

# h

THE MAGAZINE OF  
THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS

Issue 1 2019



COMMUNITY CHRONICLES:  
IN PITTSBURGH'S HAZELWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD, REDEVELOPMENT MEANS REBUILDING TOGETHER.

ISSUE 1 2019

# INSIDE



## 2

## FEATURE: IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS

The final installment of our h magazine neighborhood series looks at Hazelwood. Similar to the other Pittsburgh communities in our series, Hazelwood is undergoing revitalization that includes residents, artists, entrepreneurs and foundations, including The Heinz Endowments. Unique to Hazelwood is the 178-acre, foundation-owned brownfield that has the potential to be a model for sustainable economic development. But part of the work involves connecting the site carefully and intentionally to the rest of the neighborhood to make sure residents share in its benefits.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**About the cover** Revitalization in Hazelwood includes a number of people and organizations that participate in different aspects of the work. Sean Cuff, left, and Kizai Sewell were part of the Grounded Strategies team that helped to build "Green Playce," a neighborhood gathering area on property owned by Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church in Hazelwood. Grounded Strategies is a community-improvement nonprofit that focuses on greenspace projects. Photo by Elan Mizrahi.



42



48

## 4 BRIDGING THE GAP

Revitalization efforts in Hazelwood are reshaping remnants of the neighborhood's industrial past by bringing together residents, foundations and other groups to build a more sustainable future.

## 14 THE HOUSING QUESTION(S)

As Hazelwood redevelopment advances, foundations and other investors are trying to ease the concerns of those wondering if current residents will be priced out of their homes.

## 20 MISSION MINDED

The Mission Continues offers veterans the opportunity to channel their commitment to service into communities like Hazelwood that could use their support while offering the vets new purpose.

## 24 ERASING DIVIDING LINES

With new development springing up in Hazelwood, especially on an expansive former steel mill site, efforts also are underway to preserve and enhance community unity.

## 30 ART & SOUL

More than just improving Hazelwood's appearance, art and artistic design projects are helping to boost the neighborhood's growth and its residents' community pride.

## 36 MINI GRANTS, BIG RESULTS

As part of a Heinz Endowments mini-grant program in Hazelwood, small investments are going a long way in having an impact on the neighborhood.

## 42 HEALTHY FUTURES

Community development in Hazelwood includes addressing environmental issues to help make the neighborhood and the residents themselves healthier.

## 48 MAKING THE GRADE

Propel Hazelwood Charter School fills a void left by the closing of three schools in the community over the past two decades, but it must overcome challenges on the road to success.

## 54 HELPLINE TO HEALING

#MeTooPA launched this year as both a hotline and a lifeline to survivors of sexual assault and harassment.

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## 59 HERE & THERE

# IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS:

THIRD OF A THREE-PART SERIES  
FEATURING HOMEWOOD,  
THE HILL DISTRICT AND HAZELWOOD

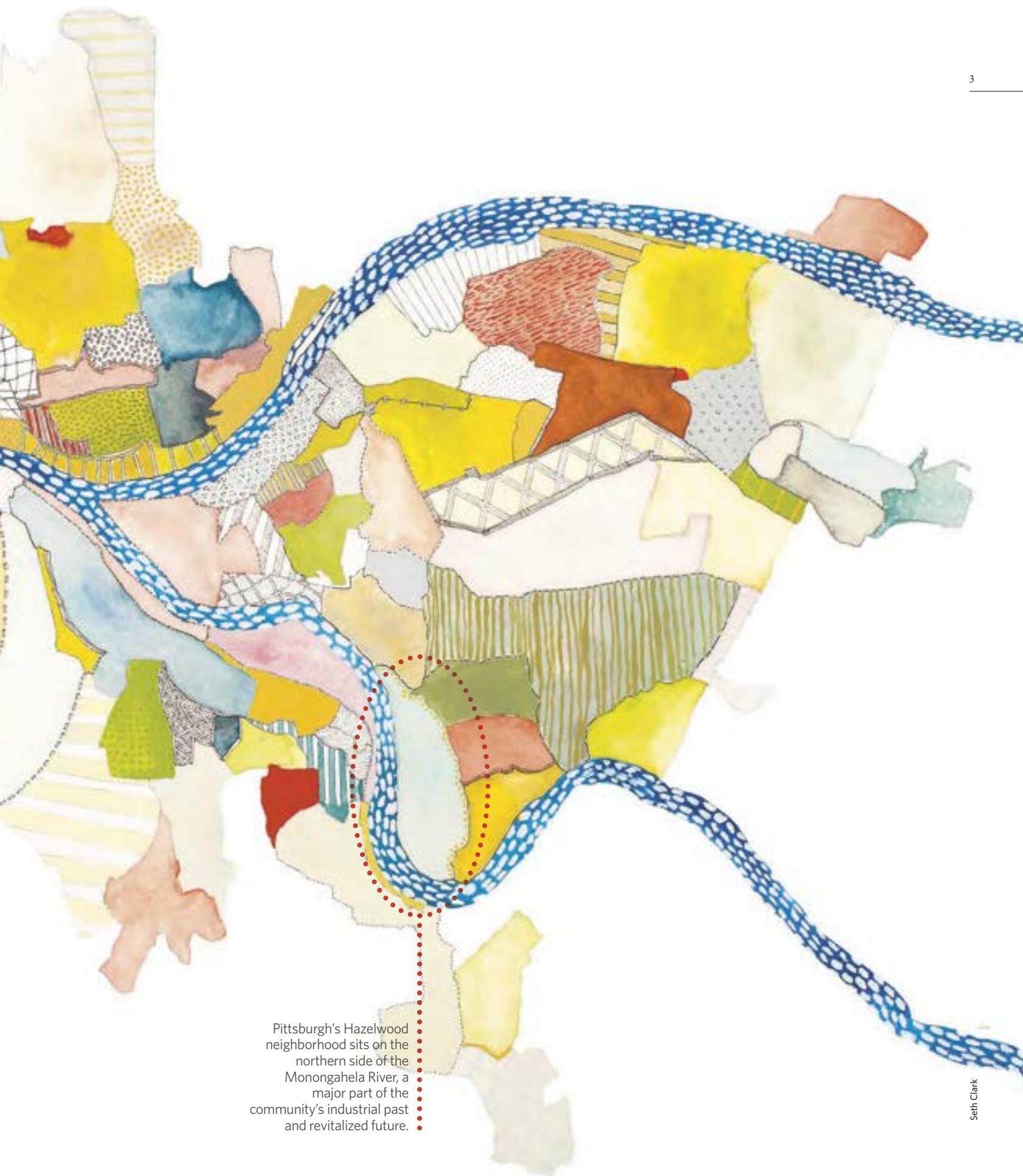
**T**he final installment of our “In the Neighborhoods” series focuses on Hazelwood, the former home of a sprawling coke-producing plant for the steel industry that once fueled the Pittsburgh region’s economy. Like many local communities that had steelmaking at the heart of their identity as well as their financial stability, Hazelwood once teemed with bustling streets and thriving businesses. Then, the mill closed, sapping vitality out of the neighborhood as the local economy eroded.

Yet, similar to Homewood and the Hill District — the other neighborhoods featured in this series — determined residents, community leaders and local supporters have been steadily writing new chapters about Hazelwood rather than closing the book on the neighborhood. Energy and investment have returned to the community, and its future looks brighter than it has in decades with efforts underway to ensure that longtime residents share in the opportunities.

The Heinz Endowments has been among the neighborhood’s largest investors as one of the foundation partners that purchased the 178-acre former mill site in 2002. Now known as Hazelwood Green, the property is an integral part of the neighborhood’s revitalization. However, the transformation expands beyond the brownfield into the rest of the community. A variety of initiatives and partnerships incorporate the talents and interests of current residents and include support from government, universities, foundations and a range of organizations.

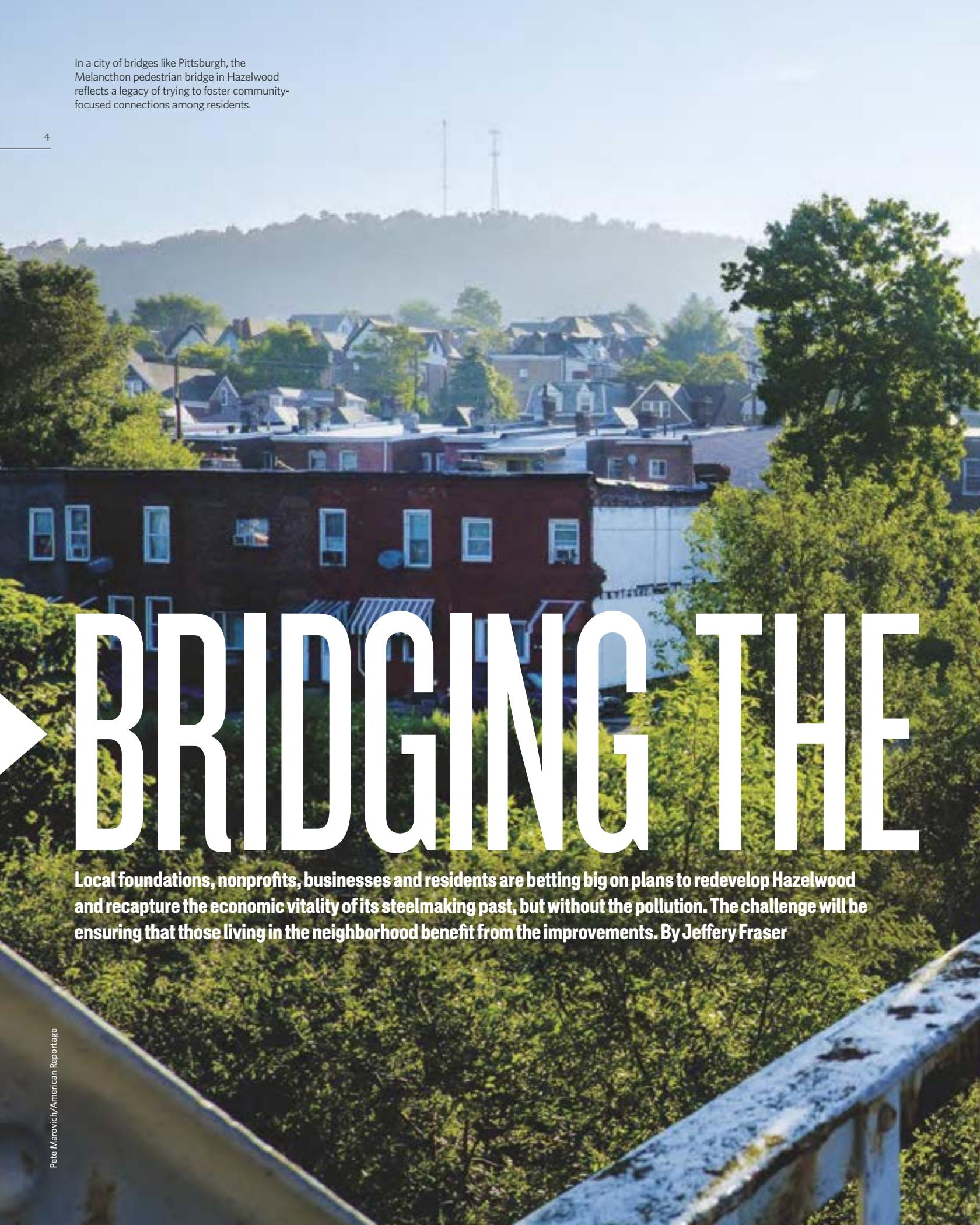
Today, Hazelwood’s unfolding story is providing lessons on how redevelopment can move forward in ways that are inclusive and beneficial for all.





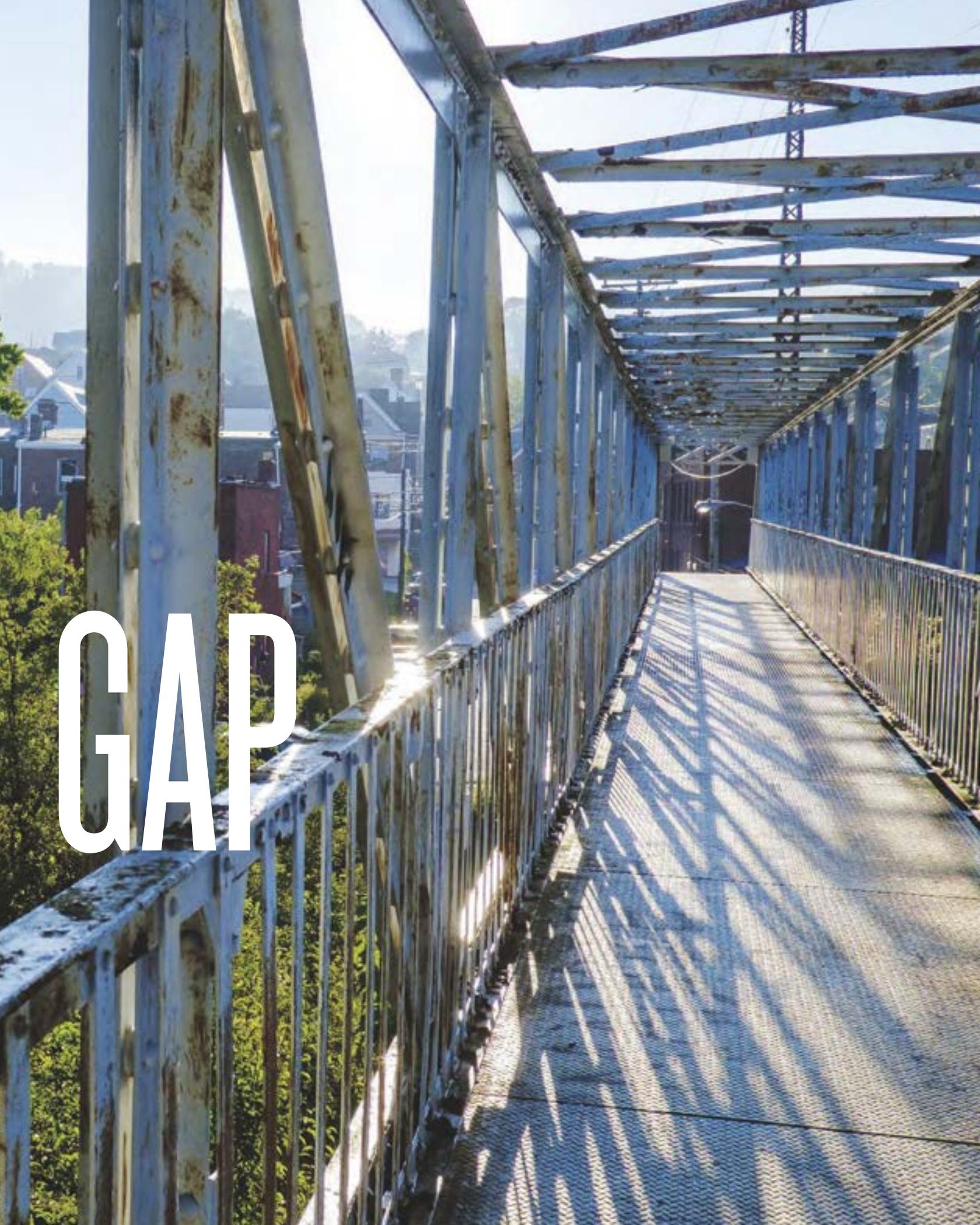
Pittsburgh's Hazelwood neighborhood sits on the northern side of the Monongahela River, a major part of the community's industrial past and revitalized future.

In a city of bridges like Pittsburgh, the Melancthon pedestrian bridge in Hazelwood reflects a legacy of trying to foster community-focused connections among residents.



# BRIDGING THE

**Local foundations, nonprofits, businesses and residents are betting big on plans to redevelop Hazelwood and recapture the economic vitality of its steelmaking past, but without the pollution. The challenge will be ensuring that those living in the neighborhood benefit from the improvements. By Jeffery Fraser**



GAP

The prospect of jobs and hope for a better life than what they had in the Jim Crow South brought JaQuay Carter's grandparents to southwestern Pennsylvania. Steel brought them to Hazelwood.

It was 1941 and the Jones & Laughlin Steel Co.'s sister mills in Hazelwood and across the Monongahela River on Pittsburgh's South Side were ramping into wartime production. It was no longer the place where the hazelnut trees and unspoiled view of the forested river valley had earned it the reputation of the "choicest" neighborhood in the city.

It was a booming mill town in Industrial Age Pittsburgh, where air thick with soot was accepted as the price of prosperity.

"I can remember the smell of sulfur and the mill being lit," Mr. Carter said.

But the memory grows distant. The mill that made coke to fuel the furnaces of local steelmakers didn't survive the 20th century. The Hazelwood of Mr. Carter's formative years was largely one of decline, a community reeling from disinvestment, where those who remained endured the loss of stores, jobs, bus routes, neighbors, schools and churches with depressing regularity.

Even the mill where his grandfather worked is gone, save for a few structural relics. But what's happening on the 178 acres where it stood promises that the Hazelwood of Mr. Carter's future will be one of change. And there are signs it could be as impactful as the arrival of steelmaker Jones & Laughlin more than a century ago.

Uber is refining its autonomous vehicle technologies on a test track where coke ovens once baked coal by the ton. Nearby is the Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing Institute (ARM), a \$250 million national research hub for expediting the ascent of U.S. manufacturing with robots and algorithms.

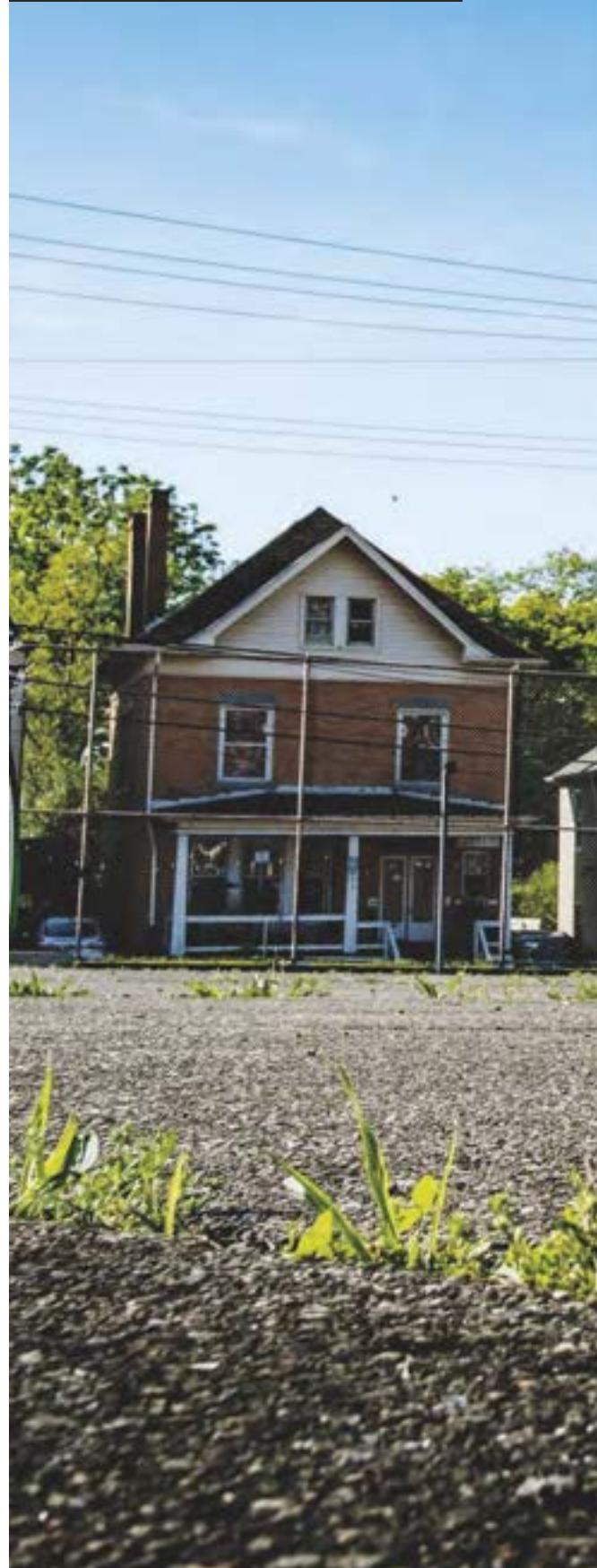
They're the first tenants of Hazelwood Green, a redevelopment of the city's last great industrial brownfield by The Heinz Endowments and the three other foundations that bought it 17 years ago. Both Uber and ARM fit well with the vision of creating a center for innovation and a catalyst of sustainable community development to raise the competitiveness of the region and the prospects of Hazelwood and its residents, while avoiding the environmental insults of the past.

The Hazelwood of Mr. Carter's formative years was largely one of decline, a community reeling from disinvestment, where those who remained endured the loss of stores, jobs, bus routes, neighbors, schools and churches with depressing regularity.

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Jeff Fraser is a Pittsburgh-based freelance writer and frequent contributor to h. His last stories for the magazine were in Issue 2, 2018, as part of the Hill District installment of the "In the Neighborhood" series. One article looked at community leaders' perspectives on economic development in the neighborhood while the other examined the changes underway in Uptown.

# REFLECTION



Pete Marovich/American Reportage

The playground at Gladstone School, one of three that have closed in Hazelwood during the past two decades, is still used on occasion for community events. But residents and developers envision a future when the former school site is a multipurpose community center buzzing with activity.





Archives &amp; Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Library System

# MIGRATION

**1962** (above) The former Jones & Laughlin Steel Co. was a major Hazelwood landmark that stretched along the Monongahela River and could be seen for miles in other Pittsburgh neighborhoods. **1936** (below left) Second Avenue has always been Hazelwood's main thoroughfare, taking travelers through the neighborhood business district across the decades, as this July 1936 photo illustrates. **1941** (below right) When the steel industry was at its height in Pittsburgh, neighborhoods like Hazelwood could support their own movie theaters. On a Sunday in January 1941—and on many other days during this era—the New Hazelwood Theater was a popular attraction for all members of the community.



Archives &amp; Special Collections, University of Pittsburgh Library System



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## Population swelled with the arrival of Hungarian, Italian, Slovak, Polish and Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants drawn to the jobs and opportunities that steelmaking created in abundance.

**H**azelwood rests along the Monongahela River, roughly 13,000 acres spreading from lowlands along the banks up a steep hillside. The first people to set foot in Hazelwood were early nomadic Paleo-Indians some 13,000 to 16,000 years ago. Little evidence remains of their Seneca, Mingo, Delaware and Shawnee descendants who followed them. Later settlers dismantled their burial mounds and used the stone to pave what today is Second Avenue, Hazelwood's main street.

Scottish immigrants were among the first white settlers to arrive, preferring the fertile lowlands, which are still known as Scotch Bottom. Among them was John Woods, a lawyer and politician who finished the plan for the City of Pittsburgh that was started by his father, a surveyor. His 18th-century stone house still stands along Monongahela Street. Bankers, businessmen and riverboat captains followed, building large leisure homes, which became the trademark of the bucolic stretch of riverfront until the industrialization of Pittsburgh found Hazelwood.

By 1906, Jones & Laughlin Steel was feeding the region's steel mills the coke produced in Hazelwood from the largest concentration of beehive ovens found in the world. Production led to jobs. Population swelled with the arrival of Hungarian, Italian, Slovak, Polish and Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants drawn to the jobs and opportunities that steelmaking created in abundance. So many Hungarians made the neighborhood their home that they needed three churches and a synagogue for worship services.

African Americans came, too, particularly during the Great Migration, when millions driven from the South

by segregationist laws, meager economic opportunities and white supremacist violence headed for jobs in the industrial cities of the North and Midwest. Among them were Mr. Carter's grandparents, who left South Carolina for Homewood, where his grandfather found work at the mighty U.S. Steel plant there. When their neighborhood was razed to make room for the plant to expand during World War II, the family relocated a few miles down the Monongahela in Hazelwood.

Nearly 5,000 workers were employed at the J&L Hazelwood plant when it was most productive, and more were employed at the company's South Side works. Their production was so important to the U.S. war effort that the Hot Metal Bridge connecting them was one of the most heavily guarded in the country. The air quality was abysmal, but Hazelwood's population swelled to nearly 12,800 people in 1960. Jobs at the mill put enough money in their pockets to support some 200 neighborhood businesses.

Fortunes quickly turned. J&L's business fell, prompting layoffs. Employment at the Hazelwood works was down to 3,600 in 1974, when Cleveland-based LTV bought it.

When the last coke ovens closed in 1998, only 6,000 people remained in the neighborhood. Nearly 1 in 4 of them lived in poverty.

Businesses dwindled to a handful for lack of customers. The public middle school and elementary school closed for lack of students. Churches closed for lack of parishioners. Bus routes were eliminated for lack of riders.

Even the neighborhood's rich history was lost in the hardship. During childhood, Mr. Carter never knew that Herb Douglas, an African American kid from Hazelwood, had won a medal in the long jump at the 1948 London Olympics, when few black athletes had the chance to compete.

Or how Hazelwood evolved from a white ethnic melting pot to one of the most racially diverse city neighborhoods. Or that Hazelwood was home to one of the first libraries built in Pittsburgh by steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie. Or that 19th-century songwriter Stephen Foster wrote songs in the parlor of a shabby old stone house on Monongahela Street.

"I grew up in Hazelwood," he said. "I didn't know anything about it."

Mr. Carter founded the Greater Hazelwood Historical Society last year to preserve the neighborhood's past. And he brings these and other stories to the local charter school so students might learn what he'd grown up not knowing about the place he called home.

Meanwhile, the next chapter of that lesson is unfolding in front of their eyes.

The Endowments, and the Richard King Mellon, Benedum and McCune foundations, saw the abandoned mill as a rare opportunity to set new standards for brownfield development when they paid \$10 million for it in 2002. For one thing, it's on the doorstep of Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh, the chief drivers of the region's innovation economy. The universities' work has attracted the likes of Google and Uber and fueled demand for more development space, which is increasingly difficult to find in the Oakland neighborhood where their campuses reside.

The foundation partners' patient money bought time to conceive a master plan guided by the principles of sustainable development, which the city has adopted as a template for its future—principles that emphasize high standards for clean air and water, housing, employment opportunity, equity and other aspects that define the quality of life found in a place. The vision unfolding at Hazelwood Green is one of a sustainable mixed-use development, a harmonious blend of housing, offices, research and development, light manufacturing, parks, trails and transportation efficiency, with a smattering of retail, but nothing remotely like big-box shopping.

Buildings are required to meet stringent LEED—Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design—standards. The site will be far less reliant on the energy grid than conventional development. Green infrastructure will help solve local stormwater management problems rather than exacerbate them. And the plan ensures that what transpires on the site won't return Hazelwood to the days when air heavy with sulfur dioxide and particulates left a coating on cars and rooftops.

Hazelwood Green finds itself on the forefront of using such concepts to guide the reuse of retired industrial properties. The Naval Yard in Philadelphia is being developed with similar strategies. And sustainable community development is gaining momentum nationwide.

"You're going to start seeing more and more of this type of development around Pennsylvania," said Andrew McElwaine, the Endowments' vice president for Sustainability. "And I believe what is happening at Hazelwood Green is going to be the industry standard in a few years."

For Hazelwood, redeveloping the former mill site as planned will be transformative, not unlike the building of the mill itself more than 130 years earlier. But unlike the mill, Hazelwood Green is coming to life in a dense, well-established community that has faced decades of decline and disinvestment. The partners control what happens in Hazelwood Green. But most of the property

in the neighborhood is available on the market, the value of which could rise sharply in coming years.

"The real challenge is, how do you do economic redevelopment in a community in an equitable way that doesn't drive out the very people who should benefit from it?" said Grant Oliphant, president of the Endowments, which has invested more than \$50 million in the Hazelwood community and Hazelwood Green combined.

**For Hazelwood, redeveloping the former mill site as planned will be transformative, not unlike the building of the mill itself more than 130 years earlier.**

## REMEDIATION

When The Heinz Endowments and three other foundations purchased the former steel mill site in Hazelwood from LTV Steel Corp., company officials agreed to completely demolish several structures connected to the old mill.



One of the most prominent structures on the Hazelwood Green site is Mill 19, a multipurpose facility housed within the skeletal remains of a steel mill building. Carnegie Mellon University's Manufacturing Futures Initiative, the national Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing Institute, and Catalyst Connections lease space in the facility. While construction is being completed, a view of Downtown Pittsburgh is visible through the beams of the building's framework.





Above: Marcus Robinson, right, founder of the Pittsburgh Bullets developmental basketball team, teaches basic basketball skills to Pierce Lumsden, 9, and other children during the 3rd annual Hazelwood Family Festival at the Gladstone School site in Hazelwood. A Hazelwood native, Mr. Robinson created the Pittsburgh Bullets as a community-based nonprofit to provide jobs as well as athletic opportunities.

Left: Among the community events that have taken place on the site of the now-closed Gladstone School in Hazelwood is the third annual Hazelwood Family Festival.

Right: H. Gene Thompson, right, helps Ari Moyer, left, with a silk screen project as part of the Center of Life's Fusion Program. Fusion provides youth in grades K-12 with homework assistance; tutoring; educational enrichment activities in areas such as math, science, technology and the arts; and a hearty meal.

Far right: Fifth-grader Justice Harris, left, enjoys drum lessons from Carter Freije, right, as part of the Center of Life's COL Jazz program. With three ensembles — Combo, Ensemble, and Bucket Band — COL Jazz offers a variety of music instruction to students in grades K-12.

# REVITALIZATION

What began as an idea of turning an abandoned urban brownfield into a center of innovation fueling Pittsburgh's 21st-century economy has become a laboratory for learning how to bring the neighborhood along for what could be a life-changing ride.

An artist-in-residence program was started. And the list of partners engaged in the work now includes city and county agencies, churches, nonprofits, universities, Hazelwood Green tenants, even a service group of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

What began as an idea of turning an abandoned urban brownfield into a center of innovation fueling Pittsburgh's 21st-century economy has become a laboratory for learning how to bring the neighborhood along for what could be a life-changing ride.

"There was an inkling even back when it started that whatever happened at Hazelwood Green had to be connected to the neighborhood," Mr. Oliphant said. "There just wasn't a lot of understanding of how to do that well. Thus began the journey." **h**

In April, the former steel mill site now known as Hazelwood Green opened to the public for the first time in a century. The foundation partners are committed to investing in ways to help strengthen the neighborhood and position it to benefit from what Hazelwood Green brings. But there is little experience with such a holistic development strategy to draw on. Another challenge is that some improvements necessary to strengthen the neighborhood invite the market forces that risk displacing residents.

"It may feel benign to rebuild a core community infrastructure, like a library or school," Mr. Oliphant said. "But, when you do that, you increase the attractiveness and functionality of the community. That attracts attention and affects perceptions of the neighborhood as a market."

The Endowments chose Hazelwood as the focus of its first place-based initiative, which involves having all of its programs work with neighborhood organizations and others on community improvements. For guidance, the effort relies on neighborhood nonprofits and residents who weathered the worst of times and have ideas about how to make the coming years better.

Some of their top priorities have been realized with support from the Endowments and other partners, including a new home for the Hazelwood branch of the Carnegie Library and a day care and early childhood center in an abandoned church renovated to green standards. A charter school moved into the former city elementary school that was closed and sold to the neighborhood community development corporation.

Nonprofits are buying and rehabbing rental property to secure more affordable housing. A neighborhood master plan was recently finished.



# THE HOUSING QUESTION(S)

REDEVELOPMENT CAN BE A MIXED BAG FOR ANY COMMUNITY THAT WOULD BENEFIT FROM ADDITIONAL SUPPORT BUT IS WARY OF CHANGES THAT COULD PUSH OUT CURRENT RESIDENTS. FOUNDATIONS AND OTHER INVESTORS IN HAZELWOOD ARE TRYING TO ALLAY THESE CONCERNS WITH ASSURANCES OF THEIR INTENTION TO AVOID DISPLACEMENT.  
BY ELWIN GREEN

**T**he redevelopment of any neighborhood that has been long overlooked invariably raises questions about housing plans such as:

- What will happen to longtime, low-income residents?
- Will those who are tenants be displaced by increasing rents?
- What will happen to houses that have been allowed to degrade?
- Will they be repaired, rehabilitated or demolished?

All of those concerns are in the minds of residents and other stakeholders in Hazelwood, and working out the answers is made more complicated by at least two unusual factors.

First, while every neighborhood undergoing revitalization has a certain amount of vacant land, Hazelwood includes the largest tract of vacant property in Pittsburgh: 178 acres upon which a Jones & Laughlin steel mill once sat. The sheer size of the site means that whatever is done with it will have a disproportionate impact on Hazelwood's 5,000 residents.

Second, that land does not belong, as is commonly the case, to either private developers or the City of Pittsburgh. Instead, a trio of philanthropies—The Heinz Endowments, the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, and the Richard King Mellon Foundation, which bought out a fourth original foundation partner—operate together as Almono LP and own the property.

The massive plot has been rechristened Hazelwood Green, and, in an August memo last year, the owners declared their objectives for the redevelopment project, the first of which is to “avoid displacement of any existing individuals and families from the Greater Hazelwood neighborhood.”

How does that happen? For Hazelwood Green's owners, it begins with supporting others who share the goal of





Elan Mizrahi

# HOME EQUITY

**A**s a homeowner, Dorothy Foy looks forward to property values rising in Hazelwood.

"I believe because they're reviving the neighborhood, it's going to enhance the value of my home, as long as I can continue to update," she said.

"If I keep it in good condition and rehab it with the development of the community, it'll be a plus for me."

That plus has been a long time coming. Ms. Foy, 58, was a single parent when she bought her home for \$91,700 in 1998. Now she is an empty-nester widow, her two children grown and gone.

There is one possible downside to having her equity grow.

"I'm not all that excited about the taxes going up," she said.

"I feel that with them reviving and developing a new neighborhood, that they should not just jump in and raise taxes. They should allow the community to adjust to what's going on."

Still, it could be worth a temporary spike in her real estate taxes if she decides to sell. The vacant house next door was appraised at \$195,000, she said.

"I figure my house is in much better condition than that house. If they can get \$195,000, I can get \$220,000."

preventing displacement. Together, the three foundations have already invested more than \$20 million in Hazelwood by way of nonprofits working to provide housing equity in the neighborhood.

The primary recipients have been Hazelwood Initiative, the neighborhood's community development corporation, and Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh, the local affiliate of a Washington, D.C.-based agency focused on repairing homes for seniors, veterans, and low-income or disabled people.

By providing repairs at no cost to homeowners, Rebuilding Together strengthens those homeowners' equity position by increasing the value of their homes. That initial equity boost could grow significantly as property values rise with the redevelopment of the neighborhood.

Since 2012, Rebuilding Together's work has helped to increase equity for 200 to 225 homeowners, according to CEO Steve Hellner-Burris. "Our goal was to serve about 60 percent of homeowners in Hazelwood who are eligible for our services," he said.

With another projected 12 to 15 home renovations scheduled, the organization anticipates winding down its comprehensive rehabilitations by the end of 2020. After that, Rebuilding Together will continue to provide maintenance services to help keep the houses from losing value.

In recent years, Rebuilding Together has partnered with Hazelwood Initiative to help residents benefit from Hazelwood's redevelopment rather than being victimized by it. The Initiative has helped to fund rehab work on some houses beyond Rebuilding Together's original free repair program, matching a homeowner's investment on a 50/50 basis. That has enabled more than 40 families to upgrade their homes.

The two agencies also have created a "Rehab 4 Resale" program in which Hazelwood Initiative buys houses, Rebuilding Together fixes them up, then the Initiative offers them for sale, preferably to first-time homeowners. By helping a person move from tenancy to homeownership, the organizations eliminate that individual's risk of being displaced by increasing rents. Hazelwood Initiative has taken five to six new homeowners a year through the process, and hopes to ramp up to 10 a year, said David Brewton, the organization's director of real estate.

"If you're renting in Hazelwood, you could be in trouble" when development leads to increased rents and property values, Mr. Brewton said. "But if you own a house in Hazelwood, you'll become wealthier."

For those renters who are not ready for homeownership, Hazelwood Initiative is preparing to provide its own affordable housing. It has bought the former Gladstone Middle School, a property with two empty buildings. The organization is collaborating with community empowerment nonprofit Center of Life to redevelop the smaller building into the center's headquarters. The larger building will be repurposed to provide some 50 units of low-income housing. For that part of the plan, Hazelwood Initiative is working with The Community Builders, which owns and manages low-income housing developments across the country.

However, turning a vacant building into affordable housing units may produce a paradoxical unintended consequence. Because the rehabbed building will be more valuable, it could help to push up property values in the neighborhood—and that could lead to higher rents all around.

As Rob Stephany, the Endowments' director of Community & Economic Development, put it, "The dirty little secret of community development is that if you succeed, the very people who could benefit most from your success could get forced out."

Hazelwood Initiative is meeting that challenge head-on by positioning itself to become the largest landlord in Hazelwood. The organization has entered into an agreement with Hazelwood's largest private landlord, David Cunningham, to acquire the bulk of his portfolio.

"We have signed an agreement that gives us 32 months to purchase more than 60 scattered-site houses," Mr. Brewton said, "with the goal being to preserve them as permanently affordable housing."

The nearly three-year period to complete the acquisition gives Hazelwood Initiative time to raise the capital needed to close the deal and to build the internal capacity to manage the portfolio.

In addition, for the past year, the Greater Hazelwood Community Collaborative has been developing a comprehensive community plan. As in other city neighborhoods such as Homewood, the idea of a comprehensive community plan flows from the realization that there is more to a neighborhood than real estate, and that a plan to redevelop a community should include other factors, such as education, public safety, and arts and culture.

But real estate is still a very big and important element. Mr. Brewton plans to hire a consultant to help develop a housing action plan. In the meantime, he expects that the

**"WE HAVE SIGNED AN AGREEMENT THAT GIVES US 32 MONTHS TO PURCHASE MORE THAN 60 SCATTERED-SITE HOUSES WITH THE GOAL BEING TO PRESERVE THEM AS PERMANENTLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING."**

**David Brewton**, director of real estate, Hazelwood Initiative

comprehensive community plan will say that Hazelwood "needs to become a mixed-income community." Pointing out that Hazelwood Green's preliminary land development plan calls for up to 3,200 units of mostly rental housing, he contended that if nothing is done to provide permanently affordable housing, "that's a threat."

This potential threat is allayed somewhat by, of all things, the development of driverless cars. Uber is using the southern end of Hazelwood Green as the site of a testing track for its self-driving vehicles, an arrangement that will



## HOME FRONT

**W**hen Dylan and Amber Rooke bought their home eight years ago, the affordability of houses in Hazelwood was a primary factor in their purchase.

"I am not a high-income earner, and neither is my wife," said Mr. Rooke, who works as a freelance graphic designer, a stagehand and a handyman, while Ms. Rooke is a nanny.

Now, the prospect of property values rising in a redeveloping Hazelwood concerns him.

"If our property taxes rose significantly, it would make it a lot harder for us to be able to afford our home," he said. "We would have to make some significant life decisions and choices. Hopefully, it wouldn't require us to move to another part of the city."

But his greater concern is not for his own household. It's for "friends or neighbors of ours... who don't have a lot of access to opportunity that my wife and I have.

"We could probably return to full-time work and earn more money," he said. "Some of our older neighbors certainly don't have that kind of flexibility when it comes to income and life."

That concern has translated into Mr. Rooke participating in the process of creating Hazelwood's comprehensive community plan as a member of the small business working group and the housing working group. His goals with the latter are to help renters "have a voice at the table when we talk about development" and to help them become homeowners.

"I have a passion to help renters."

keep that land from being turned over to a developer for another three to five years.

And although the owners of Hazelwood Green are the biggest players in the neighborhood right now, the Urban Redevelopment Authority also has significant holdings in the neighborhood. In one particular section, the 4800 block of Second Avenue, the URA owns 15 properties that it is preparing to offer for development.

In May, the authority's board agreed to issue a request for qualifications from developers seeking consideration to acquire the portfolio, which is mostly vacant land. But Outreach Manager Julie Edwards said that the selection of a developer "will be in accordance with the neighborhood plan."

Meanwhile, the Almono group understands it will take its time with the redevelopment of its 178 acres. Project Manager Rebecca Flora has said that it may take 20 years to complete the buildout of Hazelwood Green.

So far, the plan for the property does not specify that there will be any affordable housing within the development itself, but that doesn't mean having residents with diverse income levels is not being considered.

"We do not have a specific, prescriptive number for affordable housing at this time," Ms. Flora said. "Rather we are working collaboratively with Hazelwood Initiative, Glen Hazel Tenant Association and the Greater Hazelwood Community Collaborative to develop a housing strategy."

Mr. Stephany noted, in particular, that there are "a handful of very important community-building projects on the docket for the neighborhood right now, including Gladstone and the 4800 block of Second Avenue."

"The financing required to build affordable housing is highly competitive, and we don't want development at Hazelwood Green competing for the same resources as our community partners," he said. "When the time is right, we will open the site for developers who can build a mix of market-rate and affordable housing."

Ms. Flora also pointed out that the preliminary land development plan for the type of zoning that would be applied to Hazelwood Green specifies that 5 percent of total housing would be workforce housing, meaning homes for people whose household income is no more than 120 percent of the area median income.

"Our goal is to develop a strategy that is informed by accurate data on what the specific needs are [e.g., elderly, families, special needs, etc.] and to then more appropriately determine what type of housing is required and where the various population needs are best served." **h**



Pete Marovich/American Reportage

## NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

# The Story Collector

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**J**aQuay Edward Carter was raised in Hazelwood on stories about his grandparents' move from the South for better lives and better opportunities in Pittsburgh's burgeoning steel industry. Now in his 30s, Mr. Carter has a deep interest in history, particularly the history of his home community of Hazelwood. He founded the Greater Hazelwood Historical Society of Pittsburgh and Cultural Center earlier this year, and plans to set up space in the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh—Hazelwood and provide historical programming for Propel Hazelwood Charter School. While senior Hazelwood residents have memories of the neighborhood that are many decades old, Mr. Carter has taken it upon himself to collect the stories, preserving Hazelwood's past as it embarks on an exciting and revitalized future.

# MISSION MINDED

**The Mission Continues, a veterans community service organization, has a special place in Hazelwood's heart. The group's Hazelwood Platoon works on revitalization projects that are mutually uplifting to vets and residents while helping to upgrade the neighborhood.**  
By Elwin Green

**W**hen Stephanie Grimes and her husband, Nick, moved to Pittsburgh in 2011, they pulled off something of a career switch.

Nick was leaving the U.S. Army to return to civilian life, and Stephanie began working as a civilian for the Army in a statewide program assisting veterans and their families. Then, Nick started working with Meals on Wheels in Hazelwood, and Stephanie would join him in making deliveries. They both got to know some of the neighborhood's senior citizens.

Those experiences of serving veterans and Hazelwood residents came into play when, in 2016, The Mission Continues wanted to hire its first staff person in the Pittsburgh area.

"I saw the job description, and it really fit a lot of things to me," said Ms. Grimes, who served as the organization's city impact manager until assuming a new national position with the group earlier this year.

Based in St. Louis, Missouri, The Mission Continues is a nonprofit formed in 2007 "to provide opportunities to post-9/11 veterans to find purpose at home through community impact." It expanded to Pittsburgh in 2014, launched locally with a grant from The Heinz Endowments.

Since then, the Hazelwood Platoon, the first of three in the Pittsburgh area, has conducted dozens of volunteer events, from rehabbing vacant lots to upgrading classrooms. Along the way, a general desire to do good has become

more focused on "ensuring that the current, local Hazelwood residents are benefiting from revitalization efforts in Hazelwood," Ms. Grimes said.

By positioning veterans to serve their communities, The Mission Continues challenges stereotypes about men and women returning from military service — for instance, that they all suffer from incapacitating post-traumatic stress disorder — that lead to an imbalance in the allocation of resources, said Rob Stephany, the Endowments' director of Community & Economic Development.

Historically, 54 percent of vets integrate well in civilian life, returning to their families and finding suitable work, Mr. Stephany explained. That leaves 46 percent who face challenges that hinder their re-entry — challenges largely due to not having the connection with others that they had in the military. But of that group, the 2 percent exhibiting the most severe needs have received 98 percent of resources for veterans. The rest struggle on their own.

The Mission Continues recognizes that "every single one of them has been infected with the service gene," Mr. Stephany asserted. The group organizes veteran volunteers into service platoons, each with a special mission focus.

The Hazelwood Platoon focuses on neighborhood revitalization while emphases for the other two in the Pittsburgh region are youth for the platoon in the Homewood neighborhood, and refugee and immigrant support for the one in the South Hills.

As city impact manager, Ms. Grimes oversaw the operations of all three platoons, and the experience was inspirational, she said.

"It's provided me with the reinvigorating hope that there are people who want to come together in order to make our country better. That



Pete Marovich/American Reportage

Stephanie Grimes, second from left, shares a laugh with other volunteers as they build a pantry at Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church in Hazelwood. Ms. Grimes, The Mission Continues' manager of staff experience, joined the veterans group's Hazelwood Platoon in working on the project that was a collaboration with the church and the community development nonprofit Grounded Strategies.



sounds cheesy but that's the truth." She described the veterans she has gotten to know as "unique individuals who have a deep desire to serve the community and also to be a part of a community."

Sometimes the desires are so deep the veterans don't realize they exist. They just know their civilian life is missing something. Such was the case with Sean Tyler.

In the fall of 2017, as he was preparing to leave southwestern New York to pursue a master's degree in social work at the University of Pittsburgh, a friend told him about The Mission Continues.

He had retired from the U.S. Army in 2013 as a captain after spending his adult life to that point in the military, and the transition to civilian life was difficult.

"The military is very much like a family," he said. "You have the structure, the organization, and people with similar experiences. From 18 to 34, I was in the military. Then I'm back [in civilian life] with totally different experiences than most people."

It wasn't until he did a service project with the Hazelwood Platoon in May 2018 that Mr. Tyler decided to become part of the organization. He assumed the position of platoon leader in January.

"When I found The Mission Continues, it was like being with family again, a group of people that serves a purpose," he said.

The Hazelwood Platoon's work also has special significance to those with close ties to the community. Teira Collins, a Hazelwood resident who has volunteered with Mission Continues projects, appreciates what it has done for her and for the neighborhood, and considers her work with the group "the best experience of my life."

Ms. Collins became acquainted with the platoon when members were working across from her home in the building that houses Keystone Church of Hazelwood and Center of Life, a nonprofit that provides academic

and arts programming for youth. The group was building bookcases, painting walls and making custom curtains. After being housebound for a year following extensive back surgery, she was eager to get out and volunteered to help with the project.

The Mission Continues' warm welcome to Ms. Collins and her son Judah led to more volunteering and developing friendships, in part due to the Hazelwood Platoon's approach of building relationships by doing multiple projects over time.

"When they pull up, everyone knows who they are," she said. "Their impact has been absolutely astronomical, and they keep coming back. It's not like they came and then they left."

Similarly moved by the platoon's presence is Qamara Miles, a Hazelwood native who now lives in another community south of Pittsburgh. She was struggling to readjust to civilian life after a tour of duty with the U.S. Army in Afghanistan when a counselor at the Veterans Leadership Program of Western Pennsylvania referred her to The Mission Continues.

"It took me a long time to find this organization," she said. "I almost cried when they told me that they had a Hazelwood Platoon."

In May, Ms. Miles volunteered for a project in Hazelwood at Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church, where the platoon upgraded the space by making benches, painting and performing other improvements. Serving in her old neighborhood with fellow vets allowed her to re-experience a type of bond that might not be possible with individuals who have not served. She plans to be "involved in a lot more projects."

Ms. Miles' eagerness is welcomed since the Hazelwood Platoon is a leader in providing women opportunities in The Mission Continues' work, a source of pride for Megan Andros, the Endowments' senior program officer for veterans. "Sometimes women are not acknowledged as vets," she said.

The Hazelwood Platoon acknowledges them by developing all-women service projects, dubbed "Her Mission." The first, in 2017, was at the Spartan Community Center, which houses classroom space for Center of Life. Between 60 and 70 women painted, built furniture and refurbished the parent lounge.

"We piloted 'Her Mission' for The Mission Continues," Ms. Andros said. "Now there are a bunch of cities across the country that do it."

Pittsburgh's platoons have emerged as leaders in other ways, too.

"We were the first city to say, 'What if we really invested in a neighborhood long-term—would that add up to bigger changes over time?'" Ms. Andros noted.

In Hazelwood, the neighborhood focus led the group to partner with Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh, an affiliate of a Washington, D.C.-based home improvement nonprofit, and to assist in an aggressive program to repair houses for seniors, veterans and low-income homeowners.

CEO Steve Hellner-Burris said that since 2012, Rebuilding Together has helped to increase equity for 200 to 225 Hazelwood homeowners through its housing repair and rehabilitation efforts.

**"WE WERE THE FIRST CITY TO SAY,  
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**Megan Andros**, senior program officer for veterans, The Heinz Endowments



Volunteers from The Mission Continues' Hazelwood Platoon and the community development non-profit Grounded Strategies, along with members of Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church, work to transform a vacant lot near the church into a community green space.

Just as The Mission Continues uses partnerships to position veterans to serve communities, it also works with other groups to serve the veterans themselves and help them to connect to resources. One such collaboration is with PAServes, a program run by Pittsburgh Mercy, which operates behavioral health, trauma treatment, community wellness and other programs as well as systematically coordinating services for vets.

“If I have a vet or family member that has a need that’s outside of what The Mission Continues does, our partnership with PAServes allows me as a provider to ensure that I can refer that individual, and that that individual will be taken care of,” Ms. Grimes explained.

The Mission Continues has 682 “affiliates,” people who have attended an event or engaged with the group in some way. Of those, 426 are platoon members—273 vets and 153 community members—who have signed up to receive updates. Most of them, Ms. Grimes said, are consistent and active. Other than her and the new city impact manager, all are volunteers.

That includes the platoon leaders. An old military saying declares that the non-commissioned officer—the sergeants—are the backbone of the Army. The Mission Continues hangs its success on the performance of its platoon leaders, tapping into leadership skills developed in the military. The position entails a one-year commitment, which is renewable, but not indefinitely.

“The intent is to create a leadership role for a veteran leader every year or two years,” Ms. Grimes said.

The Mission Continues also has worked with local stakeholders to determine how they could best continue serving a community in the midst of change. With the help of the LUMA Institute, known for innovative approaches to organizational development, a collaborative vision emerged that emphasizes three things that would be central to The Mission Continues going forward: revitalization of indoor spaces where residents and youth gather, revitalization and use of outdoor green space, and assisting homeowners with home repairs and home safety. Other priorities for the Hazelwood Platoon are increasing community participation and identifying

opportunities for increasing organizational capacity among their community partners.

To help maintain an innovative outlook on its work, The Mission Continues has since arranged for six platoon members to receive training in LUMA methods, and Ms. Grimes earned certification that might have led to her working herself out of a job. In April, she began a newly created position as manager of staff experience for the more than 50 chapters of The Mission Continues across the country. Part of her work involves piloting a program to make the organization a more effective advocate for veterans, and helping them learn to be more effective advocates for their communities.

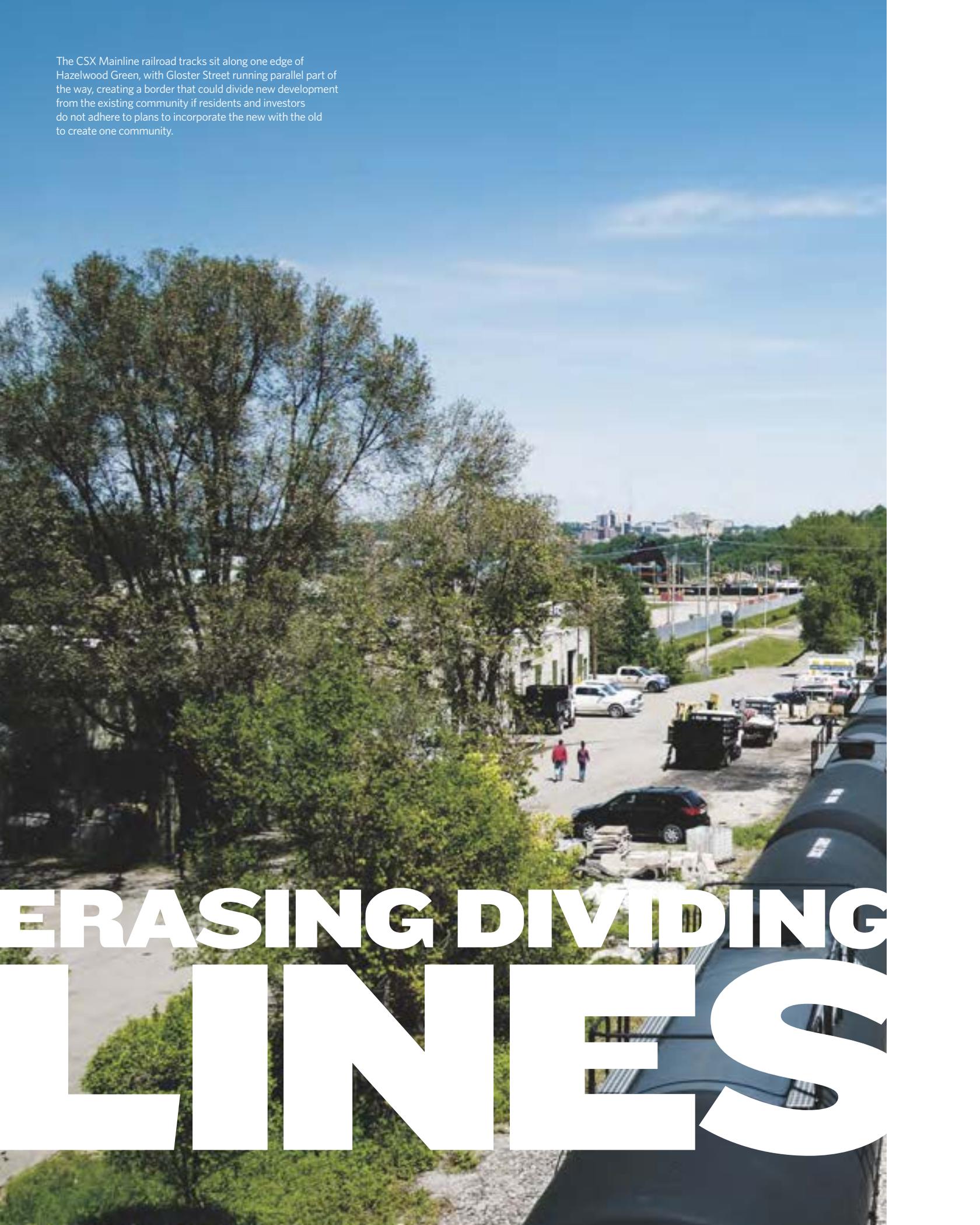
Research has shown that the military is currently the most trusted institution in America, Ms. Grimes said. “So what we know is that veterans, just by nature of serving their country, often get the benefit of the doubt in the trust category.

“And we know that our veterans are able to get into certain doors. Our responsibility is to make sure that when they get into those doors, that they know whereof they speak, and that they have insights into the community, so that they can give voice to the voiceless—and, at the same time, empower those people from the communities to be alongside them.”

All of this builds on, rather than replaces, the hands-on volunteerism that The Mission Continues started with. The organization is pursuing not just the physical rehabilitation of Hazelwood, but the strengthening of relationships.

As Ms. Grimes put it: “Painting a bench is a small act of love and worth that can lead to transformative change.” **h**

The CSX Mainline railroad tracks sit along one edge of Hazelwood Green, with Gloster Street running parallel part of the way, creating a border that could divide new development from the existing community if residents and investors do not adhere to plans to incorporate the new with the old to create one community.

An aerial photograph of a neighborhood. In the foreground, a dark-colored train car is visible on the right side. The middle ground shows a residential area with houses, trees, and a parking lot with several cars. In the background, a city skyline is visible under a clear blue sky. The text 'ERASING DIVIDING LINES' is overlaid in large white letters at the bottom of the image.

# ERASING DIVIDING LINES



As foundations, nonprofits and residents work with developers to reimagine Hazelwood, care is being taken to avoid divisions between the existing community and new development, ensuring the neighborhood remains united no matter the location of the home or business. By Jeffery Fraser



During an open house at the Spartan Center in Hazelwood last summer, visitors examined highlighted portions of the Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Plan, which provides guidelines for revitalization in the community.

Renee Rosensteel

Just ask people in Hazelwood what they hope the redevelopment of the neighborhood's former steel mill property along the Monongahela River will become, and chances are they'll answer with a common refrain.

"Not like The Waterfront," said Sonya Tilghman, executive director of Hazelwood Initiative. "That's what you hear in the community."

It's not an indictment of the popular 1.2 million-square-foot shopping complex that replaced the U.S. Steel Homestead Works in Homestead Borough just downriver from Hazelwood, she said.

What Ms. Tilghman's constituents see in The Waterfront is a sprawling retail and entertainment center, an engine of commerce that is isolated from its neighborhood, where conditions have only marginally improved since the loss of steel devastated its economy more than three decades ago.

"Hazelwood feels like the Homestead community was short-changed," she explained. "We don't want to be short-changed. We don't want to have this island that people visit and leave and ignore the fact there's a community here."

The message was heard loud and clear by The Heinz Endowments and the three other Pittsburgh foundations that bought the former Jones & Laughlin Steel property and are well into plans to make it a regional center of innovation and a catalyst for sustainable community development. The good news for Hazelwood is that the partners recognized early that critical to the development's success was integrating the neighborhood so that residents, homeowners and businesses benefit from what happens at the 178-acre Hazelwood Green.

For the better part of a decade, the foundations, neighborhood nonprofits and others have been exploring ways to strengthen Hazelwood,

guided by diverse voices in the community that know it best. A new school opened in the neighborhood that lost three it once had. Plans now include expanding bus service to the neighborhood rather than cutting it back.

The local Carnegie Library branch was saved and relocated into a building renovated to green building standards. The seeds of small businesses are being planted in the long-neglected commercial corridor. And the shuttered middle school is being reinvented as a community center, affordable housing and a model of energy efficiency.

“It’s a confusing set of two-way streets,” said Rob Stephany, the Endowments’ director of Community & Economic Development. “If we do this right, there won’t be a line between where the historic neighborhood ends and the new one begins. That line will be purposefully blurred, hopefully, from a physical and a social standpoint.”

Hazelwood Green promises to be an important asset in southwestern Pennsylvania’s innovation economy and a model for people-first sustainable development. It is planned as a mixed-use community that includes housing, research, light industry, parks, trails and multiple modes of transportation that meet strict environmental, design and

officials, Uber, ARM and others. Community meetings are frequent; surveys and focus groups are not uncommon. The process led to community consensus on priorities, which set the course of neighborhood revitalization and informed a new master plan for the neighborhood that was released in the spring.

Among the issues that had significant implications for the community was the closing of Gladstone Middle School. When Pittsburgh Public Schools shuttered the building for lack of enrollment, Hazelwood lost more than another neighborhood school. For longer than a decade, the YMCA, Communities In Schools of Pittsburgh–Allegheny County, Center of Life, the local community college and other nonprofits operated programs in the school annex that served 400 people a week, ranging from literacy classes to father–son basketball.

“All of those services left the community after the building was closed, except for us,” said the Rev. Tim Smith, founder of Center of Life, a nonprofit that’s been an anchor in Hazelwood for 18 hard years. “There was no other building in the neighborhood that could house all of those kinds of services.”

**“We don’t want to be short-changed. We don’t want to have this island that people visit and leave and ignore the fact there’s a community here.”**

**Sonya Tilghman**, executive director, Hazelwood Initiative

quality-of-life standards. It has already attracted five-star tech tenants in Uber and the national Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing Institute (ARM).

The attention and investment Hazelwood Green is attracting has pushed the neighborhood to a critical juncture. Hazelwood was already in decline when the last coke ovens at the steel plant were shut off in 1998. It languished in disinvestment for decades afterward.

While it is among Pittsburgh’s more diverse neighborhoods—with a population that is about 54 percent white, 39 percent black, and 7 percent Asian, Latino or multiracial—more than half of Hazelwood households earn less than \$30,000 a year and 1 in 4 live in poverty, the last U.S. decennial census suggests. Home values are four times lower than the city average. Property tax delinquency is high, and 56 percent of those houses and parcels are vacant.

The Greater Hazelwood Community Collaborative was formed in 2013 to find ways to improve such conditions, allow the neighborhood to leverage the potential of Hazelwood Green, and blunt the impact of economic forces that could displace its residents. At the table are nonprofits, foundations, city and county agencies, Hazelwood Green

Hazelwood Initiative formed the Gladstone Limited Partnership, which bought the middle school with loans from the Urban Redevelopment Authority and banks, and is turning part of the building into affordable housing. Center of Life is converting the annex into a community center, with a gym for its recreation programs; a theater and recording studio for arts programming; and space for child care, a full-service health clinic and a small-business incubator. If that’s not enough, they have designs on making it a net-zero energy building with help from the Green Building Alliance, Carnegie Mellon University and Phipps Conservatory, which built the city’s first such structure.

“We’re living in a community that has been underserved for many generations,” Rev. Smith said. “We have buildings no less than 100 years old. One thing we feel is important is for us to build for the future, not just put something back together again. If we’re going to put money into this, we should do it in a way that’s friendly to the environment and have a building that people can learn from.”

Five years ago, the Carnegie Library Hazelwood branch, rescued from closing, reopened with support from the Endowments in an abandoned church that had been

renovated as an energy-efficient green building. It also houses a child care and early childhood center.

Another neighborhood shuttered school, Burgwin Elementary, reopened as the Propel Hazelwood Charter School. Foundation support allowed Hazelwood Initiative to buy and rehab the building, using some of the rent it collects to award small grants to local community improvement projects.

Also gaining new life has been Hazelwood's business corridor, which fell hard with the decline of steelmaking and wholesale layoffs. The neighborhood that supported some 200 businesses when the mill was operating full throttle saw business establishments evaporate to only a handful by the dawn of the 21st century. The trend has reversed in recent years, albeit slowly.

One recent addition, Community Kitchen Pittsburgh, offers institutional food services, catering and culinary training. La Gourmandine, a popular French bakery, opened in a former market that had been abandoned for 10 years and redeveloped by a Pittsburgh housing nonprofit. The neighborhood also has a new coffee shop.

Another sign that businesses are becoming more willing to invest in Hazelwood's future is found on Monongahela Street. There, Stephen Foster wrote several of his songs on the piano in the parlor of the 18th-century home of John Woods, including *Nellie Bly*, inspired by his household's African American servant by the same name. Today, the stone house, one of the oldest in the city, is being restored to become a Scottish pub.

It's too early to determine how the retail corridor will unfold. While Hazelwood Green could hold upwards of 3,000 new housing units, creating a healthy retail market, such numbers are expected to develop gradually over a decade or so.

"We're still working on understanding the possibilities for the business mix, where the intersection is between what the neighborhood wants and market feasibility," said Dave Brewton, Hazelwood Initiative's director of real estate.

What is clear is that the plan for Hazelwood Green favors retail development in the neighborhood over a heavy concentration on site.

"There was a time when retail was an anchor. We're not looking at it that way at all," said Rebecca Flora, principal of the Remake Group, the project director at Hazelwood Green. "The site is a mile and a half long. There will probably be some service-oriented businesses. Sometimes people will want to grab something quick, on-site. But we want to be a catalyst for business on the main street of Hazelwood."

Limited road access to and from Hazelwood has long been an issue, however. It has also complicated efforts to connect the neighborhood with Hazelwood Green.

“

**If we do this right, there won't be a line between where the historic neighborhood ends and the new one begins. That line will be purposefully blurred, hopefully from a physical and a social standpoint.**

”

**Rob Stephany,**

director of Community & Economic Development,  
The Heinz Endowments



Pete Marovich/American Reportage

### Investing in Hazelwood

After two summers of successfully operating a farm stand in an empty lot in Hazelwood, Dianne Shenk, left, and her husband, Brent Showalter, established Dylamato's Market in a permanent indoor space to provide fresh produce and healthy food options in a neighborhood that for many years was a food desert.

Major investments are being made to convert the former Gladstone School into a social, educational and entertainment center for the community, right. WTW Architects has designed space for sports, recreation, musical and dance performances, family programming and a cafeteria.

“Streets are key,” Ms. Tilghman said. “There are several public spaces built into Hazelwood Green. But you have to get people from the community down there so it doesn’t feel like it’s a park for only the people who work there.”

Recent developments at Hazelwood Green are encouraging in that regard. In April, Blair Street, Hazelwood Avenue and the 1.9-mile Hazelwood Trail opened, offering public access through the former steel mill property for the first time in more than a century. The protected trail along Blair Street gives bicyclists and pedestrians a direct connection from Hazelwood to the Eliza Furnace, Three Rivers Heritage and Great Allegheny Passage trails. And Hazelwood, which for decades has seen its bus routes eliminated, is now having bus service expanded, with some routes extending to connect the neighborhood and The Waterfront shopping complex in Homestead.

City approval of the Hazelwood Green plan last year was “a big step,” Ms. Flora said. “It firms up the partners’ vision for the site in a regulatory document.”

Another important milestone was the opening of Mill 19 this year within the remaining bones of the bar mill at the former J&L plant. The multi-use building leases space to ARM; Carnegie Mellon’s Manufacturing Futures Initiative; and Catalyst Connection, a nonprofit that helps manufacturers with issues such as apprentice programs. ARM is the anchor tenant charged with advancing the automation of U.S. manufacturing, which includes developing innovative workforce training programs. Each organization brings the emerging innovation economy to the doorstep of Hazelwood.

Studies suggest that it doesn’t take a Ph.D. to land a decent job in an innovation economy. About half of

the jobs related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics in the U.S. are “middle-skill” occupations that don’t require a bachelor’s degree, but do require workers to complete some type of post-secondary education program to gain the skills the jobs demand.

Uber engineers are engaged in science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs at Center of Life, where hands-on student projects include making cell phone chargers. Months before ARM opened, Executive Director Byron Clayton began meeting with community leaders, including Rev. Smith at Center of Life, to get a sense of how the institute can help prepare children and adults for opportunities in robotics, 3D printing and other technologies.

“We think we can really help,” Mr. Clayton said. “We are a little limited in terms of how we’re structured and funded and what our mission is. But we intend to make as much of an impact on the community as we can.”

ARM is exploring the idea of introducing robotics to the “Inquire Within” program it co-sponsors with WQED and other organizations to bring hands-on, family-centered after-school activities to local libraries like the one in Hazelwood. ARM also is investigating the possibility of a partnership with a community organization to design training programs in the neighborhood.

“It starts with exposure,” Mr. Clayton asserted. “I have family members and friends who haven’t done as well as I have. The difference I point to is I was exposed to STEM and technology early on and others weren’t. From that exposure, I became involved. I had opportunities to learn. It made such a difference in my life.” **h**



WTW Architects



WTW Architects

ART

SOUL

**IN HAZELWOOD, THE ARTS ARE NOT ONLY INTEGRAL TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, THEY ALSO EXPRESS THE HOPES AND IMAGINATION OF THE COMMUNITY. BY KELLIE B. GORMLY**

**T**he downturn of southwestern Pennsylvania’s steel industry in the 1980s had a devastating impact on a number of communities in the region—including Hazelwood, one of Pittsburgh’s southeastern neighborhoods that hugs the Monongahela River.

After closure of the local steel mill, the community fell into a sharp decline. It lost residents, businesses, jobs and schools. Driving into the neighborhood from the city’s Downtown, people still can spot a few rundown buildings and boarded-up windows. But this community of nearly 5,000 residents is determined to make a comeback.

Civic institutions are returning, including a Propel charter school and a vibrant new combined library and community center. New businesses are opening, such as the French bakery La Gourmandine, which established its third regional location in Hazelwood where customers can purchase pastries that look like they could grace the glossy pages of a food magazine.

The investments that the Endowments has made to help revitalize Hazelwood have been well worth it, said Rob Stephany, the Endowments’ director of Community & Economic Development.

“I think the atmosphere in Hazelwood has changed considerably in the last few years. It’s such a neat place,” Mr. Stephany said. “The people make it really incredible, and the neighborhood has embraced diversity in a way you don’t often see in community development.”

And the arts and cultural life have emerged as significant forces in the revitalization process.

“Hazelwood is redefining itself,” said Janet Sarbaugh, the Endowments’ vice president for Creativity. “One of the things I think the arts can bring to a community that is redefining itself is providing a way to reflect on the past, imagine the future and celebrate the community’s assets.

“Arts and culture should be a part of the revitalization strategy of every neighborhood, because it’s in the DNA of every neighborhood—its history, its landmarks, and the habits and customs of its residents.” **h**



## ← ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

One of the most popular and meaningful cultural programs in Hazelwood is the Artist in Residence program, sponsored by the Hazelwood branch of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and the Office of Public Art. Visual artist Edith Abeyta has held the artist-in-residence position since 2014, focusing on the people, history and culture of Hazelwood. Rather than making her own work, her practice in the neighborhood is centered on the participation of residents and other artists as together they explore identity and place, and examine relationships with the built environment.

"I'm very much interested in directly engaging with residents," she said. "I'm interested in this idea that memories and experiences... cannot be taken away or dismantled."

Ms. Abeyta has harnessed those memories and experiences in a variety of programs co-curated with residents. In the first year of her residency, she listened to residents' hopes, fears and dreams for their community. Then, she worked with them to create the residency's signature program, Arts Excursions Unlimited, a series of arts and cultural visits to various locations across the region.

Community members determine the monthly outings based on their particular interests. The sites have varied greatly, ranging from museums and galleries to steel mills and playgrounds. One of the most exciting excursions occurred this year, when the group visited the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. Hazelwood resident Dasawn Gray, 18, a graduate of City Charter High School, went on the D.C. trip with his twin brother. Both were thrilled with the expansive museum, which was filled with a wide range of installations, music and photos.

"Traveling with my neighborhood was good," Mr. Gray said. "We all hung out and got to see people that you don't see every day. We were like a big family out there."

Other initiatives Ms. Abeyta has organized include establishing studio space at the Spartan Community Center in Hazelwood; initiating public art projects; and creating a series of visiting artist programs. She also formed the United Hazelwood Design Team as another avenue through which residents could participate in the community's transformation.

"I would say the residents that I've worked with in greater Hazelwood are really receptive to the arts and are really interested in art being a part of their neighborhood," she said, which reflects her belief in using communal arts experiences to help individuals better understand themselves and their neighborhood, city, state, country and world.

"Edith has done an excellent job as an artistic cultural interpreter who listens to the community and provides many opportunities for creative expression for residents," Ms. Sarbaugh said.

"Her residency demonstrates that Hazelwood's cultural life is not completely apparent in a building or a mural; it's more in the spirit of its people, their particular history and cultural interests. Many people think that a community's cultural life is represented by an event or a concert. But it can also just as easily be present in the interests and traditions of the people who live there."



Photos courtesy of Arts Excursions Unlimited

## ARTS EXCURSIONS UNLIMITED

From the Cleveland Museum of Art to the National Museum of African American History and Culture to Pittsburgh's Benedum Center, the Arts Excursions Unlimited program, developed by Hazelwood artist-in-resident Edith Abeyta and community members, has taken residents across and out of the region for a variety of arts and cultural experiences.



Renee Rosensteel

## ↓ CENTER OF LIFE

Founded in 2002 by the Rev. Tim Smith, the community-empowerment organization Center of Life (COL) is committed to the families and youth of Hazelwood. Its programs demonstrate its core belief that at Center of Life, “everything is about people.” The organization is driven by the goals of providing residents with the skills, education, resources and training needed to build a strong community.

“I think that community members have done so much to bring the community up to a better place,” said Rev. Smith, who came to Hazelwood in 1980. He calls his experience of learning from the neighborhood and its residents the “University of Hazelwood.”

As part of his work with Center of Life, Rev. Smith has used the power of the arts to express some of the most challenging community issues and to bring residents together. In 2017, he developed an exhibit celebrating the history of Hazelwood and the lives of youth killed in the community. “I Lived. We Lived. What Did We Miss?” was created and presented by Center of Life, Carnegie Mellon School

of Design and residents of the Hazelwood community. The exhibit featured photographs, videos and personal mementos that conveyed moving stories honoring the youth and the neighborhood.

The arts also play a key role in COL programming. Through jazz and hip-hop programs, youth from Hazelwood and other communities learn concrete artistic skills that build identity and confidence.

“I think it enriches their lives because it gives them discipline and constant practice,” Rev. Smith said. “Music is a science as well as an art. ... There’s a real discipline to learning how to play a standard instrument.”

The COL Jazz program cultivates young music lovers — some very young. The Jazz Bucket Band is for children in kindergarten through second grade, Jazz Ensemble is for grades three through five, and Combo Jazz is for grades six through eight.

The KRUNK Movement especially caters to aspiring young musicians, singers, songwriters, dancers and videographers. KRUNK is designed

to be a youth “micro-enterprise” and production company for high school students in grades 9 through 12, and it focuses on hip-hop and R&B styles. KRUNK participants perform in live productions, and make sound and video recordings.

While the KRUNK Movement is rewarding and fun, the program also prepares students for musical careers by teaching them about success in the field and financial management skills. KRUNK performers have done shows in Pittsburgh Public Schools and for businesses, and they have competed and won awards in national and international competitions. KRUNK has received significant news coverage locally, and has been featured nationally in publications such as the online entertainment blog Soul-Patrol.

“What we do is, we kind of take that natural, God-given gift they have, and we connect that to an opportunity ... and connect that opportunity to education,” Rev. Smith said. “Most of [the students] really do aspire to do it professionally. We try to teach them that there are [differences] to becoming a musician/artist/entertainer.”

KRUNK graduates often go to college with a music major, and there have been many success stories. Brett Williams plays the keyboard for jazz musician Marcus Miller. Rev. Smith’s son, also named Tim Smith, plays drums and sings all over the world with a band called Freelance; his stage name is “Smithsoneon.”

Julian Powell, program coordinator for both the COL Jazz program and the KRUNK band, was one of the original KRUNK participants and saw it grow in popularity when he was in high school. While involved with Center of Life, Mr. Powell became a rapper and a producer, and played drums in the jazz band. He later attended Berklee College of Music in Boston; today the 29-year-old is the lead drummer for the Pittsburgh funk band Starship Mantis.

Center of Life programs “got me used to being on stage and taught me studio etiquette ... and the difference between a show and an actual production,” he said. “It gave me the opportunity to really expand as a musician.”



The Center of Life’s KRUNK Movement has been an important influence in the lives of young people such as Shyheim Banks, left, an alumnus of The KRUNK Movement and a KRUNK instructor last year, and James Jaap III, right, a student in The KRUNK Movement band JIM16.

Youth apprentices with the Mobile Sculpture Workshop used a small plant to make a bold statement about Hazelwood's resilience as they designed and created "Generation Dandelion" on the grounds of the former Gladstone School.





## OUTDOOR ART

As art projects and creative experiences permeate Hazelwood, they attest to the presence of a range of artists committed to working in the community.

In 2014, visual artist Tim Kaulen launched the Mobile Sculpture Workshop in Hazelwood. As its name implies, the Mobile Sculpture Workshop, a project of the Industrial Arts Coop, travels, but it has a special commitment to the Hazelwood neighborhood. Mr. Kaulen is currently working with Hazelwood Initiative to locate a permanent location in the community for the program.

Each summer, the workshop recruits youth for instruction in the art and science of welding and the technical skills required. Participants also learn about public art and become familiar with the opportunities in welding as both a career path and an artistic outlet. Among the program's projects in Hazelwood are a giant metal bird on the lawn approaching Propel School and an 18-foot-tall metal dandelion, crafted to look like the flower in its secondary fuzzy phase, which stands on the grounds of the former Gladstone Middle School.

For the dandelion project, Hazelwood teens in the Mobile Sculpture Workshop interpreted the voice of the community and worked with Mr. Kaulen to come up with a sculpture idea to represent it. The students chose the dandelion because it is a resilient flower with many different properties, he said.

Plans are underway to convert the school building into a multipurpose community center, and the group worked with the Center of Life community empowerment organization to create a sculpture that also artistically conveyed the potential of this particular redevelopment initiative.

The towering dandelion was, as Mr. Kaulen explained, "a signal to everybody that the Gladstone School project will benefit the neighborhood."



# mini grants

# big results

The Heinz Endowments' mini-grants give small projects and organizations in Hazelwood the financial boost they need to help transform the neighborhood.  
by Deborah Todd

**A**cross from the Hazelwood Center on Second Avenue in Pittsburgh's Hazelwood neighborhood, a mid-20th-century three-floor walkup is anchored by a beauty shop painted a bold coral and abutted by a residential entrance shuttered with plywood. Next door, a mom-and-pop store with paper signs touting chicken and cheese fries sits beside a French bakery whose name is etched in gold on a milk chocolate-brown façade. Floodlights with wrought-iron fixtures cast a glow on window-sized photos of baguettes and raspberry tarts.

At the local branch of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, which is housed in the center, a group of individuals, as diverse as the business district shops, gathers once a month to discuss the community's future. In 2017, the collective of nonprofits, grassroots organizers and residents was the first to receive funding through a Heinz Endowments mini-grants initiative in Hazelwood, now known as "Making a Greater Hazelwood." The awards, part of the Endowments' Learning strategic grantmaking area, provided nearly \$250,000 in funds to a dozen community programs focused on family and child well-being and holistic education.

The idea, said Endowments Vice President for Learning Michelle Figlar, was to form a "collective impact model" where recipients share resources, collaborate and support each other's efforts.

"One day we'd like to see them meeting with policymakers, government organizations and other nonprofit leaders to have the work of the network impact system change," she said. "The goal is that the network will become a part of the Greater Hazelwood Community Collaborative, and they will have a permanent place in the neighborhood."



  
Carnegie  
Library of  
Pittsburgh  
Hazelwood  
**OPEN**

The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - Hazelwood, which also houses early learning programs and has an outdoor patio for community events, has become a popular hub for neighborhood activities and gatherings.

Elan Mizrahi

Laura Johns, president of LEADing to Movement, an Atlanta-based nonprofit consulting firm, and Chad Dorn, a Pittsburgh-based research and policy adviser for the organization, have worked with the grantees since before their first meeting, which Ms. Johns described as an intense discussion surrounding race, class, gentrification and whether the grantees' intentions aligned with residents' desires.

Two years and several tough meetings later, the process is easier and progress is clear. The first round of grantees produced results that spurred a second round of funding for most of the organizations that initially applied, plus six new recipients.

One of the 2019 awards will go toward improving the group's communal hub at the library. Branch Manager Mary Ann McHarg called upgrades to Wi-Fi and furniture, new audio equipment, and storage and window coverings in the meeting space a "longtime dream."

"Even when I would use the meeting room to Skype or do something else, there was always a technological snag," she said. "It was about time we did this for the community."

With new facilities ahead and difficult conversations behind, the mini-grant initiative has helped the divide between residents and outsiders begin to dissipate.

"It has been hard; I don't want to glamorize it. It's not easy and it's not always comfortable to sit in a room and hear all that dialogue," said Ms. Johns. "But it's been very respectful how they communicate and are really willing to listen to each other. They're all in it together trying to serve the same community. With shared goals and a shared strategy, they have really helped each other be successful."

## First-Round Mini-Grant Recipients

The continuation of the Endowments' community mini-grant program is the result of the successes experienced by grantees who participated in the 2017 pilot in Hazelwood. Most of the recipients in the first round received funding again this year to continue their work.

### JADA House International

After Terri Shields survived lupus, congestive heart failure and kidney failure, and then graduated from Carlow University in 2012, she embraced life by helping her neighbors work through their greatest traumas. She began hosting community dinners in her home with themed discussions on "children dying, gun violence, chronic illness — anything that hinders [people] from moving forward in their lives," she said.

What started with Ms. Shields, her mother and a friend in her dining room grew into JADA House International, a community outreach nonprofit that hosts weekly dinner forums at the Spartan Community Center in Hazelwood for adults, teenagers and children. Today, JADA House

## the power of small

Left: During events such as the Greater Hazelwood Family Center Family Fun Day in Burgwin Park, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy shows families how to create structured outdoor play for their pre-school children — such as getting up close to a crawfish — through its Parks Prescription program. Along with Parks Prescription, the Conservancy is assisting with development of the Hazelwood Play Trail, a network of green spaces throughout the neighborhood for creative play.

Right: JADA House International founder Terri Shields, left, gives Rickiya Taylor, center, a high five during JADA House's Teen Night at the Spartan Community Center in Hazelwood. Ms. Shields created JADA House to provide forums for children, teens and adults to talk about issues in their lives, including traumatic events.

### PITTSBURGH PARKS CONSERVANCY



features a space open round the clock for teens, and its programs include a Blast Off school supply giveaway; a senior luncheon sponsored by Ms. Shields' employer, UPMC; and a Christmas toy drive. With the help of a \$25,000 Endowments mini-grant, at least 600 Hazelwood residents were served through her efforts in the past year.

"A lot of people come and I'm happy they come. I'm exhausted they come, but I'm happy they come," Ms. Shields said with a chuckle.

#### **New Sun Rising's Digital Bridges Pittsburgh**

Digital Bridges, a technology education and digital literacy program for underserved communities, started in Weirton, West Virginia, in January 2017 through a collaboration of the Weirton-based nonprofit Social Media Advisory Council and the Millvale, Pennsylvania-based nonprofit incubator New Sun Rising. Interest in expanding the program to Pittsburgh existed, but progress was slow.

Then, Constance Capitolis, a member of the advisory council, decided to pursue Heinz Endowments mini-grant funding and, with the support of a \$10,000 grant, the

Digital Bridges Pittsburgh pilot was up and running in Hazelwood in a matter of months. Ever since, Ms. Capitolis said, she and her traveling digital media lab have been a regular presence in the community.

"It's me, my laptops and a mobile hotspot or two. I can teach anywhere — a church, somebody's basement, a park. I'm dying to teach class out in a park!"

Digital Bridges has launched a career exploration initiative with community partner JADA House, and has started a small business and entrepreneurship certification for students with another community partner, the social justice organization POORLAW. Today, Ms. Capitolis is working on the Making a Greater Hazelwood website and running a youth STEM mentorship program out of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh — Hazelwood.

#### **Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania**

When Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania decided to use its nearly \$25,000 mini-grant to spark community conversations about sexual health and encourage STD testing, there was no telling how residents would

#### **JADA HOUSE INTERNATIONAL**



# New Mini-Grant Recipients

The second year of the Making a Greater Hazelwood mini-grant initiative added six organizations whose programs include providing emergency support to families, opportunities for youth to explore their neighborhood's history, and improvements to a community space. The grantmaking strategy for this year continues to focus on building cooperation and coordination among community-based nonprofits.



**Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh** The library will upgrade technology and furniture at the Hazelwood branch, and add storage in the neighborhood library's community meeting room.

◀ **Propel Schools Foundation** The Propel Hazelwood Charter School, in collaboration with community historian JaQuay Carter, will launch the Hazelwood History Makers Club, an after-school program that will teach the neighborhood's history and cultural heritage.

In this April 1958 photo from the Greater Hazelwood Historical Society and Cultural Center, Myra "Sug" Bradley and Roslyn White of Glen Hazel pose in front of what was then Gladstone High School. The image captures the heritage that Mr. Carter, the historical society's founder, plans to share in the Hazelwood History Makers Club he is starting in conjunction with Propel Hazelwood.

▲ **Reading Is Fundamental** RIF is seeking to hire four neighborhood high school students to participate in Storymobile outreach and advocacy, and to explore future careers with RIF and AmeriCorps.

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church** The church will continue its efforts to provide free food, clothing and toiletries to residents in need, and will offer a Sunday meal for all residents, distributing leftovers to the community.

**Duquesne University of the Holy Spirit** The university will expand the Hazelwood Caring for Asthma in our Region's Schoolchildren project, which aims to improve asthma control for residents, increase clinic visits and collaborate with community health workers.

**Community Kitchen Pittsburgh** The organization will continue its ongoing work with Literacy Pittsburgh, and enroll at least 20 residents per year in educational training programs, with the goal of reaching at least 250 residents.

receive the pitch. Two years later, local individuals are getting the word out on their own initiative.

"One very enthusiastic community member who had attended several of our pop-up events began to actively recruit people to get tested for HIV," said Kimberlee Evert, CEO of the regional Planned Parenthood. "She circulated through a community event engaging people in conversations about getting tested and assured them that it was a good choice and they had nothing to fear."

Along with the community conversations, Planned Parenthood kicked off its "Care No Matter Where" initiative with eight pop-up events that included music, games, health and wellness literature, and free STD screening. In May, it began working with Hazelwood Family Health Center to provide free STD testing on Friday afternoons. The organization is currently looking for a permanent space in the neighborhood to establish regular testing hours and to serve as a youth drop-in spot.

## Literacy Pittsburgh

Prior to the mini-grants program, Literacy Pittsburgh staff members had been exploring Hazelwood residents' needs for a year, but weren't connecting with those who required

their services most. A \$15,000 mini-grant provided the organization with enough support to form collaborations with groups already serving clients who needed basic literacy and math skills to advance in the workforce. For example, Literacy Pittsburgh began a partnership with the culinary training and job placement nonprofit Community Kitchen, which brings Literacy Pittsburgh service coordinators to Community Kitchen to teach math literacy that applies directly to kitchen operations.

"We teach fractions, word problems, doubling recipes, English to metric conversions," said Literacy Pittsburgh Associate Director Lori Como, "those types of specific skills."

## POORLAW

Founders of People of Origin Rightfully Loved and Wanted (POORLAW), Saundra Cole McKamey and her husband, Terrell Johnson, used their social justice organization's \$25,000 mini-grant to expand services provided through its Hazelwood Youth Media Justice program. That effort helped to train neighborhood youth ages 12 to 21 for their first jobs, provided structured mentoring to youth and young adults, sharpened their social justice awareness, and encouraged youth leaders to take on community projects.

To advance this work, POORLAW formed partnerships with Digital Bridges, JADA House and Center of Life and collaborated with several other groups.

#### **Center of Life**

In the aftermath of the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, Center of Life founder, the Rev. Tim Smith, applied for mini-grant funding to create the Hazelwood Diversity Dialogue, a podcast dedicated to exploring race relations in the community. Since the podcast launched in October, there have been nine episodes streamed through Apple and Google Play, some of which featured students involved with POORLAW and JADA House, which also received mini-grants. Multimedia and Technology Manager Douglas Heckman said the \$25,000 grant went toward the purchase of high-quality recording equipment that allowed for recording of up to eight people at a time.

#### **Trying Together**

Trying Together, formerly the Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children, rolled out its community vocabulary-building initiative, Buzzword Pittsburgh, in Hazelwood with the help of a nearly \$11,000 mini-grant. The program also is supported by The Children's Museum, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, Carnegie Science Center, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre and Pittsburgh Festival Opera. Buzzword promotes literacy in children younger than 5 through talk, play and interaction with their environments. Trying Together has hosted Buzzword events with the Hazelwood branch of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and the Greater Hazelwood Family Support Center.

#### **Unity Through Creativity**

For those experiencing grief and trauma, finding healthy ways to process emotions can be a matter of life and death. The Unity Through Creativity Foundation used \$25,000 in mini-grant funding to launch the Grounding Lab, a studio space that doubles as a sanctuary to help Hazelwood women and teens channel pain through creative outlets. The Lab offers opportunities for meditation, journaling and graphic poetry, and features a health library. The ultimate hope is that residents will strengthen emotional coping skills through their art and that their work will decorate the space as a testament to their progress.

#### **Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy**

As residents celebrated the April opening of Hazelwood Trail, a waterfront-adjacent stretch that connects to the network of Great Allegheny Passage trails, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy remained focused on outdoor spaces intended for a smaller demographic. For the past two years,

the conservancy has teamed up with Trying Together and other partner organizations to bring Buzzword Pittsburgh to Hazelwood. The conservancy used its mini-grant of about \$23,000 to partner with the Greater Hazelwood Family Center in incorporating Buzzword into the Parks Prescription Program, an initiative to give parents of preschool-aged children tools to create structured outdoor play. It is also supporting efforts to build up the Hazelwood Play Trail, a scattering of revitalized green spaces in the neighborhood that include playgrounds, art and other features designed to inspire creative play.

#### **Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center**

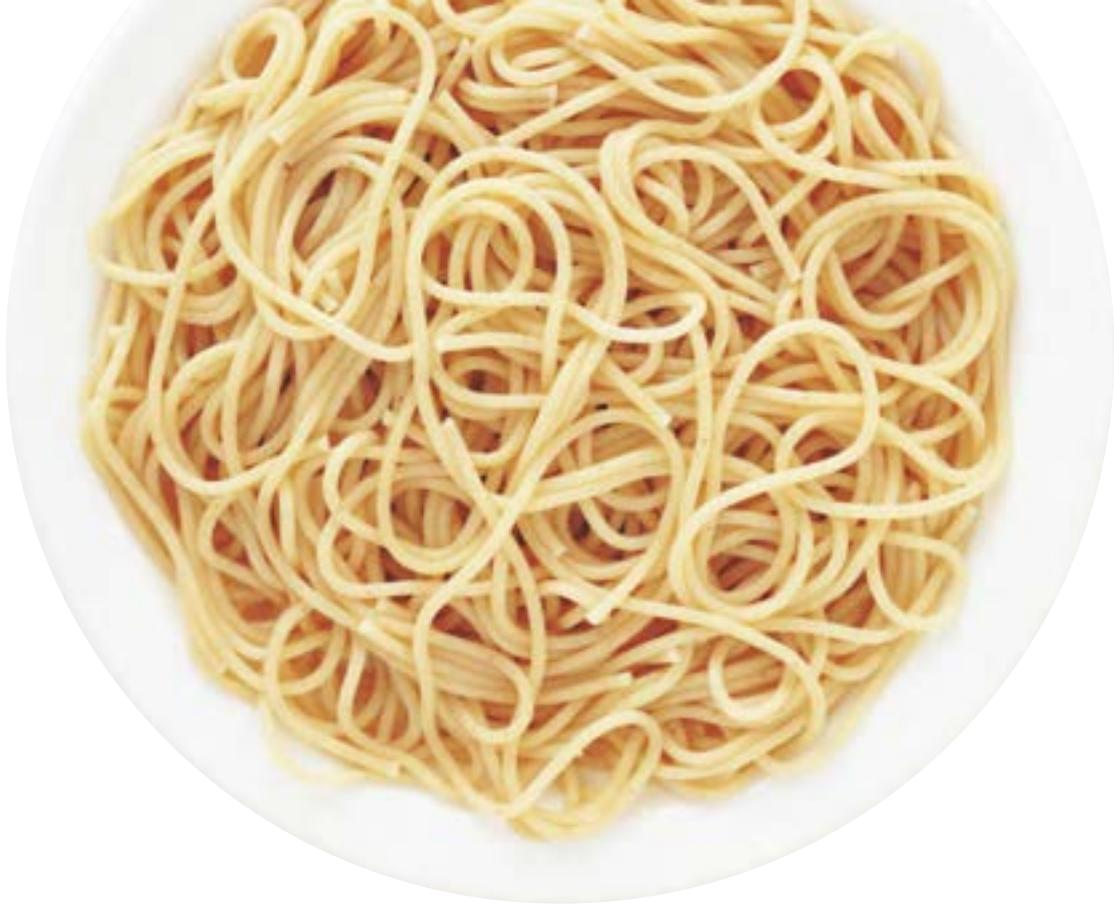
As the Hazelwood Family Center's lead agency, the Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center (COTRAIC) struggled to find credentialed infant and toddler teachers and certified bus drivers. So the nonprofit, which was created to serve Native American populations and other underserved groups, used its \$15,000 in mini-grant funding to send 12 residents to Commercial Driver's License certification classes and another two to classes to earn an accelerated child development associate's certificate. In 2019, COTRAIC will target individuals and families who are already providing child care services to offer CDL certification so they can receive subsidized funds for their work.

#### **Carnegie Institute / Carnegie Science Center**

With its \$25,000 mini-grant, the science center leveraged a partnership with the Council of the Three Rivers American Indian Center to provide STEM education and outreach at levels ranging from Head Start pre-school to adult education. They also worked with local educators to provide professional development and give parents STEM toolkits for at-home use. For the current cycle, the science center aims to teach at least 68 children in COTRAIC classrooms and to aid 14 classroom educators. It will also serve 60 to 75 families through the Greater Hazelwood Family Center.

#### **Three Rivers Village School**

Operating as an independent, tuition-based school that follows an educational model with no required classes, books, tests or homework can be a tough sell in traditionally blue-collar Hazelwood. So, once Three Rivers Village School, which serves students ages 5 through 19, was approved for mini-grant funding, it used its \$25,000 to create tuition grants for two residents and to host community events to find potential students. Admissions Coordinator Maggie Bogdanich said the events helped the team explain the school's mission and model to residents who may have never learned about it otherwise. They are still working to award the tuition grants to neighborhood students. **h**



**“I take a deep breath, like I’m sucking in spaghetti.”**

**Dr. Jennifer Elliot**, associate professor, Duquesne University School of Pharmacy



## REDEVELOPMENT IN HAZELWOOD INCLUDES EFFORTS TO ADDRESS A RANGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES SO THAT THE HEALTH OF RESIDENTS AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD IS PROTECTED AND ENHANCED. BY MARK KRAMER

**A**t Propel Hazelwood Charter School, in a mostly empty classroom, second-grader Montaziyah Evans played with her braids as she recounted her asthma medicines.

“Albuterol and Singulair,” she said.

“Good job,” responded Dr. Jennifer Elliot, an associate professor at Duquesne University’s School of Pharmacy. She gave Montaziyah a high five. “Albuterol is always so hard to remember.”

After quizzing Montaziyah about steps in her medicine regimen, Dr. Elliot said she’d call Montaziyah’s mother to check up on a few things. Then she walked the girl through the proper way of using an inhaler. “I take a deep breath,” Dr. Elliot said, “like I’m sucking in spaghetti.”

Montaziyah is one of about a dozen Hazelwood primary school students—reached through Propel and the after-school programs of the community organization Center of Life—who began participating in CARES (Caring for Asthma in our Region’s Schoolchildren) last fall.

Every few weeks, Montaziyah talks with Dr. Elliot about prevention and treatment of her asthma.

A 50-child pilot program conducted in other nearby school districts found that the CARES approach, administered

through Duquesne University and with support from The Heinz Endowments, helped children and their caregivers better understand asthma. The number of children able to control their asthma nearly doubled.

Dr. Elliot noted that some families have trouble getting kids to a doctor appointment, don’t understand how a medication works, or can’t afford it in the first place.

“By coming to the school site, where the children are,” she said, “we’re taking away those barriers.”

Nationwide, asthma affects both poor and African American households disproportionately, and children in Pittsburgh have a highly accelerated risk of asthma due to the region’s poor air quality. Hazelwood is downwind from the U.S. Steel Clairton Coke Works, a major contributor to Allegheny County’s status as just one of two counties east of the Rockies to fail federal air standards for particulate matter and sulphur dioxide. Researchers have found that Pittsburgh schoolchildren who have

asthma are at high risk for not controlling this chronic illness, which can cause them to miss school, in turn affecting grades, pass rates, and possibly their ability to attend post-secondary schools and secure good jobs.

# HEALTHY FUTURES

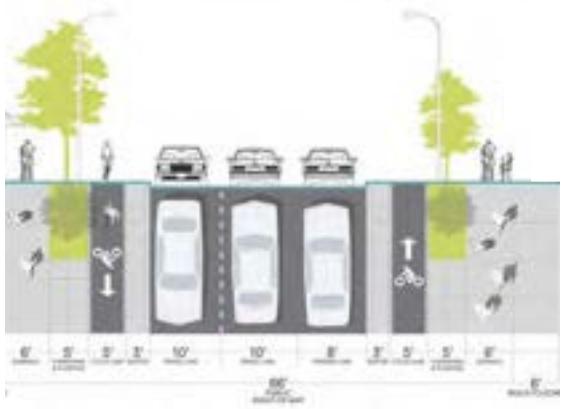
# HEALTH AND HAZELWOOD

The design for a Hazelwood Green plaza balances softscape (lawn, vegetation, rain gardens, etc.) with hardscape (paved surfaces), offering a range of uses and flexibility for the space.

The \$1 billion project requires all buildings to meet LEED Gold standards, thereby reducing energy demand while also using renewable energy, such as solar, and collecting and using rainwater.



Pete Marovich/American Reportage



Lytle Street within Hazelwood Green will incorporate cycle lanes that are protected through grade separation, an approach frequently seen in Europe, with only a handful of examples in North America. Trees on Lytle Street will be placed, on average, every 30 feet to ensure a good canopy, which in turn will create a more comfortable streetscape, slow traffic, filter air and rainwater, and provide shade for pedestrians.

A nursery run by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, Tree Pittsburgh and Landforce will provide both Hazelwood Green and the neighborhood with trees. About 17 percent of the development site is reserved for public green space.



# 17

The asthma program in Hazelwood not only attempts to reverse those impacts but also is among the many community initiatives helping residents deal with the effects of various environmental hazards while planning for a future in which the neighborhood is at the cutting edge of infrastructure design, innovative open spaces and green workforce development.

Local organizations and residents are cultivating urban gardens, creating green jobs and implementing stormwater management strategies. As the Hazelwood Green development advances across the remnants of a sprawling steel mill, air quality and other environmental concerns are driving inventive design and operations plans. These and other efforts foretell a time when Hazelwood could serve as a model for neighborhoods in the region that are trying to be environmentally responsible and innovatively green.

Fourth-grader Shamyah Livingston, center foreground, goes through breathing tests while Dr. Jennifer Elliott, right, an associate professor in Duquesne University's School of Pharmacy, monitors her progress. Shamyah is taking advantage of a school-based asthma clinic at Propel Hazelwood Charter School. Duquesne's pharmacy school runs the clinic in partnership with Primary Care Health Services. Dana Nardozi, left background, is a Duquesne pharmacy student.



This goal was first pursued in earnest in 2002, when four Pittsburgh foundations, including the Endowments, purchased the 178-acre brownfield along the Monongahela River for \$10 million. A dozen years of significant environmental remediation and site prep—as well as a dozen studies—positioned the land as a blank slate for research and innovation that should benefit not only site users, but also the neighborhood of Hazelwood and beyond.

“The Endowments and other foundations bought the site to ensure that it wouldn’t be redeveloped into just another industrial site,” said Andrew McElwaine, the Endowments’ vice president for Sustainability. He sees this “gorgeous riverfront property” becoming “an environmentally sound, prosperous development focused on the next economy, rather than the economy of the 1880s.”

According to Hazelwood Green’s Preliminary Land Development Plan, available at [www.hazelwoodgreen.com](http://www.hazelwoodgreen.com), the space will “regenerate the ecology,” leading to healthy

people, efficient management of rainwater and restoration of the local ecosystem. It will serve as a testing ground and model for environmental initiatives and those wishing to live sustainably within an ecological footprint.

The plan maintains some structures from the former mill, but the \$1 billion project requires all buildings to meet LEED—Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design—Gold standards, thereby reducing energy demand while also utilizing renewable energy, such as solar, and collecting and using rainwater. Site plans also incorporate p4 Performance Measures—locally developed and quantifiable metrics that emphasize people, planet, place and performance in development decision-making. And the project is benchmarking itself against Living Community Challenge standards, which constitute the International Future Institute’s framework for planning, design and construction.

As for transportation, “everything we’re doing is trying to advance multi-modal solutions and reduce single-occupancy vehicles,” project director Rebecca Flora said. This includes decreasing parking ratios and creating shared parking requirements. The Allegheny County Port Authority also has committed to rerouting one of its two Hazelwood routes through the Green.

Already, a new riverfront trail accommodating pedestrians and cyclists connects Hazelwood to other neighborhoods. The Green also boasts the city’s first “complete street,” Blair Street, which was designed to be safe and accessible for all users—pedestrian and vehicular—and constructed to capture all rainwater. Meanwhile, about 17 percent of the land has been reserved for public green space.

All of this, according to Ms. Flora, will help produce “pleasant pedestrian experiences throughout the site.”

In addition, Hazelwood Green’s central plaza will have a stormwater cistern to be used for irrigation, and native plants that are particularly efficient at filtering air pollutants. A nursery run by three organizations—the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy,

the urban forest restoration nonprofit Tree Pittsburgh, and the workforce development agency Landforce—will populate both the site and the neighborhood with trees. Landforce staff will be available to work as contractors for incoming tenants.

“This is a holistic approach,” Ms. Flora explained. “When we say sustainability, you really can’t just think environment without recognizing that if we’re good to the environment, we’re good to people, and also good to the economy.”

Hazelwood Green’s first tenants include Carnegie Mellon University’s Manufacturing Futures Initiative; the Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing Institute (ARM); and Catalyst Connections, a private not-for-profit organization that provides consulting, organizational development and training services to small manufacturers.

“From a social sustainability standpoint, those first tenants in particular are going to create economic opportunity and training opportunities with the neighborhood,” Ms. Flora said. “A strong linkage between the two can be a catalyst for more revitalization.” The site will also work directly with tenants to manage transportation.

“At Hazelwood Green, we will achieve, over time, a net-zero district with renewable energy and efficient, smart buildings,” said Rob Stephany, director of Community & Economic Development at the Endowments. “We would love to see that kind of system thinking penetrate the neighborhood” while maintaining affordable housing and avoiding displacement.

An example of collaboration on environmental initiatives in the neighborhood, he said, is the work of Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh, a community revitalization nonprofit that is helping senior citizen homeowners bring their houses up to code and mitigating lead, mold and radon as part of the upgrades.

Meanwhile, Grounded Strategies is conducting environmental research and programming in Hazelwood, and recently published its Hazelwood Community Greenspace Plan. The nonprofit community improvement agency will help guide the use and development of the neighborhood’s 215 acres of open green space, several existing and potential greenways, and even city steps that encourage walking and neighborhood connectivity. Among the key green spaces are three large community gardens.

A steep slope towering 300 feet above Hazelwood Green defines the eastern border of the neighborhood, and can exacerbate water runoff, flooding homes and other structures. Hazelwood’s sewer system currently collects both waste and rainwater. When these combine to exceed

capacity, wastewater flows into the Monongahela River. Grounded Strategies is working at the household level to help residents capture rainwater and take other measures to reduce flooding.

“If you want to think of it in terms of dollars and cents,” said Masoud Sayles, Grounded Strategies’ project director, “there’s just tourism dollars being lost where people might have fun kayaking, paddle boarding, just enjoying the water. But they can’t even go out on the water.

**“WHEN WE SAY SUSTAINABILITY, YOU REALLY CAN’T JUST THINK ENVIRONMENT WITHOUT RECOGNIZING THAT IF WE’RE GOOD TO THE ENVIRONMENT, WE’RE GOOD TO PEOPLE, AND ALSO GOOD TO THE ECONOMY.”**

**Rebecca Flora**, project director, Hazelwood Green

“It’s really not just about Hazelwood, though. This is about getting the message out about these issues, because they’re really Pittsburgh-wide and ... pretty much anywhere where we have combined sewers.”

Joining Grounded Strategies in working with Hazelwood residents on the community gardens is Matt Peters, who moved to Hazelwood in 2011 and has managed those gardens as part of his contribution to his community. He currently serves as chair of the Hazelwood Initiative’s Urban Agriculture Team.

“The importance of building community through gardening cannot be understated,” he said. “When else do you have an opportunity to work together towards a common goal, and the payment is doing the work itself and the harvest you get?”

With a similar commitment to increasing access to healthy food and to building community capacity, Community Kitchen Pittsburgh has located its culinary arts training facility in the heart of Hazelwood. The organization’s 12-week training program equips participants—most of whom have been incarcerated previously—to work in the food industry. Dylamato’s Market on the southern end of the neighborhood stocks its shelves with fresh, healthy food from locally owned businesses—including garlic grown by Mr. Peters, who can recount Hazelwood’s history as farmland.

He also asserted that the simple act of growing tomatoes and other vegetables at a community garden can lower grocery bills, increase property values and have other far-reaching environmental effects.

“The way we live in our cities,” he said, “has an impact on our wild places thousands of miles away.” **h**



Pete Marovich/American Reportage

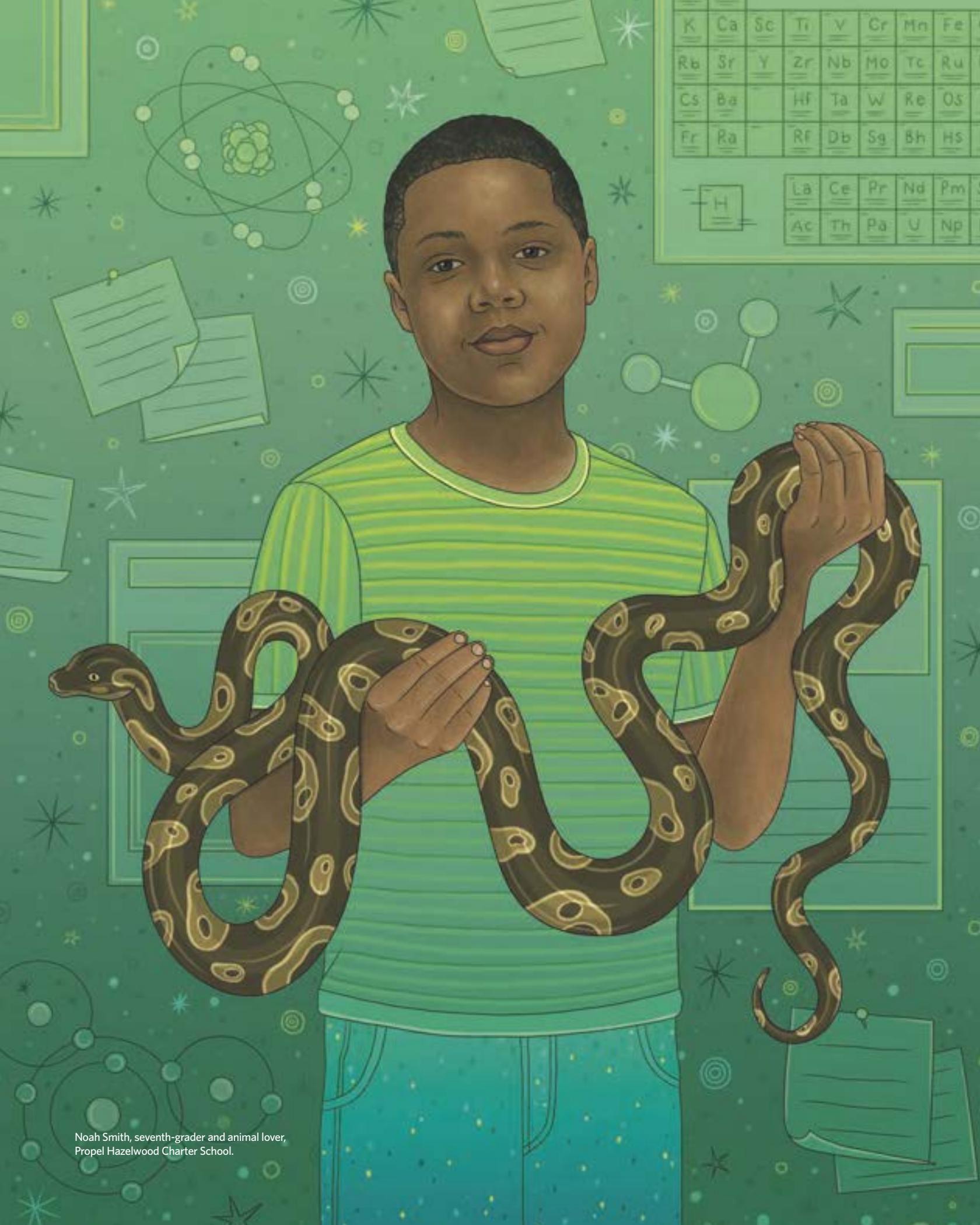
## NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

# The Home Maker

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**A**lexander Jozsa Bodnar, center, was 15 when he came to Pittsburgh in 1957, having fled Budapest, Hungary, after participating in the failed 1956 Hungarian revolution. Mr. Bodnar settled in Hazelwood where there was a thriving Hungarian community with three churches and a synagogue serving large Hungarian congregations. But the traditions he was familiar with as a youth slowly faded as the neighborhood began to decline economically.

Yet, like others in Hazelwood, Mr. Bodnar did not give up on the community. He opened Jozsa Corner in 1988 in a building that he says was built in 1886 by Transylvania Saxons. The restaurant creates an ethnic, home-style experience centered on Hungarian traditions.



K	Ca	Sc	Ti	V	Cr	Mn	Fe
Rb	Sr	Y	Zr	Nb	Mo	Tc	Ru
Cs	Ba		Hf	Ta	W	Re	Os
Fr	Ra		Rf	Db	Sg	Bh	Hs
		La	Ce	Pr	Nd	Pm	
		Ac	Th	Pa	U	Np	

Noah Smith, seventh-grader and animal lover, Propel Hazelwood Charter School.

# MAKING THE GRADE

The Propel charter school in Pittsburgh's Hazelwood neighborhood has its share of challenges, but school officials and staff are invested in making it successful for the students and the community. By Eleanor Chute  
Illustration by Gaby D'Alessandro

**“W**elcome to science,” Harold Schmidt told every seventh-grader entering his classroom at Propel Hazelwood Charter School one morning earlier this year.

Noah Smith and his nine classmates each took a Post-it note from Mr. Schmidt to answer “do now” questions—a class warmup. But first Noah had his own questions about the periodic table on the wall, particularly about a recently discovered element. Then he wrote on the Post-it the explanation for why water is considered a pure substance even though it is a compound. (Answer: It’s pure because it has chemical properties different from hydrogen alone or oxygen alone, making it a totally new substance.)

At the beginning of the class discussion, Mr. Schmidt gave each small group of students a choice: Would their table like to have one of the classroom animals with them? The decision was easy for Noah. His favorite is Sir Hiss, an adult

male python about four feet long. While the other two tables each chose a guinea pig, Noah reached carefully into Sir Hiss’s glass home, gently took him out and replaced the lid.

As Mr. Schmidt and the class talked about the differences between chemical and physical changes, Noah shared the snake with his tablemates. He petted Sir Hiss and, at one point, was following the lesson with the snake over his neck and shoulders. When the tables switched animals, Noah made sure that the guinea pig, Rosencrantz, got some hay. Before the class was over, Mr. Schmidt had Sir Hiss draped over his own neck.

“I love animals,” Noah said, and given his care for those in the classroom, it’s not surprising that he would like to become a veterinarian.

He has a similar fondness for Propel Hazelwood, which he began attending as a third-grader in 2014, the year it opened.

“It’s a great place to go,” he said. “You really learn a lot.”

Noah's high praise comes as the school is still trying to find its footing in a community that is slowly rebuilding after decades of seeing its economic and social fabric unravel, which included the loss of its local schools. Before Propel Hazelwood opened, the neighborhood had watched its public schools disappear one by one: Gladstone Middle School in 2001 and Burgwin Elementary in 2006. Even the Catholic elementary school, St. Stephen, closed in 2005.

The absence of a school—any school—left a hole.

"Schools are community assets," said the Rev. Tim Smith, president and executive director of Center of Life, a community organization serving families and youth. With a neighborhood school, he said, parents can stay in touch better with their child's educators, and residents can use the building for events and recreation.

Lifelong Hazelwood resident Kris DiPietro traveled to Harrisburg with Rev. Smith when she was chair of Hazelwood Initiative to urge the state to approve Propel. "A school brings youthful energy to a community that is vital to its growth," she said.

Community members encouraged Propel Charter Schools—which currently operates 13 schools in Allegheny County—to open Propel Hazelwood in fall 2014 in the former Burgwin Elementary building. Charter schools are tuition-free public schools, with priority for those living in the chartering district, in this case, Pittsburgh.

The school opened with 185 students in grades K–4 and added one grade level each year. As of the 2018–19 school year, the grade levels are complete, with 304 students in K–8. According to state figures, 86.9 percent of its students

are economically disadvantaged; 81 percent are black, 7 percent biracial or multiracial, 4.7 percent Hispanic and 4 percent white.

Propel leases the building from Hazelwood Initiative, a nonprofit community development corporation that purchased it for \$475,000 from Pittsburgh Public Schools with a grant from The Heinz Endowments. A \$900,000 grant to the Propel Schools Foundation from the Endowments helped with startup costs. These included renovating and furnishing the ivory brick, three-story 1930s building on Glenwood Avenue, four blocks above Second Avenue, Hazelwood's main thoroughfare.

Part of Propel's annual rent of \$100,000 to Hazelwood Initiative pays for neighborhood grants of up to \$2,000 for community-building activities, such as block parties and school backpack distributions.

Although Propel was recruited to Hazelwood, there still was some mistrust in the community that already had seen too many "saviors" who didn't treat the neighborhood as a partner or lacked commitment, Mrs. DiPietro said.

Early on, Propel was criticized for too little community involvement. But some say Propel improved this past school year under new leadership that included Shala Darwin, who was formerly the school counselor and now is the full-time site coordinator for community wellness, and Danielle Parson, senior director of community affairs for the entire Propel Schools network.

"These two young ladies have been amazing. They have kept the school involved with the community," Rev. Smith said. "I think [the school is] going to get better. It's not where it needs to be. I'm encouraged by the leadership. It did need new leadership."

That new leadership also had included Toni Hurt, who joined Propel Hazelwood last fall as principal. She left this spring at the end of the school year, but that did not prevent the Pittsburgh Public Schools board from renewing the school's five-year charter in June, allowing it to move forward with projects inside and outside of the classroom.

Propel is planning to open a community wellness center within the next year, serving not only Propel students and families but also providing medical services and a community hub for the entire neighborhood. The hope is that the center will help to address barriers to learning—such as mental health and medical needs—and give back to the community.

“For Propel to take on this kind of role, I think they are truly communicating to the larger community that they want to partner with Hazelwood in order to make it a better place for everyone.”

Propel Hazelwood eighth-grader Megayle Lucas, right, serves classmate Amare Halse-Collins, left, and Amare's mother, Matyce Collins, center, during a Mother's Day Breakfast that Propel students hosted in May.



Njaimen Njie

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A city recreation building located across the field behind the school is being considered as the site for the community wellness center, said Pittsburgh City Councilman Corey O'Connor. The recreation building would continue to serve users of the water spray park and other activities, but space would be renovated and used more efficiently.

"This is something everybody needs," he said, citing a lack of access to medical services in the Hazelwood area.

"For Propel to take on this kind of role, I think they are truly communicating to the larger community that they want to partner with Hazelwood in order to make it a better place for everyone," said Stanley W. Thompson, the Endowments' senior program director for Education. "Schools don't have to do that and usually they don't."

Despite the initial impetus to restore a neighborhood school for neighborhood children, many Hazelwood children attend public schools outside the community. The Pittsburgh school district counts more than 700 children in the main Hazelwood ZIP code—15207—attending 28 district-operated schools for kindergarten through eighth grade, with more than half of them at Pittsburgh Mifflin, Greenfield and Minadeo. In the same ZIP code, more than 100 children attend 18 other K–8 charter schools, including five other Propel schools, seven other brick-and-mortar charter schools and six cyber charter schools.

About a third of Propel Hazelwood's students live in Hazelwood. It attracts children from 13 school districts, with about 70 percent of enrollment coming from the city.

And the school has had mixed reviews.

Seventh-grader Carmella Foster began Propel Hazelwood as a third-grader, and was among the first students at Propel. She likes the school so much that when her family moved from Hazelwood to McKeesport about three years ago, she continued at Propel Hazelwood even though Propel McKeesport is near her new home. That means a bus ride of nearly two hours every morning, and pickup by her father after classes or an athletic practice.

"The teachers are really nice. It's one big family," Carmella said. "Even when we have arguments, we all come back together."

Carmella also has a sister, Olivia, in third grade at Propel Hazelwood, and a brother, Eddie, who will start kindergarten in the fall. Their mother, Sara Foster, noting that Olivia has medical issues, said, "I talk to these teachers sometimes more than my own husband. I trust these teachers with her care."

However, Hazelwood resident Sade Hardman sent her daughter, Sau'mara, to Propel Hazelwood for first and second grades before transferring to Provident Charter School on the North Side where she was a fifth-grader last year. While she welcomed a neighborhood school, Mrs. Hardman disagreed with some school policies and found communication with parents lacking.

As the school does more to reach out in the neighborhood, its involvement has already gone beyond planning a wellness center. Propel Hazelwood hosts monthly community dinners, offers community classes such as hip-hop aerobics and serves as the site for a weekly job training series. Some students have participated in neighborhood

projects, such as helping to build a Little Free Pantry on the school lawn, and singing and making crafts at a senior living center.

Mrs. Darwin has helped to build relationships with about two dozen organizations inside and outside Hazelwood, in part as a precursor to establishing the more comprehensive community wellness center. And some school wellness programs have begun. The school's Partners in Wellness program provides an intervention specialist, a student assistance program specialist and a therapist. A \$350,000 grant from the Endowments helps to support that program and planning for the community wellness center.

As the former school counselor, Mrs. Darwin saw the different issues the children in the school were facing. "There were a lot of needs that needed to be addressed in terms of behavioral support, support with social services, mental health support as well as academic support," she said.

The school itself also faces many challenges.

Academically, the most recent state report for 2017–18 shows Propel Hazelwood students having particularly low scores in math/algebra on state tests, with just 9.1 percent proficient or advanced. Students do better in English language arts/literature with 43.2 percent proficient or advanced, and science/biology with 44.4 percent. All three are below state averages. The school exceeded the standard demonstrating students' growth in their English language arts/literature proficiency but did not meet the growth standard in science/biology or math/algebra.

"Many students come in not on grade level," said Tina Chekan, Propel Schools' CEO/superintendent. "Our goal is to increase academic growth over time and close the gap."

Attendance also is challenging. The most recent state Safe Schools report shows a habitual truancy rate of 61.62 percent for 2017–18. The habitual truancy rate counts students who had six or more unexcused absences in a school year. In Pittsburgh district-operated schools overall, the habitual truancy rate was 3.71 percent.

Dr. Chekan said the school has been working with families to help put attendance plans in place as well as incentives, such as recognition of parents whose children come daily.

"We have a long way to go when it comes to chronic absenteeism. It's more than making basic phone calls," Dr. Chekan said. "It is a deeply rooted community issue we've seen over time. It's one that many schools are challenged with."

The school also has a high out-of-school suspension rate. The 2018 A+ Schools Report to the Community states that 21 percent of Propel Hazelwood students were suspended

"With any new school, challenges exist . . . Over time, we've started to build very strong relationships with our students and families in making sure we have structures in place to support those students."

**Tina Chekan**, CEO and superintendent of Propel Schools

at least once. By comparison, the report put the figure for city district-operated K–8 schools at 7 percent.

Dr. Chekan said the school is training staff in restorative practices aimed at resolving conflicts with fewer suspensions.

"With any new school, challenges exist, and part of the suspensions was getting to know our students," she said. "Over time, we've started to build very strong relationships with our students and families in making sure we have structures in place to support those students. Also, suspensions aren't effective and we need to change our practices to ensure student success"

She also noted that a culture coach and a student support specialist were added in recent years. "With the consistent structure in place, we'll continue to see better results for our students," she said. The Endowments made a grant of \$125,000 over two years toward the culture coach.

The school has a goal for teachers to meet twice a year in person with a parent, even if that means meeting at a coffee shop or the child's home.

As a community leader, Rev. Smith is both hopeful and realistic about Propel Hazelwood and its progress.

"Propel is what we have, but they have to do better. We want them to do better," he said. "Pittsburgh Public Schools should not be the benchmark. We have to look across the country to models of schools that are helping kids learn. We should be looking at the absolute best schools out there. We need our school, but we need to up the ante and we're willing to work with them."

And while Propel Hazelwood tries to meet new challenges of a new generation of students, it retains some of the familiar aspects of the former Burgwin Elementary. With its ivory-tiled walls, the building contains occasional displays of student work, such as first-graders' colorful drawings showing their foot measurements and fifth-graders' writings about ways to stop bullying.

Although much has changed since the Burgwin days, student support specialist Justin Peeks, who works with students schoolwide, sees other fundamental similarities to when he was a Burgwin student. "There's still learning," he said. "It still feels like family to me."

Propel Hazelwood seventh-grader Noah's sentiments reflected a similar sense of comfort and familiarity: "I feel I could trust this school more than any other school." **h**



Pete Marovich/American Reportage

## NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

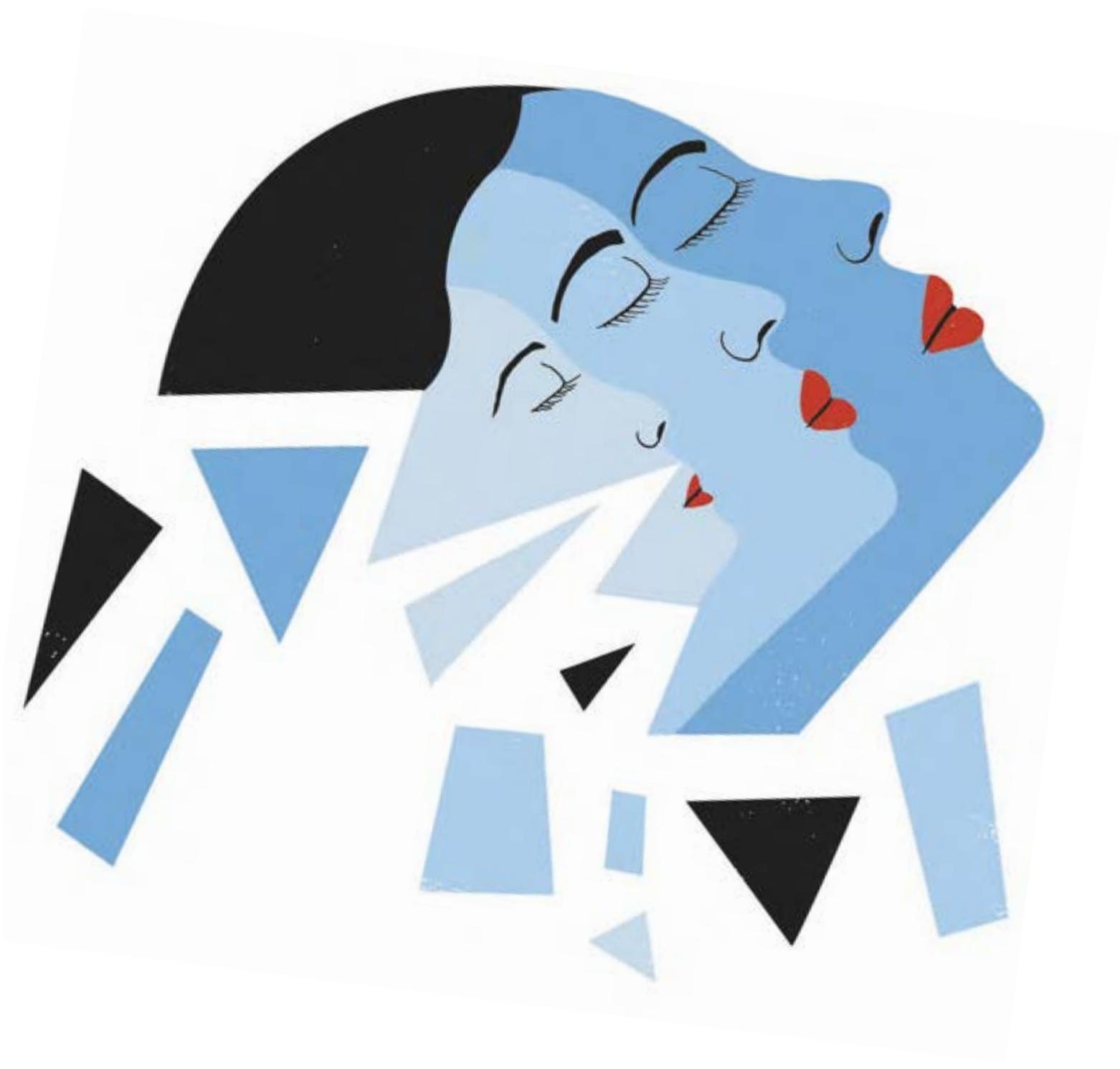
# The History Marker

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In 1792, not long after America gained its independence, lawyer and politician John Woods built his stone house in what would become the Pittsburgh neighborhood of Hazelwood. A member of a prominent Pittsburgh founding family, Mr. Woods finished the plan for the City of Pittsburgh that was started by his father, a surveyor. Today the John Woods House is one of the city's oldest homes and has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Plans are underway to convert the building, which has been abandoned for years, into a Scottish pub.

# HELPLINE TO HEALING

THE NEW #METOOPA INITIATIVE PROVIDES A HOTLINE AND A SAFE SPACE FOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT TO GET NEEDED LEGAL AND COUNSELING ADVICE. BY CHRISTIANA DILLARD. ILLUSTRATION BY HANNA BARCZYK





hen Anna-Lena Kempen, an employee of Pittsburgh's Mattress Factory museum, brought forward her concerns to management about a former coworker sexually harassing her and other employees last year, she did it for her peace of mind.

"I had been in conversation with a lot of women who either were or had been working at the Mattress Factory," she said. "So, as all of these conversations were happening for months and months and months about our experiences and our feelings and our frustrations and what we wanted to do or what we could do, eventually I said, 'Listen, I'm going to go forward.'"

Much to Ms. Kempen's shock and disappointment, the accused employee did not receive the severe discipline she believed was required based on the complaints she and her colleagues made. The accusers also alleged that top staffers at the museum retaliated against those who had complained. That is when the women decided to file a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board, and the case eventually became a major news story locally and nationally.

Although Ms. Kempen recognizes that the case resulted in a few positive changes at the museum, including an internal investigation, she knows that everyone who experiences sexual harassment may not have taken the same course of action.

"Sharing stories is just one form of emotional support," she said. Through the help she received from legal counsel, she learned that even if she had chosen not to come forward on the job, there are more options for receiving assistance.

One of the avenues sexual harassment and assault survivors in the Pittsburgh region now have available is #MeTooPA, an initiative started by the Women's Law Project in collaboration with FISA Foundation's program to end domestic and sexual violence, Southwest PA Says

No More. Launched in January, #MeTooPA's purpose is to assist Pennsylvania students and low-wage workers with legal advice regarding sexual harassment and assault. Funded by The Heinz Endowments and supported by several partnering organizations, the program allows participants to ask questions confidentially and receive answers from legal and counseling professionals.

Creators of the initiative closely studied how the national #MeToo movement addressed sexual harassment and assault to determine the best methods of tackling this multifaceted issue. Of particular interest was TIME'S UP, an organization that started after #MeToo and established a celebrity-supported legal defense fund for sexual assault survivors.

"They raised the money to hire attorneys just to be on call for victims of sexual harassment and assault," said Kristy Trautmann, executive director of FISA Foundation and founder of Southwest PA Says No More. "So we were talking about ways that we could do something like TIME'S UP here."

Participating organizations created the #MeTooPA hotline to provide a convenient means for survivors to talk about their needs, especially their legal concerns. Individuals can access the hotline on weekdays by calling 412-281-2892 during regular business hours, and an attorney is available to consult with callers free of charge.

"I think this helpline is really about having somebody safe and on your side, a confidential expert to help you really think through where behaviors have crossed the line and what your options are for taking action," said Ms. Trautmann. "And that may for some people include taking some sort of legal action, but that can also be just about having somebody who is safe and supportive to talk to."

Sue Frietsche, senior staff attorney at the Women's Law Project, explained that one kind of advice does not fit all, and the Endowments' contribution leaves room for #MeTooPA to address its clients' individual concerns.

"What The Heinz Endowments grant does for us—which is so welcome and so overdue and so wonderful—is it is giving us the capacity to reach out and inform people at the point at which they need us," she said. "They do have rights and there are resources to help them."

Carmen Anderson, director of Equity and Social Justice for the Endowments, believes that #MeTooPA comes just in time for this urgent problem.

"We've known that it's an issue, but until now victims—primarily women and girls—had limited options as to where to turn. Now they have access to easily accessible free information and referrals as well as legal advice and



This helpline is really about having somebody safe and on your side, a confidential expert to help you really think through where behaviors have crossed the line and what your options are for taking action.”

**Kristy Trautmann**, executive director of FISA Foundation and founder of Southwest PA Says No More

representation if necessary,” Ms. Anderson said. “This work should also help destigmatize being a survivor and change the conversation about victimization.”

Other partner organizations have endorsed the efforts of #MeTooPA, realizing its capacity to assist the most vulnerable. For example, students in both the K–12 school system and collegiate institutions are a primary focus. Dr. Kathi Elliott, CEO of the nonprofit Gwen’s Girls, recognizes the potential for #MeTooPA to give young survivors a safe space to explore their options.

“What we want to address is the awareness of what’s acceptable and not acceptable when it comes to relationships and behaviors,” she said. “We want to provide guidance regarding when something is reported, what an adult should do, or what someone who has a friend who’s been impacted can do to help.”

India Renae Hunter, a University of Pittsburgh graduate student in public health and social work, found that her experience with the school’s Title IX program made her weary of seeking sexual harassment and assault assistance through the institution. After being groped at a party the summer before her senior undergraduate year and reporting the incident to several of the school’s sexual assault assistance organizations, her case led to a Title IX hearing that she contends did not proceed with her well-being in mind.

“It was the stereotypical sexist comments and bias by the panel of staff and faculty who were supposed to be prioritizing my safety,” she said. “Like, ‘How much were

you drinking? Are you sure you weren’t drunk? Are you sure you didn’t overreact?’”

The man she accused of groping her was not disciplined for sexual assault, but for physical assault, and Ms. Hunter never received the official written apology he was supposed to send. Though he did reach out to her on his own accord much later, how the case ended greatly affected her experience as an undergraduate student.

“It was still very traumatizing, especially after the fact, because they dragged out the whole process of having the hearing just to give him a slap on the wrist—and I still had to see him at kickbacks and parties and he would literally smile and wave at me,” she recalled. “It would just make my skin crawl.”

Uncertainty about the effectiveness of reporting to school officials also is an issue among younger students. Pittsburgh CAPA senior Auja Diggs, a student activist and youth representative for #MeTooPA, has spoken with peers whose negative experiences with sexual discrimination in areas such as dress codes and sexual harassment have lessened their willingness to speak out. The change she wants to see begins with youth who advocate and support each other.

“Usually when people look at us, they want to baby us. They think we’re not ready; it’s always a power play,” she said. “So, [I decided] why not be a leader myself?”

Similarly, workers are often put in the position of having to vouch for themselves, and can have negative experiences when expressing their trauma. Until her case

with the Mattress Factory, Ms. Kempen was unaware of the ways in which speaking out would affect her personal and professional life.

“There are going to be consequences for coming forward. And nobody wants to hear this, but you’re going to lose friends. Your work relationships are going to be weird. It’s going to reverberate in ways you don’t anticipate,” she said. “And I’m not saying that to dissuade people from coming forward. I just realized that I had to accept that.”

An additional layer of complexity arises when individuals who identify themselves based on a combination of racial, ethnic, gender or sexual minority characteristics come forward with sexual harassment and assault complaints. Their situations often can involve discriminatory treatment on multiple levels. #MeTooPA aims to work with clients of various backgrounds to assist them with their needs.

“When we talk about sexual violence and sexual assault, it does become a women’s issue. But women aren’t the only people who go through this,” said Ms. Hunter. “I think that’s also something that could be talked about, something that should be prioritized: the understanding that anybody can be a victim.”

Ms. Frietsche is especially interested in assisting members of the LGBTQ community who are not sure how to navigate sexual harassment and assault.

“Sexual harassment often occurs in combination with harassment based on other characteristics. It’s kind of intersectional harassment,” she said. “So now more than ever, especially since we do not have statewide protection or national protection for the LGBTQ community, [those individuals need] expert legal advice when they’re facing sexual harassment or harassment based on their sexuality or gender identity.”

The potential of #MeTooPA does not rest exclusively with the work of its legal counseling and hotline. Fighting against sexual harassment and assault is an effort that requires time, energy and resources from many community members to have an effective impact. Though the initiative is in its early stages, there is hope that it can trigger a response just as meaningful as any movement on the national level.

“Having some sort of infrastructure in place that can support people or answer questions or just be someplace that people can call is really important, especially because a lot of times . . . you second-guess yourself and you kind of gaslight yourself as it’s happening. You sit there thinking, ‘Everything else around me seems normal. Am I crazy?’” said Ms. Kempen.

“So it’s very helpful just having somebody or some organization to kind of reality check you and say, ‘No, you’re not crazy. This is a problem, this is an issue.’” **h**



**When we talk about sexual violence and sexual assault, it does become a women’s issue. But women aren’t the only people who go through this. I think that’s also something that could be talked about, something that should be prioritized: the understanding that anybody can be a victim.”**

**India Renae Hunter**, a University of Pittsburgh graduate student in public health and social work

## BILLBOARD TO ART PROGRAM

Artist Alisha Wormsley, center rear, meets with grant recipients for a new Pittsburgh public art initiative that makes the text of debated billboard message — “There Are Black People in the Future” — its theme. The Artwork-in-Residence program also positions Ms. Wormsley, who coined the phrase, as the program manager. The initiative provides \$1,200 awards to participants who use Ms. Wormsley’s words in performances, classroom experiences or other creative ways, and is intended to encourage people to think and talk about the meaning of the phrase.

Last year, a billboard in Pittsburgh’s East Liberty neighborhood displayed the text in white block lettering against a black background. When the landlord of the building where the message had been presented ordered the words to be removed, citing complaints from the community, other residents objected and made accusations of censorship and racism. The dispute became news locally and nationally, and the landlord later said the message could return. Ms. Wormsley and Jon Rubin, the artist who invited her to display the text as part of his series, “The Last Billboard,” chose not to reinstate it. They later proposed the Artwork-in-Residence project, which is supported by the City of Pittsburgh’s Office of Public Art and funded by the Endowments.



Photo courtesy of Office of Public Art

## VOTING SECURITY

In its final report released earlier this year, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Pennsylvania’s Election Security recommended that state legislators consider issuing bonds to help counties buy voting systems that have paper ballots. The report also called for mandatory post-election audits and the creation of election emergency plans before the 2020 presidential election. David Hickton, founding director of the University of Pittsburgh Institute for Cyber Law, Policy, and Security and the former U.S. attorney for the Western District of Pennsylvania, and Paul McNulty, president of Grove City College and a former U.S. deputy attorney general, are co-chairmen of the commission. Its work has been supported by The Heinz Endowments and the Charles H. Spang Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation.



## SMELL MY CITY

Carnegie Mellon University’s Community Robotics, Education and Technology Empowerment Lab, or CREATE Lab, has rolled out nationally its digital tool that allows citizens to track and report air pollution in their communities. The app, called Smell MyCity, follows the Smell Pittsburgh — Smell PGH — app, which was launched in 2016 and proved popular with many residents in the Pittsburgh region. Any community in the country can use the Smell MyCity app to document and monitor pollution odors. CREATE Lab is exploring ways to help grassroots organizations report local smell-report data shared in the app to the appropriate regulatory agencies and policymakers. Smell MyCity was developed as part of a partnership between Carnegie Mellon and Seventh Generation, producer of environmentally conscious personal and household products, and with support from The Heinz Endowments.





### FIRST EXECUTIVE CLASS

The Advanced Leadership Initiative has accepted 24 individuals into the inaugural class of its Executive Leadership Academy. The eight-month executive education program is designed to provide African American business leaders with the tools, exposure and training they need so they can contribute to their organizations and communities at the highest levels. The first participants include representatives from for-profit corporations, nonprofit agencies and local government. The Advanced Leadership Initiative is a regional program whose mission is to increase corporate diversity in southwestern Pennsylvania by investing in African American executive talent. The initiative receives support from several local corporations and foundations, including the Endowments. Carnegie Mellon University serves as the academic partner and host for the Executive Leadership Academy.



### FUTURE OF WORK

A Heinz Endowments-supported report by the Harrisburg-based Keystone Research Center asserts that artificial intelligence will not cause massive job displacement in the next few decades. But "Towards an AI Economy That Works for All" recommends that in the future, policymakers should create regulations around artificial intelligence to protect workers. AI could not only threaten lower-paid occupations but also take over some of the responsibilities of individuals in well-paid occupations such as medicine and law, the report says. This is the first of several studies on the impact of artificial intelligence that the Keystone Research Center will produce in the coming year.



### NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Twenty-one people have been accepted into the second round of the Lead Now Pittsburgh fellowship program, an initiative of the nonprofit Leadership Pittsburgh, Inc. Participants are learning leadership skills, collaboration, coaching and new organizational approaches. Lead Now Pittsburgh was created after The Heinz Endowments, which supports the program financially, and other local organizations pinpointed nonprofit organization leaders as an essential part of the region's recent revitalization.

Joshua Franzos for The Pittsburgh Foundation



### PITTSBURGH FOUNDATION APPOINTS NEW LEADER

Lisa Schroeder, former head of the Pittsburgh nonprofit Riverlife, is the new president and CEO of The Pittsburgh Foundation and the first woman to hold that position. She most recently served as president and chief executive of the Parks & People Foundation, a Baltimore nonprofit that develops ways to connect that city's residents with parks and outdoor spaces. From 2002 to 2015, Ms. Schroeder was president and CEO of Riverlife, which is committed to redeveloping and promoting Pittsburgh's riverfronts. She succeeds Maxwell King, a former president of The Heinz Endowments who recently retired as president and CEO of The Pittsburgh Foundation.

For daily updates on programs and issues that The Heinz Endowments supports, follow us on social media.



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## MORE "WE CAN BE"

The Heinz Endowments' podcast, "We Can Be," continues to address important issues of the day with some of the most accomplished and caring individuals in the social change arena. Hosted by Endowments President Grant Oliphant, the first half of the second season included 10 frank discussions covering topics such as environmental justice, arts activism, the dangers of bias policing, and the mass shootings at Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. In addition to local leaders and activists, guests included Parkland students Adam Habona and Alyssa Fletcher, and Sybrina Fulton, the mother of Trayvon Martin, who was shot to death in 2012 by a neighborhood watch coordinator in Sanford, Florida.

Season 2 of "We Can Be" will resume in September with new compelling guests and conversations. The podcast can be found at [www.heinz.org/podcast](http://www.heinz.org/podcast) or by visiting iTunes, Podbean, Google Play, Stitcher or other major podcast sites.

Renee Rosensteel



## JOINT ARTS AWARDS

Two regional arts programs jointly sponsored by the Endowments and The Pittsburgh Foundation have distributed awards that together amounted to more than half a million dollars in arts grantmaking during the first half of this year. Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh gave grants totaling over \$427,000 to support 16 individual and institutional projects and to help nine organizations with operating costs this year. Since the program's inception in 2010, it has awarded \$5.2 million to support "excellence in presenting and producing artwork rooted in the black experience."

As part of the Investing in Professional Artists initiative, 15 local artists and organizations received grants totaling \$169,000. Since 2011, 133 artists and organizations have received about \$2 million through the program, which is designed to support creative development for professional artists, create career advancement and recognition opportunities for artists, encourage creative partnerships among artists and local organizations, and increase the visibility of working artists.

# KUDOS

## STAFF NEWS

Heinz Endowments President Grant Oliphant and recently retired Pittsburgh Foundation President and CEO Maxwell King have been honored with the 2019 Johnson Institute Exemplary Leadership Award for their innovative and transformational work in the region. The Johnson Institute is part of University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs.

Carmen Anderson, the Endowments' director of Equity and Social Justice, received the Equity Award from the African American Strategic Partnership during its second annual conference in April. The organization seeks to collaborate with and gauge perspectives from various corporations, foundations and nonprofits to help develop solutions to institutional problems that affect black residents in Pittsburgh.

## H MAGAZINE AWARDS

The collection of h stories examining Pittsburgh's Hill District as part of the magazine's "In the Neighborhoods" series received the Magazine/Investigative-Enterprise Award from the Pittsburgh Black Media Federation as part of its 2019 Robert L. Vann Media Competition. Receiving the Vann award for Magazine/Public Affairs was Christine O'Toole for her h magazine article "Singled Out," about racial disparities in Allegheny County school suspensions.

The Vann contest honors excellence in print, broadcast, photography and online journalism coverage of the African American and African diaspora communities of Western Pennsylvania.



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