idea. Most of the grant money — at least two-thirds — is directed through the partnering arts organizations to fund the artist and project-related costs. The $150,000 annual program budget is distributed in two types of grants. Production grants range from $10,000 to $40,000 for residencies of six months to two years, culminating in at least one public performance, exhibition or screening. New this year are seed grants of $2,000 to $7,000 for residencies of less than one year to help artists "experiment with process, try out new ideas and not necessarily produce a finished product," Sarbaugh says.

The Arts & Culture staff has simplified the initial application process with a letter of inquiry rather than a full-blown proposal as the first step. The most promising are then invited to submit formal, detailed applications, which are reviewed by an outside panel of local and national arts experts. Panelists have included composer Libby Larsen, choreographer James Sewell and Creative Capital Foundation President Ruby Lerner.

William Judson, an independent film–video programmer and teacher in Pittsburgh who served on the review panel for this year's awardees, says one of the less heralded benefits of the program is in its validation that the arts can enhance quality of life and economic well-being in a city. The challenge, says Judson, is to use the successful performances and exhibits coming out of Creative Heights "to sell more foundation investments in individual artists. It takes a lot of courage because it can be risky. But for arts institutions to thrive and for cities to be great places to live, there needs to be more individual artist support, not less," says Judson.

Among Creative Heights awardees beginning projects this year are South Side crooner Phat Man Dee partnering with the Pittsburgh Opera to develop a production based on S. Ansky's play, *The Dybbuk*; composer David Stock working with the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony to produce a 20- to 25-minute clarinet concerto; and theater artists Rick Kemp and Heath Lamberts working with Point Park College's Pittsburgh Playhouse Repertory Company to produce an original comic theater piece. *h*

Srishti Dancers of India photo by Jeff Swensen

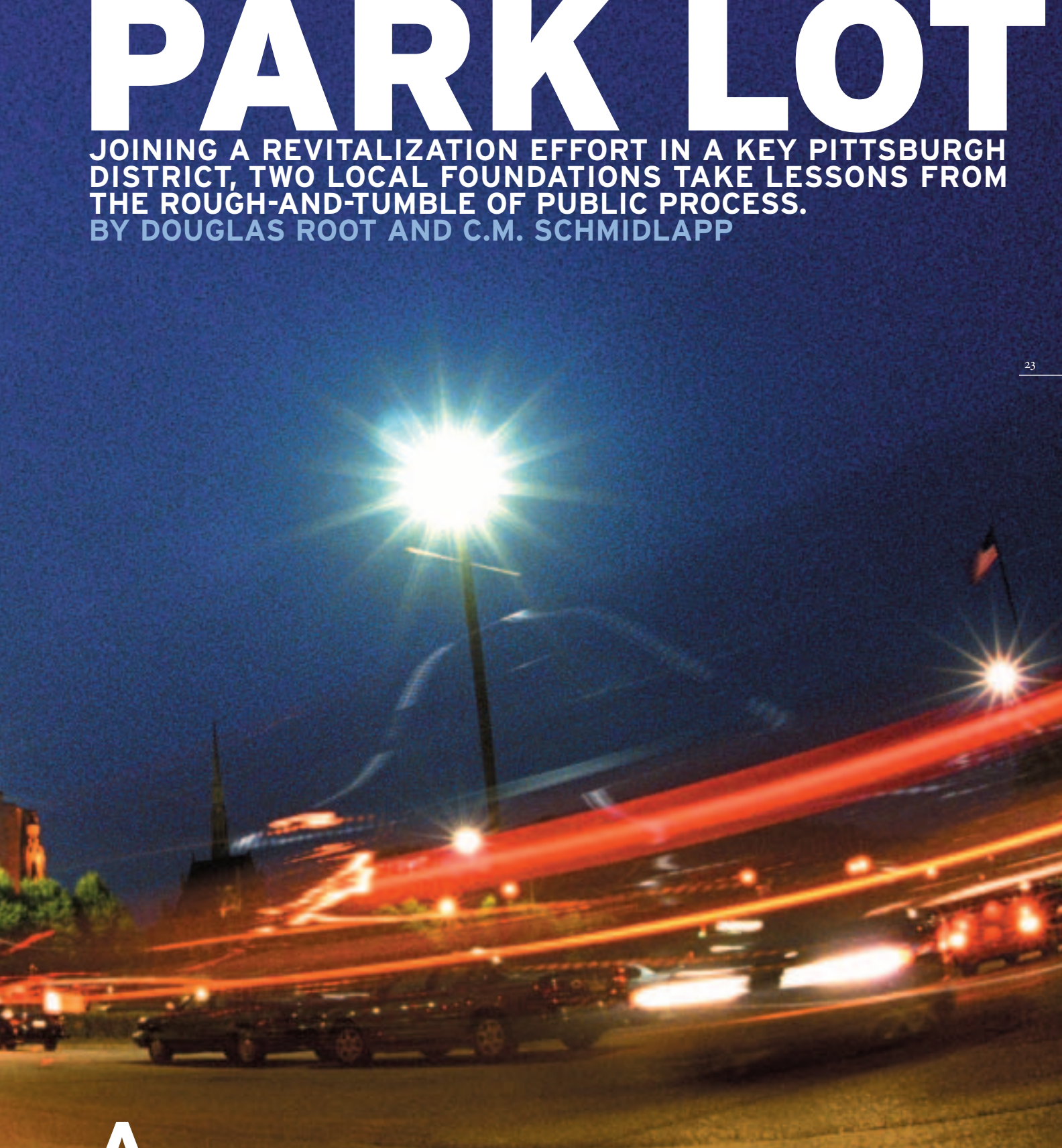
An asphalt-level view of the parking lot across from the University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning. The lot is at the center of an intense public debate over the merits of turning it into an amenities-filled town square that also serves as an entrance to sprawling Schenley Park.

Photo by David Aschkenas

PARK LOT

JOINING A REVITALIZATION EFFORT IN A KEY PITTSBURGH DISTRICT, TWO LOCAL FOUNDATIONS TAKE LESSONS FROM THE ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE OF PUBLIC PROCESS.

BY DOUGLAS ROOT AND C.M. SCHMIDLAPP



At both ends of Pittsburgh's Oakland district, where prestigious medical centers, top-line universities and museums, trendy boutiques and flavorful ethnic restaurants bump up against tony estates, working-class homes and dumpy student housing, construction cranes are plying the air.

One wields beams for what will be the Collaborative Innovation Center, a high-tech workplace for Carnegie Mellon University. Less than one mile south of that site, two more cranes hoist loads for the University of Pittsburgh's Biomedical Science Tower 3. The flurry of construction activity validates the high stakes as government officials, and academic, foundation and civic leaders are betting that the region's future economy depends on the fortunes of what is arguably the city's most complex neighborhood.

Certainly, Oakland is a place of contrasts. Even as Pittsburgh's downtown skyline is visible from any high perch, Oakland is a metro center unto itself — Pennsylvania's third largest — and, unlike downtown Pittsburgh, has a strong residential base of 20,000. Commuters entering the district each day swell the population to more than five times that number and strain a transportation system ruled by lumbering buses and streams of private vehicles.

In the distance covered by a 10-minute stroll, a compressed business district surrounded by hospitals, university campuses, museums and row-house–packed border blocks gives way to the vast expanse of Schenley Park. At more than 400 acres, the second largest in the city parks system, Schenley covers a golf course, skating rink, playing fields and wooded trails.

Between these extremes is a nondescript asphalt parking lot that civic leaders have envisioned as the staging ground for a new town square that will serve as the center of gravity between business–campus life and park entrance. It also is viewed as the symbolic first step among stakeholder leaders coming together under the powerful Allegheny Conference Oakland Investment Committee and the 25 represented organizations and groups of the Oakland Task Force, which includes planners from Pittsburgh city government, staff from the Allegheny Conference on Community Development and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.

For the region's two largest philanthropies, The Heinz Endowments and the Richard King Mellon Foundation, membership on the committee and substantial investments by each in the plaza project design present unique opportunities for realizing long-term strategy goals.

But there also are some valuable "commitment-to-broader-vision" lessons offered as funders participate in a leadership group where priorities for revitalization are at odds with some elements of the community. In the case of the proposed Schenley Plaza, heavyweight Investment Committee members, in addition to the foundations — the University of Pittsburgh and its Medical Center, Carnegie Mellon University, the Carnegie Museums and Library, and Kennametal Corp. — have embraced the $8.1 million plaza project as a key symbolic move that will have tremendous impact on Oakland's future revitalization.

Indeed, symbolism was all over the unveiling of the foundations-funded plaza design in October 2002 when a *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* editorial championed it as a dramatic conversion of one of the city's most congested sectors "into a leafy, grassy thing of beauty."

But since then, other opinion columns and news pieces have vented angry opposition from various single-issue constituencies: a group of commuters complains of the prospect of losing 178 parking spaces on the five-acre lot; some fiscal conservatives fume that a city on the verge of bankruptcy is giving up a cash cow in annual parking revenue; some urban planners worry that the plaza is taking attention away from knotty infrastructure problems that should be tackled first; preservationist and architectural critics debated the design.

Foundation officials, who have been singled out as well for embracing Schenley Plaza in a period of retrenchment in philanthropy, stand their ground. They believe that the project is symbolic in another important way: as a test of commitment to community process and long-term goals.

"I'm sure there was a time when foundations would have been reluctant to participate in a process that has been so public, where there have been dozens of public meetings and many opportunities for dissenters to influence the outcome," says Endowments President Maxwell King. "But today, foundations can't afford to stay out of the fray. We're there as a steadying force to remind the community that the project — as vibrant as it will be — is just the first step in a long journey to reach some significant goals."

Schenley Plaza is key, says King, because it has all the markers of what foundations envision for an Oakland of 2015: an international center for research, education and health care; a hub for technology-based entrepreneurial activity; a district of quality mixed-income neighborhoods; and a showcase for high civic design standards in public buildings and grounds.

While today's Oakland has small pockets of each of these

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SCHENLEY PLAZA: then & now

1920

Photos courtesy of Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy

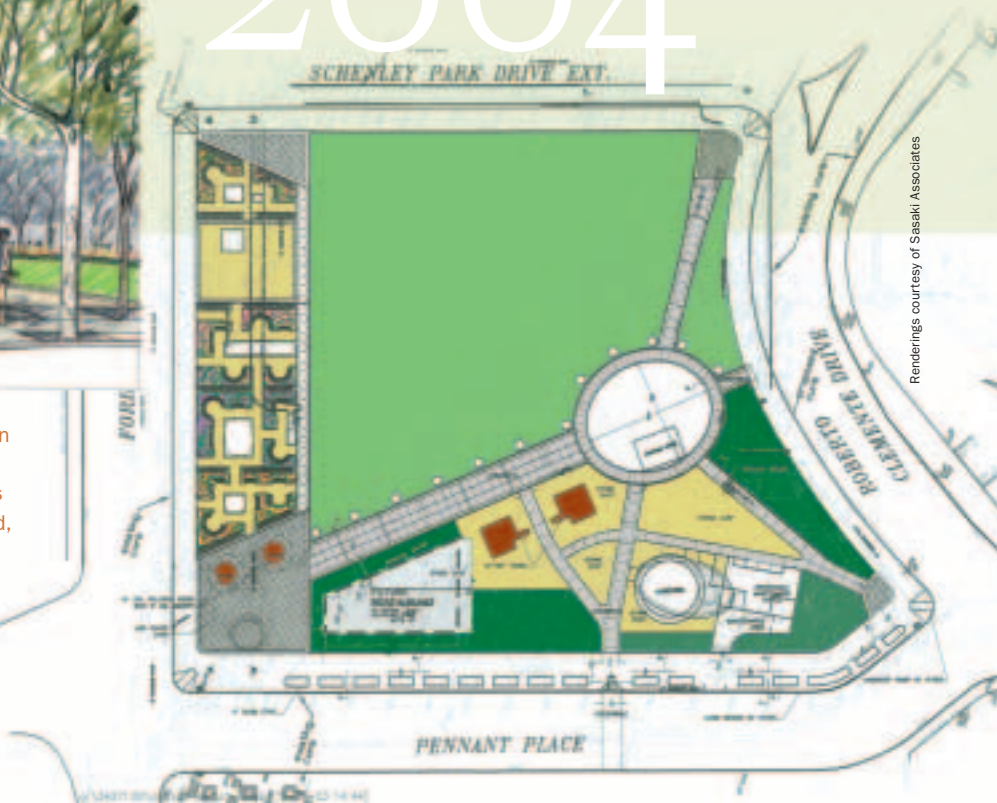
An image of one of the earliest forms of Schenley Plaza, as it was being created according to a 1915 plan developed by landscape architectural firm Sellers & Register after being selected in a national design competition.

1940

This 1940 photograph taken from the University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning shows Schenley Plaza's groves of London Plane trees enclosing an oval lawn with a surround reserved for scores of cars.

2004

Below, an overview of the Sasaki Associates plan for a new plaza shows a pedestrian path that would cut diagonally across the five-acre site, with a great lawn on one side and a grove of trees and a restaurant on the other.



Renderings courtesy of Sasaki Associates

Above, an artist's conception of the plaza entrance from Clemente Drive. Food kiosks are visible in the background, and other areas of the lawn will have tables with moveable chairs.

activities, most civic leaders agree that many more projects beyond Schenley Plaza will need to be implemented during the next decade to ensure that the district reaches its full potential.

The foundation community will be involved in many of these, says Richard King Mellon Foundation Vice-President Mike Watson, with a continued effort to adapt long-range strategy goals to what emerges in a community process. "Those of us on the Investment Committee are not doing this in isolation. We're working very closely with just about every possible Oakland interest group on issues they've identified as important," says Watson. "We're talking well beyond the plaza to issues of transportation, housing, the retail corridor, the portals to Oakland." Though each project will meet a different need, he says, the unifying theme is that "a strong community that surrounds the two universities is essential to the future success of Pittsburgh."

Much of that conviction is based on population demographics that foundations would love to see duplicated in other city neighborhoods and in suburbs. In Oakland, the most internationally diverse population in the region goes to school each day at one of four academic institutions, or works in medical research labs, in technology-based start-up firms, in specialty stores, or in one of the dozens of ethnic restaurants that thrive in the district.

Oakland's potential for serving as a regional economic generator also has attracted the attention of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, the venerable business–civic leadership group that has driven some of the region's most important development since the late 1940s. The Conference supports Schenley Plaza as the first project out of the gate, says Vice-President Ellen Brooks, "because it benefits so many constituencies." A chart on her desk showing relationships among plaza project stakeholders has so many inter-connecting lines it looks like a spider web. The park idea, says Brooks, "bubbled up from the various improvement plans undertaken by many of these groups over the years."

In fact, so many studies of Oakland have been archived, among them a regional parks master plan, the Oakland Civic Loop Study and the Oakland Improvement Strategy, that one of the first actions of Investment Committee members was to order up a study of the studies. The result was The Future of Oakland, prepared by Urban Design Associates and completed early last year. Analyzing and integrating the earlier proposals, its recommendations ranged from improving the Forbes Avenue commercial district to constructing a new elementary school. Also highlighted in that plan and later approved by the Investment Committee was the plaza project.

"OAKLAND NEEDS A GATHERING PLACE THAT'S COMMON TO ALL THE PARTIES THAT ARE THERE. THESE INCLUDE VISITORS TO THE MUSEUMS, STUDENTS, PEOPLE WHO USE THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS. WHILE [SCHENLEY PLAZA] WON'T BE RETAIL, IT WILL BE ACTIVE."

Dan Biederman President, Bryant Park Restoration Corporation

"Our studies for the parks master plan told us that people wanted [the parking lot] to be a park-like space," says Meg Cheever, founder and president of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, the advocacy organization supporting the city's four regional parks, including Schenley. Wealthy Pittsburgh landholder Mary Schenley deeded the plaza site to the City in 1891, intending that it serve as an entrance to Schenley Park, and Cheever believes it is the Conservancy's duty to honor that purpose.

The Conservancy also worked to justify it by bringing in urban parks expert Dan Biederman, internationally known for his dramatic transformation of New York City's Bryant Park. Biederman focuses on specific strategies for attracting people, emphasizing the highest standards of design and maintenance. "Oakland needs a gathering place that's common to all the parties that are there," he says. "These include visitors to the museums, students, people who use the commercial districts. While [Schenley Plaza] won't be retail, it will be active."

A design process funded by the two foundations and grounded in Biederman's "what people want" principle, led to a plan devised by Boston landscape architectural firm, Sasaki Associates, that incorporates many Bryant Park amenities, including a great lawn, small flower gardens near walkways, portable chairs and food kiosks.

Last September, Sasaki landscape architect Alistair McIntosh, outlining the design plan in a public meeting, talked about

the plan being anchored to the original 1915 plaza designed by Sellers and Register. But the new design's user-friendly amenities, the expansive gardens and trees, even a pedestrian walkway direct to Schenley Bridge, are included to make the park relevant to a district that must serve so many masters in so many different ways.

Both the City Historic Review Commission and the Art Commission saw the merits of amenities mixed in with a historically conscious design and cleared the way for construction. But *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* architecture critic Patricia Lowry has reservations. While appreciative of some of the amenities that mirror Byant Park, she sees a fundamental drawback in that, unlike the New York park, "Schenley Plaza must serve as the entrance to something greater than itself." She argues that the accepted design sacrifices the original plaza's "symmetry and monumentality, mostly to gain a restaurant within an informal bosque of trees."

While lofty arguments over landscape design have ignited passions among a few, none of these compare to scattered critics closer to street level who have savaged the project as green space supplanting essential parking space at a cost the community can't afford.

"I think the whole plan's a bunch of crap, and you can quote me on that," says Pittsburgh City Councilman Jim Motznik, who cast the lone 'no' vote in May when his eight Council colleagues approved land- and street-control agreements among city government, the Conservancy and the University of Pittsburgh.

Motznik cites costs of $20,000 for new traffic signals, with another $10,000 annually for maintenance. He discounts a portion of the plan that has the Parks Conservancy meeting the $1.75 million in annual maintenance and management costs by developing new revenue streams, believing taxpayers will end up holding the bag. He also believes the $5 million awarded to the project by Governor Ed Rendell in the spring should have been diverted to more worthy projects. "All this money, and for what? You're not going to attract a single person to Oakland as a result of this project," he says.

In a May opinion piece, Motznik staff member Cleda Klingensmith lamented the foundations' underwriting the park design, and singled out the Endowments for agreeing to pay an extra $750,000 to supply basic utilities infrastructure that a nearly bankrupt city government can't afford. "Since these groups don't pay taxes, they probably have a bit more money to throw around," she wrote.

While Motznik doesn't represent Oakland or live in the district, the Khalil family does. Mike Khalil was an immigrant from Syria in 1952 when he settled in Oakland with little education to earn a living and raise a family. In 1972, he opened a restaurant on Semple Street near the family home. Business was good enough that eventually he was able to move his parents and four brothers from Syria to Pittsburgh as well.

Today, the family runs a successful real estate business centered on renting out commercial property on Forbes Avenue and student housing on Atwood. Dalel, one of Mike Khalil's five children, each of whom is a Pitt graduate, helps run the family real estate business. Remembering the ethnic diversity of life in the neighborhood, where "you would walk down the street and smell Greek, Nigerian, Italian and Syrian cooking," she embraces Schenley Plaza. "Give me the scissors so I can cut the ribbon," she says. "This kind of thing is the lifeblood of this district." While pleased with the plaza's purpose, she worries about too much tweaking. "If it's pretentious, it doesn't belong in Oakland," she says.

The same "pretentious" test also might apply to regional foundations that want to be successful in grand grantmaking strategies but leery of getting too involved in the rough-and-tumble of an in-depth public process.

"We need to be on the ground level of projects like Schenley Plaza. We need to attend the meetings and do our homework and listen carefully to comments at public forums" says Caren Glotfelty, director of the Endowments' Environment Program and the foundation's representative on the Schenley Plaza Design Review Committee. "Doing all that gives us the ability to separate worthy criticism from complaints based on narrow self-interest." When foundations offer ways to shape future projects, says Glotfelty, we have more assurance that the community will come along with us. *h*

here&there

PITTSBURGH GLITTERS AS NATIONAL ARTS STAGE

The inaugural National Performing Arts Convention held in Pittsburgh in June drew some 4,000 artists, arts organization managers, board members and funders to Pittsburgh's Cultural District, and reviewers of the event raved about the city and its arts institutions as hosts.

"Mainly, a lot of arts opinion-makers got a whole new sense of Pittsburgh," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* drama critic Chris Rawson wrote of the week-long interactions–public performances, seminars, workshops and private networking. "Chief movers Mark Weinstein [Pittsburgh Opera], Kevin McMahon [Cultural Trust] and many funders [led by PNC Financial Services Corp.] and performing groups can all be proud."

The Heinz Endowments contributed over $300,000 through the Pittsburgh Opera and Three Rivers Arts Festival for conference activities. An additional $710,000 was provided by other local funders, including the Richard King Mellon Foundation.

Arts leaders who attended the conference included National Endowment for the Arts head Dana Gioia, veteran TV actress Estelle Parsons, New York Theater pioneer Ellen Stewart of La Mama Theatre Group and vocalist Bobby McFerrin, below, who sang at the closing night performance.

Photo by Matt Polk

NEW SOFTWARE PACKAGE RAISES QUALITY OF GRANTEE EVALUATIONS

Two Endowments' grantmaking programs have committed a total of $75,000 for a pilot project that will offer a proven computer software program and training to grantees to make program evaluations more effective and easier to produce.

The software and training program, known as Impact Manager, will be managed through Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania in two phases running through the end of this year. A group of as many as 10 grantees — from fledgling groups to large institutions — has been asked to participate as part of a representative sample to establish the worth of the computer tool. "We're hoping to verify that those who are properly trained to use the new software will be able to do a better job overseeing programs by being more accurate in reporting on outcomes," says Endowments Evaluation Officer Stephanie Wilson, who is managing the project. "We also believe that once they're experienced with the software, evaluation reports will be much less of a burden to produce."

Wilson says that Impact Manager already has brought solid performance reviews from other grantmaking organizations, including The Woods Fund of Chicago and the national staff of Easter Seals Society.

The Endowments' Education and Children, Youth & Families Programs are sharing in the costs of the pilot. If grantees and Endowments staff find it successful, other Endowments grantees may be added to the program next year.

Pittsburgh's Faith Tech Awarded Federal Education Grant

A computer-based training and tutoring program attached to church-sponsored, after-school programs in disadvantaged communities, has received a $391,700 grant from the U.S. Department of Education through its Community Technology Center Program.

Faith Tech, managed through the University of Pittsburgh's Student Outreach Office, is a grantee of the Endowments' Education Program, which has provided $400,000 in funding during the past three years. The group's goal of improving the quality of church-connected, out-of-school programs, especially to teenagers from troubled neighborhoods, matches up with the foundation's after-school program agenda. The Pitt-managed program involves 200 undergraduate students who tutor Faith Tech participants to develop better computer skills, assist with homework and use the Internet for job searches and employment training.

The Department of Education grants covered 78 nonprofit groups across the country. Faith Tech is one of 21 groups connected to religious organizations that received funding.

INTERNS ADVANCE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM AGENDA

The Endowments' extensive funding strategy around after-school programming will benefit from a thorough review of citywide after-school networks conducted by students participating in this summer's internship program.

Mary Frances Beattie, Chantal Whitehead and Greg Gerson, all college-bound seniors from local high schools, reviewed scores of articles, reports and studies; they interviewed educators and consultants, and examined after-school programs in several cities in preparing a detailed analysis.

In a final presentation to Endowments staff, the interns recommended that the often scattered and ill-defined after-school programming in the region be brought together in a cohesive network that would benefit from data collection, training and technical assistance. The students also suggested that regional funders active in after-school programming would be better able to measure results by pooling resources. They identified several groups that would have the capacity to coordinate a network and build on successful programs already popular in the community.

Beattie, a graduate of the Pittsburgh Public Schools' Creative and Performing Arts High School, interned in the spring at the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild on Pittsburgh's North Side, and will study at Sarah Lawrence College. Whitehead, of Shady Side Academy, is a former Sarah Heinz House member and will begin a pre-medicine program at West Chester University. Gerson, a graduate of Steel Valley High School, where he was president of the student council and editor of the school newspaper, will attend the University of Pittsburgh and pursue a business degree.

The Endowments' internship program is run through the Children, Youth & Families Program under the direction of Marge Petruska. Interns coordinator is Program Associate Wayne Jones.

Endowments' Grant Application Process Moves Online

In a recent grantee perception survey conducted by the Endowments, 80 percent of respondents indicated that they wanted the ability to apply for funding through the Endowments' website.

The Endowments' Information-Technology staff took that mandate to heart and has now

made that process possible on the Endowments' home page: www.heinz.org. Nonprofit organizations interested in applying for Endowments funding need only click on the "Grants" section and then scroll through the menu to click on "Online Application." Applications processed through the Internet are secure and are treated in the same manner as paper submissions.

THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS

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