



THE MAGAZINE OF
THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS

Issue 2 2020

**TRYING
TO SURVIVE
A GLOBAL
PANDEMIC—
TOGETHER
AND APART**

ISSUE 2 2020

INSIDE

h

PANDEMIC IMPACT

This issue of h magazine examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Pittsburgh region and within the context of the national and global crisis. The stories reveal how individuals, families and businesses are coping in different areas such as health and economics, and how communities are trying to rally together to address immediate needs and prepare for a better future.

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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 The cover for this issue of h illustrates the unique isolation created by the "social distancing" required to stay healthy during the coronavirus pandemic. The hazard cones surrounding each individual provide both a warning and a barrier. Illustration by Gary Waters.



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Sometimes photos can illuminate our experiences more quickly than words, and scenes from across the Pittsburgh region reveal the far-reaching impact of the pandemic on many aspects of our lives.

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The evolution of the coronavirus pandemic in the U.S. from a China-West Coast headline to a life-altering plague across the country is worth reviewing as we enter the next stages of the crisis.

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Lessons from the COVID-19 crisis are many and ongoing. Here's a list of the most significant we've learned so far.

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Dr. Debra Bogen became the new director of the Allegheny County Health Department as the pandemic began, and looks back on the tumultuous early days and the challenges ahead.

50 HERE AND THERE



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Our current reality

A photo essay by Elan Mizrahi

The magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic is both numbing and maddening. Some of us can lose track of the days of virtual meetings and classes, while others are forced to brave the minefields of “essential” work, hoping to return home healthy and safe. Donning a face mask or making a donation to help our neighbors has become commonplace, and home entertainment has taken on new meaning.

Life in this current reality is the focus of this issue of *h* magazine, which examines the impact of the pandemic on issues related to health, education, economics and equity in the Pittsburgh region and beyond. The stories, with their tales of uncertainties and disparities, provide glimpses into experiences that will be familiar to some, new to others and a testament to all that we're in this together.

For Jason, Mariace and Isabel Dancisin, shown from left to right, just peering out a window in their Pittsburgh home reveals changes in their lifestyle.



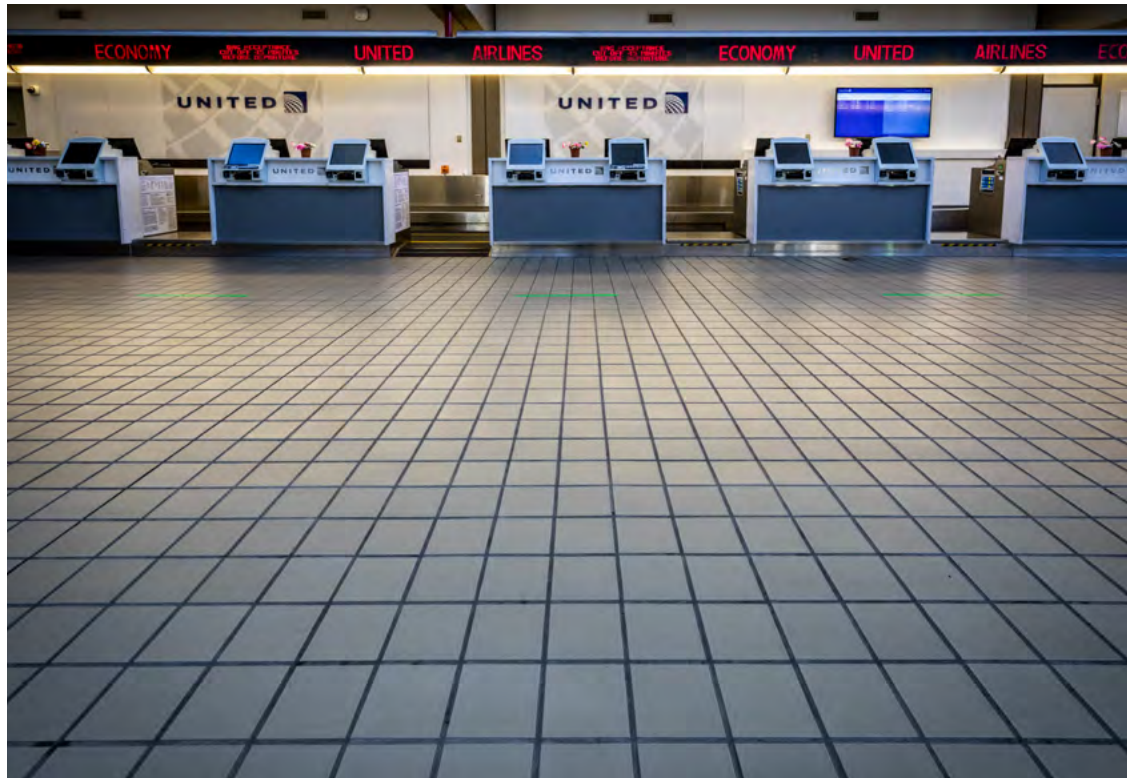
During the quarantine lockdown, our homes were our sanctuary. They also became our schools, offices, gyms, vacation destinations, and places of worship.

CAUTION DO NOT ENTER

CAUTION DO NOT ENTER

DO NOT ENTER

Playgrounds, like Pittsburgh's West Penn Park, left, were empty, with hazard tape used to discourage equipment use. Pittsburgh International Airport, right, joined others across the country in seeming to almost close for a while before resuming lighter than normal business. Other businesses actually shut down, bringing an uncomfortable quiet to once bustling areas.



The COVID-19 pandemic led to scenes and experiences we will long remember.



But as the crisis wore on, we put on our masks and did our best to go about life in ways large and small.



Grace Life Church hosted a drive-in Easter service, top left, complete with communion distribution at a parking lot in Monroeville, east of Pittsburgh. Students played tennis at the Carnegie Mellon University tennis courts, middle left, despite the COVID-19 warning sign. Cheryl and Gary Fedder, bottom left, used video conference calls from their home in Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania, to stay connected with their daughter Tara in Flagstaff, Arizona. Others shopped incognito at stores like Costco, top right, or took time out of their own schedules to help their neighbors by volunteering at food or clothing drives, bottom right.





And through it all, people from all backgrounds in the Pittsburgh region and elsewhere rolled up their collective sleeves and supported their communities.

Volunteers at a Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank food drive at PPG Paints Arena in early April.



1 FOOD SHARE
PER VEHICLE

A NOVEL
CORONAVIRUS IN CHINA
THAT STARTED TO MAKE
BACK-PAGE HEADLINES AT THE
END OF 2019 RECEIVED SCANT IF
ANY ATTENTION BY MANY IN THE U.S.
IT DIDN'T AFFECT US—UNTIL IT DID.
TODAY, OUR COUNTRY HAS THE MOST
REPORTED DEATHS FROM COVID-19 IN
THE WORLD, AND THE PROGNOSIS
FOR 2021 IS STILL UNCERTAIN.
BY JEFFERY FRASER

GOING ON 21

Few New Year's Eve revelers in Pittsburgh took notice of the news quietly reported nearly 7,500 miles away that day. A cluster of people with pneumonia in Wuhan, China, had researchers scratching their heads. Dozens of people were infected by a virus never seen before, for which there was no vaccine or known treatment. Within months, everyone would know COVID-19 as an inescapable part of their lives.

Tens of millions of people have been infected across the globe. Only a handful of nations have so far been spared. Nearly 1.6 million people worldwide who were alive at the dawn of 2020 were dead from the virus by the beginning of December, including more than 285,000 Americans, and over 11,500 who lived in Pennsylvania.

The first warning of the magnitude of the peril came in January, when China took the unprecedented step of shutting down Wuhan, putting an entire city of 11 million people under quarantine.

Scientists scrambled to decipher the new disease—a coronavirus, like the common cold and MERS, but with frightening traits. Respiratory distress and lung damage can be severe. Mortality is high. And the more cases seen, the more evidence emerges that it can inflict broader harm, such as causing blood to clot and damaging the heart, brain and other organs.

One of COVID-19's remarkable traits is its stealth. People infected can go a week or two without symptoms, or never exhibit them at all, leading them to unknowingly transmit it to friends, family and strangers with a cough, sneeze or close conversation.

The virus has infected and killed people of all ages, genders and races. But some populations are at greater risk. People with pre-existing conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease, are more likely to experience severe illness and death, as are the elderly, particularly those in long-term care facilities.



MARCH

Pittsburgh's Strip District is a popular restaurant and wholesale and retail food shopping destination that usually has little parking available, but it often looked nearly deserted in the spring.



More than 80 percent of COVID deaths in Allegheny County involved long-term care facilities during the first six months of the pandemic. And rates of hospitalization and death among people of color are more than twice as high as those among white people, Centers of Disease Control data suggest.

The first U.S. case was reported in late January in Washington state—a man in his 30s who had traveled to Wuhan. Seattle became America's first “hot spot,” a term that would become familiar in the months to follow.

Europe's first severe outbreak swept Italy in February as the world watched televised images of patients treated in the streets outside overwhelmed hospitals. In March, the horror came to New York City, where infections jumped to 12,000 in three weeks—35 percent of the world's cases at the time. Hospitals rented refrigerated trucks to store the dead as morgues filled. Exhausted doctors and nurses pleaded publicly for masks and other protective gear to spare them from the virus claiming their patients and co-workers.

Pennsylvania confirmed its first case on March 6. Infections in Philadelphia and counties a short drive from New York soon surged. The coronavirus arrived in southwestern Pennsylvania on March 13 with confirmation of a case in Washington County.

Governors and local government and health officials were left to figure out a response without a coordinated national public health



MAY JUNE

After the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood became a regular location for protests like this one on June 1.

strategy to harness the virus, which an increasing number of nations in Europe and Asia successfully deployed. Early on, ventilators were rationed, forcing doctors to choose which severely ill patients to keep alive. A nationwide shortage of COVID tests kept states and counties from fully understanding the scope of the outbreak in their communities. UPMC and local private labs developed their own.

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf imposed social distancing measures on March 12—including the wearing of masks in stores and public places—and urged nonessential businesses to shutter in Allegheny and four eastern counties. He shut down schools statewide the following day, joining several other hard-hit states.

President Donald Trump declared a national emergency a day later, but left social and business restrictions largely up to each state. As some states wrestled their outbreak under control, flare-ups would occur in other states where restrictions were lax, raising the risk of interstate transmission—a pattern seen across the country throughout the summer.

Southwestern Pennsylvania shined as a national example of how a metropolitan region could corral the virus during the pandemic's early months. Daily new cases in Allegheny County peaked at 70 on March 30, while being reported by the thousands in eastern counties.

But success would prove fleeting.

JUNE
JULY

Summer socializing too often involved not enough people wearing masks, as occurred June 28 at Lefty's bar, and contributed to later spikes in the coronavirus cases and increased restrictions from the Allegheny County Health Department on drinking at bars and restaurants.



SEPT

The beginning of the school year brought new challenges as students like Adele Bradley, who attends Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, along with faculties and staffs around the country, tried to figure how to safely navigate an educational environment during the pandemic.

The public health crisis, meanwhile, thrust the nation into a recession with no clear end in sight. More than 30 million Americans filed for unemployment during a six-week span in March and April. National unemployment hit 14.7 percent in April. It reached 16.8 percent in southwestern Pennsylvania. Restaurant closures and a lack of tourism ravaged the local leisure and hospitality industry. In May, the sector had shed 48 percent of its jobs. Even after a summer rebound, local unemployment rates were nearly twice as high as last year's.

Falling sales tax revenue led the Allegheny Regional Asset District to trim funding to the arts, museums, libraries and other amenities. Steep tax revenue shortfalls loomed for state, county and local governments. In Allegheny County alone, a pandemic lasting into next year could push 26 municipalities into financial distress deep enough to qualify for state Act 47 economic recovery assistance, University of Pittsburgh researchers warned.

The relaxing social and business restrictions in early summer helped local businesses rebound and eased joblessness. But it came with a price.

Allegheny County, which for several days in early June reported fewer than five new cases, saw daily cases surge above 250 in July after moving into the "green" phase of reopening. County data suggest it was largely driven by young adults. Cases involving restaurants were

high. Cases among people attending parties grew. Vacation season led to increased cases among people who had recently traveled.

The pandemic assumed political overtones. The wearing of masks to curb the spread of COVID-19 became a point of contention, despite being effectively practiced in most other nations. Protests against such restrictions were staged in several states, including in Harrisburg and on the steps of Pittsburgh's City-County Building. U.S. gun sales in March set a historic monthly high.

Protests against social injustice following the death of George Floyd in the custody of Minneapolis police spread across the country in the context of a pandemic and a hotly contested presidential race.

Hope for ending the pandemic's assault on normalcy rested on making a vaccine. An unprecedented worldwide effort to develop one produced more than 100 candidates. In November, Pfizer and German drug maker BioNTech said its vaccine was 95 percent effective in clinical trials. And another company, Moderna, reported similarly remarkable results in late-stage trials of its vaccine.

The research includes different strategies for building a virus and new methods of testing it for safety and effectiveness more quickly than the typical 18-month-or-longer timetable. Public confidence in the result is critical to acquiring the mass immunity necessary to suppress a virus. National polls

in August suggested that more than one-third of Americans would hold off on getting a vaccine if one were available.

A new era in the pandemic saga opened as September drew to a close. Colleges reopened along with K-12 schools, each with their own strategies for teaching remotely or in person. Social gatherings large and small increased just as colder weather forced them indoors.

As the fall progressed, the number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths spiked, again. By December, the daily number of new cases in the U.S. was averaging more than 200,000. In Allegheny County, new cases began to exceed 800 a day for the first time after Nov. 25.

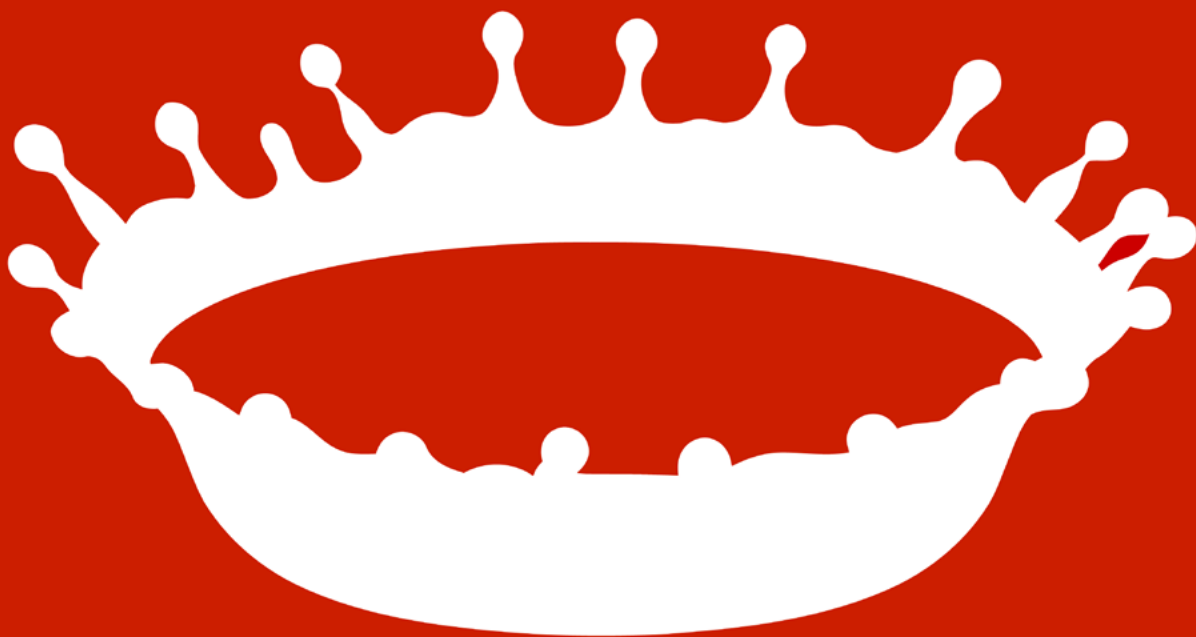
So far, there has been little indication that the response of a pandemic-weary America will be better than the first eight months. By December, the U.S. claimed 21.5 percent of the world's COVID-19 cases and 18 percent of the deaths, despite having only 4 percent of the world's population.

Initially, conditions in the Pittsburgh region were not as dire as in the rest of the country, or even in other parts of Pennsylvania, but the situation has worsened here as it has elsewhere. Local foundations—including The Heinz Endowments—nonprofits and local governments have coordinated their attempts to fill in the gaps left by federal efforts.

And as some pin their hopes on a vaccine to end the crisis, the pandemic rages on. **h**



ripple effects





Long-Term Health

As the COVID-19 death toll numbers continue to alarm, severe illnesses and other health-related consequences of the pandemic that are raising their own concerns are also emerging.
By Jeffery Fraser

Recovery from a critical illness does not always mean patients are in the clear, particularly if they've spent time in a hospital intensive care unit. COVID-19 survivors are no exception. "We're seeing patients with COVID-19 who have physical manifestations of post-intensive care syndrome, often a significant lack of endurance, exercise tolerance, some degree of muscular weakness and often a feeling of shortness of breath that accompanies any sort of exertion," said Dr. Brad Butcher, critical care physician and co-founder of the Critical Illness Recovery Center at UPMC Mercy hospital.

Most COVID-19 patients recover completely, often within one or two weeks. But some have complications after initial recovery, even some who had mild symptoms.

And evidence of possible longer-term health issues has been reported, including scarring in the lungs, damage to the heart muscle, blood clots and strokes among young adults who had COVID-19. But how such conditions relate to the coronavirus, their prevalence among survivors and their duration remains unclear. The virus is new, and researchers have less than a year of clinical experience to draw on.

Having to battle a severe illness such as COVID-19 in the ICU can itself invite cognitive, psychiatric and social disabilities after recovery. Such outcomes have been difficult to predict among coronavirus patients.

"We've seen critically ill patients who required five to 10 days in the ICU and lots of life-support machines, and their cognitive function is pretty normal," said Tammy Eaton, a UPMC critical care nurse and co-founder of the Critical Illness Recovery Center at Mercy. "Then, we've had patients 30 to 40 years old who didn't require mechanical ventilation or all the other things, and they have significant cognitive dysfunction — inattention, memory loss, poor concentration."

Anna Lewis, a senior social worker at the clinic, recalled one patient who didn't know how she contracted the virus, and was so gripped with anxiety that she jumped when someone touched her arm and promptly scrubbed it clean.

"We're also seeing a lot of depression with the inability to return to that prior level of functioning," Ms. Lewis said. "The frustration that comes with that is high."

Such symptoms can also be seen among families of ICU patients, and in the era of COVID, the rates of that are high.

"You can imagine," Dr. Butcher said, "how anxiety-provoking it can be if you know your loved one is in an intensive care unit, sedated on a ventilator on the verge of death, and there is no way for you to visit them, hold their hand."



Mental Health Impact

The first two months of the pandemic were deceptive. Stay-at-home orders, social isolation and fear challenged many people's mental health. But for those already struggling with behavioral and mental health disorders, the risks are particularly acute. UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital braced for a spike in patients. What it saw was a slight drop in demand for in-patient services.

That didn't last long.

"At the beginning, I think people were trying to isolate at home," said Dr. Scott Lewis, director of in-patient units. "But we saw a very quick rebound. By summer, people had been isolating so much their symptoms were exacerbated, and they needed to come into the hospital for stabilization. The volume is there and it's staying consistent."

A similar pattern of lower-than-expected demand was seen by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS). From March through July, services offered by its providers were down about 2 percent from the same period last year. But suicides were 18 percent higher from March to May compared to the previous three pre-pandemic months.

The more than 300 service providers DHS relies on were deemed essential workers and kept their doors open when business and revenue were slack. That, in turn, posed financial risks.

"It immediately became a challenge to figure out how to keep those services open financially, support those providers,

and make sure people stay connected and can access them," said Denise Macerelli, deputy director, DHS Office of Behavioral Health. Changes to state and county payment methods were required to resolve the issue.

While the storm they expected hadn't yet hit, mental health experts worried one was gathering. The pandemic incites anxiety and fear and heightens uncertainty. It has delivered near-record unemployment. And it

disrupts normal means of coping. Social contact so critical to treatment is restricted or looks differently, such as when therapy is delivered as telemedicine, rather than face-to-face with a therapist or a group.

"This is a traumatic event," Ms. Macerelli said. "It taps our primal fear of loss, fear of abandonment, fear of the unknown. Most of us have not lived through this kind of thing."

Calls for help to the county's resolve Crisis Services were down slightly from April through June compared to what they were during the second quarter of last year. But the number of calls in June alone had jumped 5 percent, raising concern that a deeper crisis was on the horizon.



Domestic Abuse and Drug Use

The number of calls for support that the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh was getting from domestic abuse victims belied what Nicole Molinaro knew was happening. In March, when the coronavirus arrived, it received 48 percent fewer calls than the year before. In June and July, when social restrictions were relaxed, calls still lagged by 33 percent.

But the 48-bed shelter has been filled, stays have grown longer, and the nonprofit has been putting women up in hotels to accommodate demand. Domestic abuse hasn't waned. It's harder for victims to report it when they're home with their abuser.

"We know it's increasing," said Ms. Molinaro, the nonprofit's president and chief executive officer. "We know that because our clients are going through it and talking about it."

Abuse has triggers. One is when an abuser feels a loss of power and control. "In the pandemic, we all feel some loss of control," Ms. Molinaro said. "At the same time, the isolation we are all experiencing is increasing victims' inability to reach out for help."

The Women's Center and Shelter started a text/chat line as another way for victims to reach out to it. In July, the number of texts/chats received was more than double what the nonprofit received in May and June. Ms. Molinaro said Childline referrals for protection from child abuse suggest more children are intervening to try to stop an assault on their mother.

"This is a traumatic event. It taps our primal fear of loss, fear of abandonment, fear of the unknown."

Denise Macerelli, deputy director
DHS Office of Behavioral Health

“We’re anticipating being crushed as the pandemic progresses.”

Nicole Molinaro, president and CEO
Women’s Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh

And, after declining early in the pandemic, the number of filings for protection from abuse orders in Allegheny County is rising. In the early weeks of August, as much as 10 percent more women were filing for protection orders than in the same time period a year before.

“We’re anticipating being crushed as the pandemic progresses,” she said.

Domestic abuse isn’t the only social ill the pandemic threatens to exacerbate. The pandemic provides plenty of risks for those struggling with substance abuse, such as higher stress, joblessness, isolation, and the lack of face-to-face support that can be critical to recovery support, or the reluctance to take part in it.

Calls for help from county residents to the statewide substance use disorder call center have been exceeding normal volumes by about 20 percent since May, according to the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. Fatal overdoses, which had been rising before the pandemic, were 18 percent higher from March to May compared to the previous three months. But the medical examiner’s data lags by several months, leading DHS officials to worry that fatal overdoses will exceed last year’s toll in the months ahead.



Insurance Challenges

Getting tested for COVID-19 raises immediate questions other than whether you have the virus. Do you need a referral from a doctor? Where do you go to have the test done? Is it free? Does your insurance cover it? Can you get tested if you don’t have insurance? How much does it cost and can you afford it?

People with low incomes and individuals who are undocumented immigrants have long been among the most likely to live without health insurance. But the pandemic has changed that, throwing the country into recession and tens of millions of Americans out of work.

Projections of whether the pandemic will swell the ranks of the uninsured are grave. An Urban Institute study warned that 10 million Americans would lose their employer insurance and more than a third of them would be without coverage during the last quarters of the year. Families USA, a consumer advocacy group, estimated that 5.4 million workers lost their insurance between February and May—more than the number who typically lose coverage in a year.

Pennsylvania Medicaid enrollment increased by 244,603, or 8.6 percent, from February to October. But enrollment trends in the state insurance marketplace barely budged during the first half of the year. One reason, state marketplace data suggest, is that most furloughed workers kept their employer insurance, at least temporarily.

Confusion is another concern. Finding health insurance isn’t easy to the unfamiliar. Options include choosing from plans available in insurance marketplaces that emerged under the Affordable Care Act, keeping employer insurance under COBRA, and enrolling in Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program. Costs vary. Eligibility requirements can be tricky.

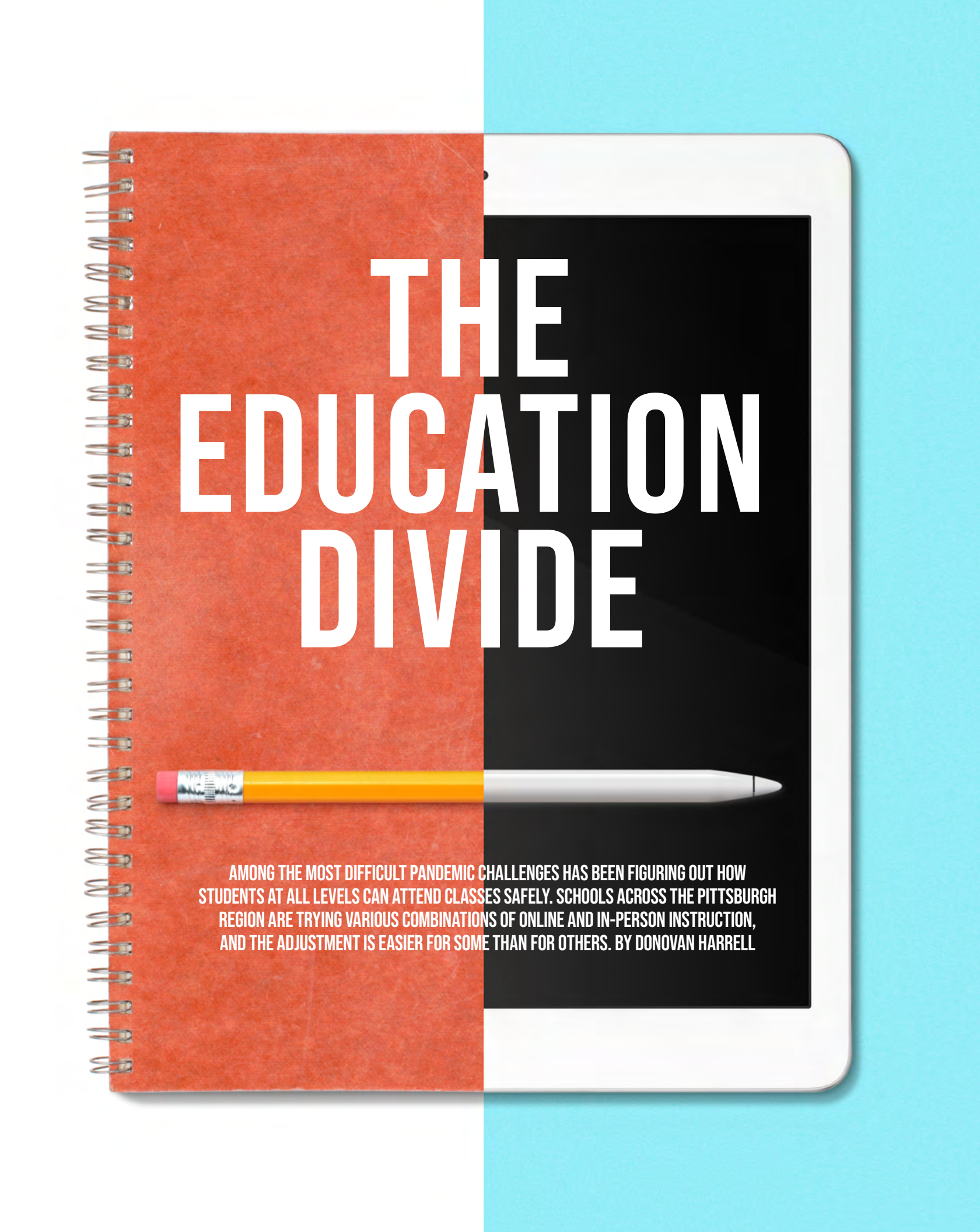
“One of the challenges we’re seeing is that some people who are out of work need to understand that they can apply for Medicaid,” said Laurie Johnson-Wade, a Pittsburgh community navigator with an initiative started by the Pennsylvania Health Law Project with CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) funding to help vulnerable populations secure health insurance.

For those populations, the pandemic heightens health risks that were already high. Some 6.8 percent of Pittsburghers and 5 percent of Allegheny County residents didn’t have health insurance last year.

“People who are uninsured probably don’t have a primary care provider,” said Callie Perrone, who also works with the outreach initiative. “If they become symptomatic, they may not have access to a doctor to call for advice about where to get tested. And they’d be ineligible to be tested at all of the sites that require a referral from a provider.” **h**

“[The uninsured would be] ineligible to be tested at all of the sites that require a referral from a provider.”

Callie Perrone, outreach representative
Pennsylvania Health Law Project



THE EDUCATION DIVIDE

AMONG THE MOST DIFFICULT PANDEMIC CHALLENGES HAS BEEN FIGURING OUT HOW STUDENTS AT ALL LEVELS CAN ATTEND CLASSES SAFELY. SCHOOLS ACROSS THE PITTSBURGH REGION ARE TRYING VARIOUS COMBINATIONS OF ONLINE AND IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION, AND THE ADJUSTMENT IS EASIER FOR SOME THAN FOR OTHERS. BY DONOVAN HARRELL

It's been hard for McKeesport Area School District Superintendent Mark Holtzman to see his community struggle with adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic. Before schools in the district started their first nine weeks on Sept. 2, students and families grappled with food insecurity and a lack of access to the internet and technology devices.

"We went through a lot of issues with connectivity and access and things that I've been kind of screaming about for many years as an advocate for our community and our children," said Mr. Holtzman, who graduated from McKeesport Area High School in 1997.

The pandemic has exacerbated long-standing inequities in the region, he said. And many of these struggles existed decades before the health crisis forced schools across the state to close their doors in March. "I've taken just about every opportunity I could to talk about meeting the needs of our children."

The McKeesport Area School District is not alone in its struggles as school districts across Allegheny County have been forced to adopt new, evolving approaches to education for 142,550 students in 280 public schools. When the novel coronavirus began spreading to the U.S., Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf issued an order, on March 13, that required school districts to shutter their buildings for 10 days to help mitigate the spread of the virus. By March 30, the governor had extended the closures indefinitely as the pandemic showed no signs of slowing down.

As part of Mr. Wolf's move to temporarily close schools in the spring, districts were instructed to develop Continuity of Education plans. The Heinz Endowments-funded Research for Action, a Philadelphia-based research organization, reviewed the proposals of each of the 43 districts and 13 charter schools located in Allegheny County. According to the study, those with plans that showed strong potential learning opportunities during the pandemic served lower rates of economically disadvantaged students and students of color. Schools in wealthier districts were better positioned to pivot to remote learning since they were more likely to have the resources to provide students with devices and remote learning options.

Hit especially hard by these closures were school districts like McKeesport Area, which encompasses the City of McKeesport and its neighboring municipalities of Versailles, South Versailles, Dravosburg and White Oak. Median household incomes for the district range from \$29,312 to \$56,128, according to U.S. census data, with McKeesport, the largest community, having the lowest median household income while White Oak has the highest. In McKeesport, 32.9 percent of its population live in poverty, according to census statistics. One hundred percent of the district's roughly 3,300 students in the district depend on free and reduced lunches, Mr. Holtzman said.

After assessing challenges and student needs in preparation for the current school year, the district opted for a blended attendance model. Students attend class in person five days a week on a two-hour early-release schedule. During those two hours, students can work on remote learning assignments or other activities.

Since classes resumed on Sept. 2, roughly 1,000 students chose to completely attend remotely, Mr. Holtzman said. With these students attending online, the school district was able to adjust its seating to better accommodate social distancing guidelines.

"We came to the conclusion that our children need to be in schools," Mr. Holtzman said. "They need to be in schools because the activities that they're involved in are almost as important as what they learn in the classroom."

Several McKeesport Area High School students had mixed reactions to the combination of in-person and online instruction, wanting more of the former but appreciating the flexibility of the latter.

Junior Nya O'Neal, 16, was glad to be back in the classroom to "have the opportunity to be around my teachers and other students."

But ninth-grader Isaiah Johnson, 14, said, "Shorter classes give teachers less time to teach, and sometimes you can't ask questions because they have to get done with the lesson."

Calise Johnson, 16, also a junior, echoed that sentiment, though she and Isaiah saw benefits of having much of their schoolwork online, "meaning you can do it anywhere, at any time and turn things in that way as well," she said.

McKeesport Area partnered with Comcast to address challenges with students' internet access through the company's



Broadcast journalist Craig Melvin of NBC's TODAY show visits McKeesport High School in September during an event in which Comcast Western Pennsylvania donated laptops to the school district.

Internet Essentials Program, which provides connectivity at reduced prices. On Sept. 18, NBC's TODAY show visited McKeesport Area High School, and Comcast provided 2,500 laptops for students, teachers and staff in the high school and middle school.

The overall goal is for the district to provide devices to every student, but the district is not quite there yet, Mr. Holtzman said. The school received \$1.8 million in funding from the CARES Act for devices and additional costs related to the shutdown, including sanitation equipment and expenses related to additional safety procedures.

In fact, school funding experts predict sharp drops in revenue as a result of the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. Pennsylvania districts are projected to lose more than \$1 billion in local funding in the 2020-21 school year—a decline of about 4 percent of their total local revenue.

Because of these pending losses, the Endowments and other foundations have worked to recognize and respond to funding and social needs gaps that were caused by the pandemic in the affected districts. The Endowments donated more than \$600,000 in support to school communities hit hardest by the pandemic and in need of resources to transition students to virtual learning.

Among the Endowments grantees that are providing instructional support to students, such as laptops, tablets and tech training, are Neighborhood Allies, a grantmaking nonprofit that supports development in economically struggling neighborhoods; the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, which provides instructional services to the 42 suburban districts outside of the City of Pittsburgh; and the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Rosanne Javorsky, assistant executive director of teaching and learning at the AIU, said the agency received a \$200,000 grant from the Endowments and used it to purchase more than 1,000

devices such as laptops and tablets and other technology for under-resourced school districts and families in need of devices and internet access, including McKeesport Area.

The AIU also offered professional development to teachers as they worked to restructure how they approach teaching in a virtual learning space. When it became clear that schools would be closed for an extended time, teachers began requesting professional development, explained Tyler Samstag, director of instructional innovation at the AIU. The training included instruction on teaching platforms such as Google Suite and Google Classroom “to help teachers develop those foundational skills so that they would be able to start teaching virtually.”

“It was a whole new skill set, even for folks who are going through teacher preparation programs currently” because many of the programs are not developed for entirely virtual teaching, he said. “The idea that overnight teachers had to transform everything they do in the classroom, I think obviously there’s anxiety associated with that.”

In mid-July, the AIU released a survey that asked its school districts, “If your district had to be one-to-one, provide one-to-one virtual instruction, could you do it?” Ms. Javorsky said.

“Eighty percent of our districts said they had enough devices that they could be one-to-one for their students, which is a huge difference from when [the pandemic] happened back in March, because many districts weren’t even thinking about one-to-one or they had a phased-in plan for one-to-one devices.”

Among the 42 school districts AIU serves, 25 districts have developed “hybrid” learning environments with students coming in on certain days while on others they study remotely, 15 districts are fully remote, and two school districts are offering in-person classes, five days a week.

The Fox Chapel Area School District, about 45 minutes from McKeesport Area schools, quickly adapted to the abrupt remote learning requirements at the beginning of the pandemic shutdown. In March, the district was able to move to completely remote instruction a few days after Gov. Wolf's order, said Fox Chapel Superintendent Mary Catherine Reljac.

Ms. Reljac attributed the prompt adjustment to district teachers and administrators who had previous experience with remote instruction. Also, with Fox Chapel's median income at \$168,073, according to census data, many students in the school district already had access to the necessary devices and remote learning infrastructure to make the transition.

Students in the district began the current school year on Aug. 24, and were given the option to attend school through a hybrid model in which they went to school in person two days per week and worked remotely for the other three days. Fox Chapel Area schools also offered two completely remote instructional models: one that provided synchronous, real-time learning and another that offered asynchronous, recorded instruction.

However, due to a nationwide spike in cases in mid-November, the schedule was temporarily adjusted, and all students were moved to remote instruction from Nov. 23 to Dec. 4, with elementary school students expected to return afterward to a five-day in-person schedule, while Pre-K students and those in grades six through 12 resume the hybrid model.

The Fox Chapel Area middle school students have a one-to-one device program, representing the ratio of students receiving iPads, Ms. Reljac said. The district, however, isn't officially a one-to-one district overall. In the future, she said, the school district may consider developing an official one-to-one device program.

Despite its advantages, Fox Chapel Area and its families have faced challenges. The months following the initial school closures were tough on the district, Ms. Reljac said.

Fox Chapel Area includes Fox Chapel, Aspinwall, Blawnox and Sharpsburg boroughs, along with Indiana and O'Hara townships, representing a mix of affluent and working-class communities. The district has 22 percent of its students receiving free and reduced lunch, and it saw some students and families struggling with food insecurity.

The district offered a feeding program where families could pick up a week's worth of food. Some who didn't previously need this support also depended on the meals because of the economic instability caused by the pandemic. Roughly 300 to 400 families each week sought meals, Ms. Reljac said. Waivers from the Department of Agriculture have helped offset additional costs.

In terms of technology, the district had to provide hundreds of devices to families, some who had limited equipment and needed supplemental support and others who didn't have any devices at all. There also were students who needed hot spots. A large portion of the devices went to elementary school students, who did not have as much experience with remote instruction.

Ms. Reljac agreed with Mr. Holtzman that the pandemic put a spotlight on inequalities in the region and across the country.

"I think that that's one of the most difficult things that I see as a leader is how different students struggle," Ms. Reljac said. "Even students who may be in homes that have enough food [but] haven't had technology and may also be struggling because they may be dealing with parents who are frontline workers, so there's that anxiety that comes along with that... You never really know what hardships go on behind closed doors for families."

She and Mr. Holtzman also said recommendations from the Department of Education and guidelines provided by the state and federal governments often came late and weren't very specific.

Adam Schott, a special assistant to the secretary of education in the Pennsylvania Department of Education, described the challenges of issuing guidance to the 500 locally controlled school districts in the state, each dealing with the pandemic in ways unique to their communities. State education officials had to "recognize that there are some core mitigation efforts that make sense wherever you are," while allowing for nuance.

Despite the many challenges posed by the pandemic, Ms. Reljac said, the region's strength lies in its collaboration between school districts and other community stakeholders.

"Everyone really opened their doors, opened their hearts, checked on each other, helped each other and shared," she said. "And I think that is something that really is a testament not just to the education in this region, but really to the people that make up Western Pennsylvania. It's something that I hope we continue moving forward in many ways." **h**

Fox Chapel Area School District students alternate between in-person and online classes. When these Kerr Elementary School children are in their building, coronavirus protection measures include plexiglass dividers as well as facial masks.



Courtesy Fox Chapel Area School District

HOME ROOM

Classes have resumed in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, but most students and staff are relying on virtual instruction, and questions remain about how well learning is happening.

By TyLisa C. Johnson



Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy teacher Sean Means is back to work with his students, adjusting to teaching from his home instead of the classroom.

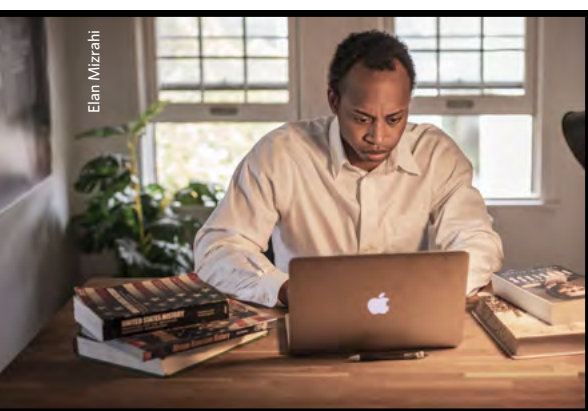


Sean Means is overjoyed to be back with his students at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy 6-12, even though it is in a completely virtual learning environment for the first time.

He relishes hearing his students joke and laugh with each other. He hadn't seen them since Pittsburgh city schools were shuttered in March because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and many families' lack of home technology made virtual interaction almost impossible.

Now, his students' faces remind Mr. Means why he became an educator. These days he clings hard to his mission, as he embarks on a completely unprecedented school year, which began with full-time electronic, or e-learning, in the face of the health crisis.

His biggest concern to address: Are children still falling behind?



Sean Means, teacher at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy.

"The more time we're away from class [physically], the bigger the opportunity gap becomes," Mr. Means said. "Honestly, that is one thing I am extremely afraid of ... because I do believe education is such an opportunity for them to create a better life for themselves down the road. And while we can create an all right, decent platform, I don't think we can replace all the opportunities that lie within our building."

Student regression is just one major issue for educators like Mr. Means as students return to school amid a year with new and possibly unforeseen challenges ahead.

In the last weeks of summer, thousands of teachers and students across Allegheny County started classes that were a blend of traditional, hybrid and completely virtual environments. Many were filled with anxieties and hopes for the ensuing school year and the future of education as their communities grappled with the best way to provide equitable instruction to all students during this difficult time.

Challenges with access to technology — laptops, tablets and internet connections — food insecurity and threats to social-emotional well-being intertwine among the major concerns that families, teachers and organizations countywide are working to address. When the pandemic struck and school

districts were forced to transition to virtual learning, the digital divide and technological gap were made clear, according to staff members of The Heinz Endowments' Learning team.

Not only are "the inequities widened in terms of who's impacted negatively, but the inequities are widened in terms of what are some of the lasting changes to the way that families and young people experience learning—and who has a leverage point to get ahead, versus who's systematically held back," said Endowments Creative Learning Program Officer Mac Howison.

Stan Thompson, senior education program director at the Endowments, echoed Mr. Howison. "The reality is you still have folks who are in a crisis, and everyone's scrambling trying to figure out how do we address this," Dr. Thompson said. "We've never been here before."

Starting Aug. 20, all staff across the Pittsburgh Public Schools began training on platforms that the district now relies on heavily in the new virtual learning environment, including Microsoft Teams and Schoology. For five days, staff received a combination of different types of instruction—synchronous trainings by colleagues-turned-coaches and asynchronous online courses on a vast range of topics. Counselors, social

workers and paraprofessionals received training specific to their fields.

Meanwhile, school officials had difficulty pinning down when and how to start the school year for the district's roughly 22,000 students. The fall reopening was delayed a week as the district awaited the arrival of a technology shipment. The schedule for in-person instruction for most students was pushed back three times, finally settling on January 2021—for now. Exceptions were initially made for students who have special needs, are medically fragile or are English language learners, allowing them to have some in-person learning in school buildings beginning Nov. 9. But later that week, when Allegheny County experienced a sharp uptick in COVID-19 cases, school officials shifted all district students back to full-time online instruction.

By the end of November, the district had obtained 23,719 technology devices, already distributed nearly 18,000 to students and faculty, and was developing a plan for giving out devices to those families who had been using their personal home equipment, district spokeswoman Ebony Pugh said.

The total cost of device purchases for the district, including warranties and accessories, surpassed \$10.7 million. The Endowments provided PPS \$360,000 in grant funding to aid the district's effort to order the thousands of devices needed to shift the district to a one-to-one model, where each student has a district device.

"One of the things is understanding that, even though you're going one-to-one, it's not a panacea," Superintendent Anthony Hamlet said. "There's still a large level of training that needs to be had for our faculty and staff."

Kendrah Foster, who lives in Pittsburgh's Observatory Hill neighborhood, breathed a sigh of relief at the end of August when she finally received devices from the district for her three children—a first-grader, second-grader and third-grader at Allegheny K-5—days before school was first scheduled to start. Once classes began, her family faced several device issues. Sometimes her children were kicked off the platform in the middle of class; other times technology simply didn't work altogether. For her children, who have emotional and behavioral disabilities, this made learning a challenge.

Though remote learning has become easier over time, "it's been very hard," Ms. Foster said. Her children lack the structure they need. However, their teachers have been an invaluable support, sending extra resources and educational

tools. One teacher even dropped off paper instructional packets to the family in the spring when learning first shifted online.

Teachers, in general, have been organized, helpful and encouraging for her and her children, Ms. Foster said. Without their assistance throughout the pandemic, she likely would have shifted her children to home schooling.

She was less impressed with the district's response to the pandemic, which she described as "abysmal" and rife with confusing messaging and a lack of proper preparation.

"They were not prepared when they could have been," she said. "It was not thought out well and I feel like time was wasted. ... At the end of March, that is when they should have been planning."

As a parent to children with disabilities, Ms. Foster explained that she's seen how much her children needed better planning and organization by school officials to help make their adjustment to online learning less difficult.

"There should have been one place where the kid logs on and everything should be there. You should not have to go to several different things to get what you need," she said. "That is not only a problem for my kids, but for many children who have learning disabilities, behavioral issues."

While PPS, the county's largest district, faced challenges to secure technology, some school districts in the Allegheny Intermediate Unit "have the very same issues Pittsburgh Public



54

Number of schools



21,784

Number of students



2,070

Number of teachers



23,719

District-provided technology devices distributed to teachers and students

NO SMALL TASK

Getting Pittsburgh Public Schools students—and many teachers—up to speed to work from home meant that the district had to distribute nearly 24,000 technology devices such as laptops and tablets.

was having without necessarily having all the same benefactors that Pittsburgh Public had,” said Rosanne Javorsky, assistant executive director of teaching and learning at the AIU, which provides educational services to 42 Allegheny County districts outside of Pittsburgh.

The AIU received a \$200,000 grant from the Endowments and used it to purchase more than 1,000 technology devices and other technology for families in under-resourced school districts, including McKeesport Area, Sto-Rox and Clairton.

Educators and families also have leaned on their neighborhood, familial and other communities to transition students to a virtual learning environment. This includes getting technology and Wi-Fi connections for students who need it most.

Vanessa Buffry heads the digital inclusion department at Neighborhood Allies, which has been calling attention to the digital divide and working to close the gap. Throughout the spring and summer, Neighborhood Allies worked to get new

devices to families and help them connect to the internet. The nonprofit community organization received \$50,000 in the spring from the Endowments to provide refurbished technology devices to PPS for its students still without technology.

“People could get by with daily functions without having digital access before. You could go face-to-face to a store ... all of those businesses and services were open with personnel who could walk you through the process,” Ms. Buffry said. But the coronavirus pandemic flipped that on its head.

“There was just this spiraling effect where people were literally cut off from the world. They’re cut off from their daily functions. They’re cut off from their ability to do schooling and at the same time we’re looking at the possibility of an economic recession.”

She worries that with the pandemic, “we’ll see an even steeper effect of [students] who are falling behind academically in a way that their maybe white and more privileged peers are not falling behind because they have computers at home and they can access content remotely.”

Ms. Foster doesn’t worry too much about her kids falling behind. She’s found hope in “the connections that we are still able to have with other families.”

“Even though we are all different and in different situations, we’re having some of the same struggles and some of the same successes,” she said. “We’re hopeful that the kids are going to be resilient and, when all of this is over, be able to pick up the pieces and continue on with their education and their friendships.” **h**

“We’re hopeful that the kids are going to be resilient and, when all of this is over, be able to pick up the pieces and continue on with their education and their friendships.”

Kendrah Foster, Pittsburgh Public Schools parent



Kendrah Foster, who is raising her nephew DeVonte, right, and nieces Winter, far left, and Stormy, center, as her own, helps them with classwork in a makeshift classroom in the basement of their Observatory Hill home.

CAMPUS HEALTH & SAFETY

Universities in the Pittsburgh region have varied approaches to instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Within the city limits, different models have been adopted in response to the crisis. When schools closed in March, the universities switched to remote learning to finish the semester. By the fall, the schools had developed their own guidance and methods for adapting to the pandemic. By Donovan Harrell

“I continue to be inspired by the resilience, kindness and determination of our faculty, students and staff as we work together to navigate the very fluid situation brought about by COVID-19,” Provost Ann Cudd said in a prepared public statement. “We are all eager to meet new people and explore the campus—and the world—more freely. We are trying all we can in the terrain we are in.”

Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and the Center for Vaccine Research are also looking into treatments for the virus while other researchers at Pitt examine the virus’s community impacts. This work would contribute to the creation of a data portal that would help community organizations combat housing market crises.

CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY adopted in-person, remote and hybrid instructional models for its classes. As a part of this approach, the university installed new video and audio equipment in classrooms. Carnegie Mellon created three on-campus postures—Modified, Restricted and Essential—to describe the amount of in-person activity on campus as pandemic conditions evolve. Students also have to agree to abide by “A Tartan’s Responsibility,” an adjustment to the Carnegie Mellon Code that encourages students to take actions to minimize the spread of the virus.

If a student receives a positive test result, the university will offer support and contact tracing. It has also reserved private bedrooms and bathrooms in campus housing for infected students.

“Every member of the Carnegie Mellon community—students, faculty and staff members—has a shared responsibility to keep our community’s health top of mind, while also allowing us to fulfill the university’s core mission of education and research,” Senior Director of Media Relations Jason Maderer said. “Our approach is guided by what makes Carnegie Mellon a leader in higher education: science- and data-driven, built on the latest technology and human-centered. CMU’s COVID response follows industry best practices and demonstrates the innovation for which we are known.”

CHATHAM UNIVERSITY has adopted various campus alert levels—Normal, Guarded, Raised and High—similar to other universities in the Pittsburgh region. In the Guarded Alert Level, residence halls, apartments and classrooms operate with additional safety guidelines. In the Raised Alert Level, housing, apartments and classrooms are restricted, with courses moving to a mixture of in-person and remote. In the High Alert Level, residence halls, apartments, classes and buildings are closed while learning is conducted remotely. The university also started the Cougars Care initiative to provide support, training and other resources to advance the safety and academic goals of students and staff.

Courses are delivered in on-site, hybrid and online models. On-site courses are offered in person. Hybrid courses have some online meetings to reduce in-person interactions, and online courses are completely remote.

“Our efforts are guided by the goals to protect community health, provide a quality academic and personalized education experience, and prepare our community to adapt and change based on the results of things within—and out of—our control,” Bill Campbell, vice president of marketing and communications said. “Our community has embraced this historic challenge, and through their commitment and efforts, we are fortunate to have a low positivity rate six weeks into our term.”

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY created a series of COVID-19 awareness videos detailing new campus procedures to help mitigate the spread of the virus. The school developed a HyFlex system that allows for students to take classes on campus and remotely and enables the university to comply with local, state and federal guidelines while still offering students the option to take classes in person. As a part of this model, classrooms were equipped with new webcams and monitors. Overall, Duquesne reduced classroom occupancies by 40 percent and lecture halls by 20 percent, according to the university website.

CARLOW UNIVERSITY offers classes on campus, through a hybrid model, or using a completely remote model. So far, 70 percent of university courses are offered online, with the remaining percentage being offered through a hybrid format. The university also created multiple “movable” contingency plans that can change depending on the severity of the pandemic. Scenario No. 1 allows for on-campus classes and housing that follow government guidelines. Scenario No. 2 downsizes campus housing and moves classes to a hybrid—alternating in-person and remote—format to “de-densify.” Based on the severity of the pandemic, Scenario No. 3 moves all courses online to make sure the university complies with federal guidance.

POINT PARK UNIVERSITY adopted a series of learning options to adapt to the pandemic. These include in-person, remote, hybrid and HyFlex formats as well as “blended” courses. Remote courses are offered completely online through both real-time and asynchronous instruction. In the hybrid model, students alternate between in-person and remote instruction depending on the day of the week, but classes do not have some students participating remotely and others in person at the same time. The HyFlex format combines in-person and remote participation in real time. Blended courses combine elements of both the HyFlex model and the hybrid model. **h**

THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH developed the Flex@Pitt teaching model to allow for both in-person and remote classes, according to the university’s COVID-19 resource website. This approach to instruction during the pandemic gives students the option to learn synchronously in real time through Zoom sessions and asynchronously with recorded classes, depending on student and faculty preference. Classrooms were also outfitted with cameras, monitors, microphones and speakers as a part of the Flex@Pitt model.

Pitt developed three operational postures for each of its campuses—High Risk, Elevated Risk and Guarded Risk—to make sure the university stayed in compliance with federal, state and local guidance. These postures change depending on several factors, such as the number of COVID-19 cases in Allegheny County and among faculty, staff and students. Pitt also adjusted its student code of conduct to account for the pandemic and has set aside about 179 beds to quarantine students who test positive, with the ability to add an additional 20 beds as needed.

UNLOCKING HOUSING HELP

At RentHelpPGH, a communications hub for accessing housing-related resources in Allegheny County, the calls these days from people seeking assistance just keep coming and coming:

- A former waitress in her 60s from the Mon Valley, who is cobbling together temp jobs in an effort to make her rent payments
- Two Brighton Heights neighbors, each laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic, whose mutual landlord refuses to apply for relief under the federal CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) that would enable him to keep them and their families as tenants while making his own mortgage payments
- A single mother of four in Fox Chapel, recently let go from a well-paying job, who is now navigating a thicket of social services for the first time in her life while struggling to maintain a calm home environment for remote learning

These cases represent just the tip of the iceberg. By mid-November, RentHelpPGH had 650 active clients, up from 264 only two months earlier, following the end of the state's second moratorium on evictions. According to Program Director Abby Rae LaCombe, who was hired to run the call center's team of "resource navigators" in early July, the scale of the crisis is "huge."

With new registrations coming in at a rate of 40 per week, "it's just one call after another," she said.

As a microcosm of a national crisis, the struggle to retain or obtain access to housing in the Pittsburgh region amid an economically crippling pandemic is not only devastating to the thousands of people directly involved but also is exposing deep systemic flaws that affect the broader community, most notably in terms of the vast socioeconomic and racial disparities of the pandemic's impact. Of the callers to RentHelpPGH and its sister centers, only about 3 percent are white, estimates Crystal Jennings, a resource navigator who wears multiple hats within the region's social service community.

**NONPROFITS IN THE PITTSBURGH REGION ARE COORDINATING THEIR EFFORTS TO ASSIST RESIDENTS IN KEEPING OR FINDING HOUSING DURING THE ECONOMIC CRISIS SPAWNED BY THE PANDEMIC.
BY BEN WECHT**



“What COVID did was not create the crisis but make the crisis more stark,” explains Matt Barron, a Heinz Endowments senior program officer who oversees some of the foundation’s sustainability grantmaking, including support for the cluster of organizations associated with RentHelpPGH. “We’ve been engaged in funding around housing for years now, so it’s not a new area for us. But what we’ve been able to do this time is to accelerate [the work].”

That such a ramping up has been possible is owed to the network of community, governmental and philanthropic organizations that have come together to address the local housing challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, collectively donating, raising and putting to work millions of dollars within the space of a few months. Of the Endowments’ own

(Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network), which provided funding to a collaboration of the Community Justice Project (CJP), the Hill District Consensus Group and the Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation to address the anticipated increase in local evictions.

“HOUSING IS HEALTH CARE”

Of course, dollars alone cannot solve a crisis, and that’s where nonprofits such as Pittsburgh United come into play. A coalition of labor, faith, community and environmental groups, the organization was formed in 2007 around the One Hill Community Benefits agreement among the city, the Pittsburgh Penguins and the Lower Hill District neighborhood. Its earliest fights were in the areas of jobs, economic development and water quality.

“We believe economic development should serve and benefit the community,” said Pittsburgh United Executive Director Jennifer Rafanan Kennedy, who joined the organization in 2012 as director of its Clean Rivers Campaign.

In 2015, when Pittsburgh’s Affordable Housing Task Force recommended that the city create a trust fund but no immediate action occurred, her focus shifted. After knocking on tens of thousands of doors, Ms. Rafanan Kennedy and her team succeeded in collecting more than 14,000 signatures to place a referendum on the ballot to start a housing fund, prompting City Council to create the Affordable Housing Trust Fund without taking the issue to the polls. Pittsburgh United then embarked on extensive community organizing to win an increase in the real estate transfer tax, providing \$10 million per year to the fund.

Today the organization, an Endowments grantee, is engaged in perhaps its greatest battle yet. Before the crisis, Pittsburgh had

\$5 million emergency appropriation relating to COVID-19-based needs, some \$400,000 to \$500,000 has been directed to housing support and anti-eviction work.

The Endowments also contributed another \$1 million to the COVID-19 Emergency Action Fund, a pooled fund that addresses a range of issues, including housing. Also making \$1 million contributions to the collaborative relief effort were the Richard King Mellon, Hillman and Pittsburgh foundations. The Pittsburgh Foundation managed the fund and raised another \$5 million from individual and organizational donors.

The work of initiatives such as RentHelpPGH also is supported by a federal CARES Act-related grant through PLAN

a shortage of more than 17,000 affordable units, with the biggest obstacles facing those earning 30 to 50 percent of area median income.

“The folks trying to access affordable housing at this level face challenge after challenge,” Ms. Rafanan Kennedy said. “COVID presented another crisis layered on this shortage.”

“The moratoriums have protected many families, but some are still facing evictions or have been evicted. Pittsburgh United has been deeply engaged in local, state and federal advocacy on extension of moratoria and protecting people through keeping them in their homes—because housing is health care in a pandemic, a safe place for us to distance and protect ourselves and our families.”



Anne Grayson, center, of the United Neighborhood Defense Movement, participates in an August demonstration outside the Penn Hills municipal building to protest eviction attempts earlier in the summer at the Valmar Gardens apartment complex where Andre Mobley, foreground, is a tenant.

PROVIDING LEGAL HELP

Another critical piece of the pandemic-era housing puzzle is providing embattled residents access to the legal services they need to remain in their homes. At the CJP, a nonprofit, statewide law firm that PLAN formed in 1996 in response to restrictions imposed on legal service programs by the Welfare Reform Act, staff lawyers engage in class action lawsuits, administrative legal actions and legislative advocacy to assist low-income Pennsylvania residents.

“Our work is focused on issues that are systemic in nature,” Kevin Quisenberry, CJP’s litigation director, said. “Affordability had been a problem for a long time, and displacement is a trend that’s real and has been happening to a degree in Pittsburgh and other markets. The pandemic has amplified the crisis and introduced a lot of new people to that crisis because they are now at the same income level where others already were.”

Having built a relationship with the Endowments a couple of years ago around the issue of lead poisoning in low-income housing, CJP is receiving additional Endowments support, in part for COVID-related work that will help area residents engage in litigation to protect their rights under federal or state law so they can avoid eviction.

“If we can help 500 families or 1,000,” Mr. Quisenberry said, “that will be a major victory, because we’re working with such a short time frame.”

VISUALIZING THE PROBLEM

To help explain how long-term systemic flaws laid the foundation for the crisis we now face, Carnegie Mellon University’s CREATE Lab provides critical data analysis tools to projects such as RentHelpPGH. Under the direction of professors and spouses Anne Wright and Randy Sargent, the lab—whose acronym stands for “Community Robotics, Education and Technology Empowerment”—uses sophisticated visualization platform software to animate maps and demonstrate trends in the housing market.

Based on the EarthTime project, a CREATE Lab effort that focused on examining the long-term effects of such issues as climate change and deforestation, the software is now enabling policymakers and social service providers to get a much tighter bead on aspects of the housing problem, such as the neighborhoods where evictions are more likely to happen, who’s at risk and what a backlog means when moratoria are lifted.

In a recent Zoom meeting, Ms. Wright and Mr. Sargent used a series of color-coded images of the Pittsburgh region to demonstrate the pernicious effects of “redlining” in America that began in the 1930s to restrict Black families’ access to housing in certain communities. Their presentation revealed the way the practice determined the shape of cities like Pittsburgh. Other maps show the effects of displacements in neighborhoods

like East Liberty and the role of the 2008 housing crisis in exacerbating the current predicament.

“Our desire is to engage with the community and better understand changing needs outside the campus,” Mr. Sargent said. “The Heinz Endowments has just been incredibly supportive in helping us to partner with the communities... The fact that we’ve been able to pivot from historical trend data analysis to real-time, ‘Let’s see what’s happening because of the pandemic’... Heinz has been instrumental in allowing us to do that.”

As various community partners in Pittsburgh continue to advance efforts such as these, the focus remains on the thousands of human lives at stake, and the myriad ways in which housing impacts those lives.

“The effects of waves of debt and evictions ripple out into every part of our lives and our communities,” Ms. Rafanan Kennedy of Pittsburgh United said. “Housing is everything. It is the safety and stability that underpins so many things in our lives. And with massive numbers of families facing eviction, our communities will also feel the effects of this crisis if we don’t take action to protect our people.”

Looking to the challenging months ahead, local organizations and foundations understand that just as it takes a village to raise a child, it’s equally true that it takes a community to shelter a family. But as Jane Downing, senior program officer for economic and community development at The Pittsburgh Foundation, sees it, that’s simply the Pittsburgh way.

“I think collaboration is built into the region’s DNA, and I think it stems from the early collaboration on Renaissance I,” Pittsburgh’s post–World War II clean air and civic revitalization project, she said. “So, when there’s an issue, we come together. That’s just how we deal with it.” **h**

The EarthTime project from Carnegie Mellon University’s CREATE Lab developed visualization models of how the 1968 Fair Housing Act addressed racially biased neighborhood redlining in Pittsburgh to help housing advocates see how they could advance fair and affordable housing now and in the future.



IN ADDITION TO ITS IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH, THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC HAS SENT SHOCK WAVES THROUGH ALMOST EVERY ASPECT OF THE U.S. ECONOMY — AND THE PITTSBURGH REGION WAS NOT SPARED.
BY ELWIN GREEN

Let's start with the simplest and starkest datum: In the second quarter of 2020, according to the U.S. Commerce Department, the nation's gross domestic product fell by 9.5 percent or an annualized rate of 32.9 percent — the largest quarterly drop ever recorded. The previous record decline was an annualized 28.2 percent drop in the second quarter of 1921.

This latest plunge was just one result of quarantines enacted in attempts to stem the spread of the novel coronavirus COVID-19. State shutdowns and other economic setbacks led to more than 67 million Americans filing first-time unemployment claims by mid-November, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. At the same time, the National Bureau of Economic Research reported 3.3 million business owners going out of business.

The economic roller coaster continues as the Pittsburgh region and the rest of the country face another surge in COVID-19 cases, and employers and workers try to figure out how to navigate a landscape that keeps shifting beneath their feet.

Attempts to keep small businesses open

Arlan Hess took COVID-19 seriously, early. The owner of the North Side independent bookstore City Books sent a newsletter out to customers and friends well before the state-mandated shutdown to let them know that she was preparing for such an event.

"Because my customers knew what was going to happen, the final three or four days before we shut our doors were huge sales days," she said.

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Joshua Franzos



Many businesses across Pittsburgh, offering a range of goods and services, closed this spring, at least for a while, as the region tried to get a grip on its response to the COVID-19 crisis. Today, most of those whose closed signs are shown here have reopened.





IMPACT ON BUSINESS

Arlan Hess took her independent bookstore virtual after temporarily closing the physical shop on Pittsburgh's North Side at the beginning of the pandemic. City Books now has limited in-store hours while maintaining an online presence.

After locking the doors on March 15, City Books went virtual.

"We pivoted to online sales on a variety of channels, which have taken up the slack in in-store sales," Ms. Hess said. "Otherwise we'd be much worse off."

Even with a robust online presence—the store has accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and LinkedIn—sales fell by 30 percent. Having no employees meant that the shutdown did not cost any jobs, but that loss was still enough to qualify Ms. Hess for a \$1,000 grant under the federal CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) that became law in late March.

When she reopened the store on July 8 with reduced operating hours—Wednesdays and Saturdays, noon to 5 p.m., and by appointment—returning customers found a number of changes in place. Like many larger retailers, City Books now had markers on the floor laying out a one-way path through the store, and it limited the number of customers who may be inside at any given time—two. Ms. Hess also stopped accepting cash at the register, and provided hand sanitizer for visitors to use upon both entering and leaving the store.

And of course, she required customers to wear masks.

Online sales continue, and while total sales haven't returned to pre-pandemic levels, "as of early October, we are still covering all of our bills," she said, "and, if our revenue streams continue as they are, we can continue like this for quite a while, if need be."

Many other business owners in the Pittsburgh region have not fared so well.

Locally, Yelp's Economic Average Report said that 739 businesses closed their doors between March 1 and July 20, including 129 restaurants. Among the losses was The Original Hot Dog Shop, the Oakland establishment affectionately known to generations of college students as "The Dirty O."

"My guess is, anywhere between 20 and 40 percent of business in southwestern Pennsylvania could shut down," said Rob Stephany, senior program director for community and economic development at The Heinz Endowments.

According to the Small Business Administration, by early August, some 8,800 businesses in Pittsburgh had each received up to \$150,000 in Payroll Protection Program loans.

Arts and entertainment try to survive

It's often said that timing is everything. Mark Clayton Southers, founder of the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company, could affirm that in regard to the timing of the pandemic's emergence.

When Pennsylvania's first case of COVID-19 was reported in early March, PPTC had already decided to cancel a planned production in order to make its move to a new location easier. That decision prevented the statewide April 1 shutdown from dealing a body blow to the theater's operations.

"It didn't actually affect what we were doing," Mr. Southers said.

But it did affect cast and crew members, and other artists that Pittsburgh Playwrights had worked with through the years. For that reason, the organization raised \$20,000 to distribute to 40 local artists. This followed an almost prescient pre-COVID decision by Pittsburgh Playwrights' board to match a \$5,000 grant and give 10 playwrights \$1,000 each after canceling its February production because the company was relocating.

The next challenge was figuring out how—or even if—to mount a 2020–21 season.

Recalling the years that it took to develop an effective medical regimen for HIV/AIDS, Mr. Southers said, "Instead of waiting for the right time to do theater, we decided to do theater in a way that reflects how we're living today."

The company devised what might be described as a hybrid season. For three of its four offerings, Pittsburgh Playwrights staged live productions with limited attendance to maintain "social distance hygiene," then made videos of the live performance available for online viewing in a type of pay-per-view model. For the holidays, it is offering online viewing of a 2014 production, "Ubuntu Holiday."

Also, the company is doing additional fundraising on behalf of artists and plans now to issue more mini-grants, Mr. Southers said, "as long as there is a need for support."

While Pittsburgh Playwrights had already ended its season when coronavirus hit, many other arts organizations and venues were forced to shut down operations mid-season. Plays and concerts alike have been rescheduled for dates in 2021.

“The creative economy is one of the sectors most at risk from the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Janet Sarbaugh, the Endowments’ vice president of Creativity.

She noted an August 2020 Brookings Institution report, “Lost Art: Measuring COVID-19’s devastating impact on America’s creative economy,” that detailed the impact of the pandemic on the arts and culture sector, described as one of the three most important sectors in driving regional economies along with business and management, and science and technology.

According to the report, from April to July, Pennsylvania ranked sixth in the nation in job

and sales losses in the creative industries and occupations. And within the creative sector, the fine and performing arts were identified as the hardest hit.

A study conducted by Fourth Economy Consulting early in the COVID-19 crisis documented a similar economic impact from the pandemic on the Pittsburgh region, and identified the largest negative effects in the areas of arts and entertainment, accommodations, and food.

Still, “the cultural community has been incredibly inventive” in adapting to pandemic life, Ms. Sarbaugh said. “There are many local examples of exemplary virtual programming, virtual teaching artistry, and collective funding and promotion efforts.”

She cited City Theatre, which mounted its 12-night, Drive-In Arts Festival in September that offered live performances at the Hazelwood Green business and residential

complex under development. Artists occupied an outdoor stage, and patrons viewed the shows from their parked cars, listening through their FM radios like they would at now rare drive-in movie theaters.

City Theatre also offered online performances, as did City of Asylum, a nonprofit on Pittsburgh’s North Side dedicated to housing writers in exile. The latter produced “The Show Must Go On(line) Pittsburgh,” a collaborative daily webcast that streams programs by arts organizations from across the region.

Over the summer, a large part of the region’s philanthropic community — 15 foundations, including the Endowments, and one private donor — came together to form the COVID-19 Arts Working Group, which created the Arts|Equity|Reimagined Fund to assist local arts groups. Launched with about \$3.5 million, the fund was created in response to the pandemic, but the working

IMPACT ON THE ARTS

Among the creative adjustments to the COVID-19 crisis was City Theatre’s decision to move a multimedia production of “Frankenstein” from the company’s auditorium on Pittsburgh’s South Side to an open space at the Hazelwood Green development where it became a drive-in performance.



THE “ESSENTIAL WORKER” CHALLENGE

BY ELWIN GREEN

As employees in a wide variety of occupations began working from home to minimize the spread of COVID-19, it quickly became apparent that many others could not do so. Their jobs required their physical presence in the workplace. And the country required that those jobs continue to be done. Thus, a new term entered America's everyday vocabulary: essential worker.

In the Pittsburgh region, hospital and health care workers represented by SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania, the state chapter of a national union, are among those essential workers.

Early on, the pandemic upended hospital workers' lives with uncertainty, said the organization's executive vice president for strategic campaigns, Lisa Frank.

“Within hospitals, you have some people who were overworked and some people who had no work at all,” she said.

For instance, in some hospitals, when the virus surge first hit, some patients who were scheduled to receive elective surgery had those operations pushed back to free up resources for COVID patients. Workers whose jobs focused on such surgeries wound up with so little work to do that in some cases they were furloughed.

Fortunately, there were employers who “decided to use some of the federal CARES money to pay people even when they were furloughed,” Ms. Frank said. Combining those funds with enhanced unemployment benefits allowed workers to avoid financial devastation.

Conversely, as hospitals created dedicated spaces for working with COVID patients, some employees in those units found themselves working extra hours because their hospitals wanted to restrict the number of personnel coming into contact with coronavirus patients.

For them, the physical challenge of working extended hours was exacerbated by the challenge of avoiding infection by the new virus.

But topping it all was the emotional and psychological toll.

“One of the things that we heard from many, many, many workers... was just lack of information, plain old lack of information. Workers saying, ‘You know, I don’t really know where the COVID floors are today,’” Ms. Frank explained.

“That was really psychologically difficult because it’s one thing to say, ‘I’m an essential worker, I’m a health care worker, I’m going to go into work, and I’m going to try to do my job.’ It is entirely another thing to say, ‘I’m going to go do that and not really know where the danger is.’”

Bobbi Linskens was working as a server with a locally owned restaurant chain when she signed a petition on behalf of a coworker in October 2016. After their manager threatened to fire them, they filed an unfair labor practices grievance and won.

That was her introduction to labor organizing, and in 2017 she became an organizer for Restaurant Opportunities Center–Pittsburgh (ROC), an agency dedicated to improving working conditions for Pittsburgh's more than 57,000 food service industry workers.

When state-mandated restaurant closures occurred earlier this year, she said, “One of the first things I saw... was restaurant workers reaching out [to ROC] because they were not paid for work they did before the restaurant closed.”

In one case, the employer told workers that the government had frozen their accounts—“A total lie,” Ms. Linskens insisted—before he admitted that he didn’t have the money to pay them.

Nurses like Angela Battaglia, who works at Allegheny General Hospital on Pittsburgh's North Side, are among the essential workers whose sacrifices are helping to protect the health and safety of people across the country.

“It took a couple of months and a lot of pressure,” but he eventually paid the staff, Ms. Linskens said.

In other cases, workers have asked ROC for help, not with getting paid, but with staying safe. Ms. Linskens told the story of an individual who had COVID-19 symptoms, had been tested for the virus, and was awaiting the results only to be told that if they didn’t have a fever they had to come in to work or be fired.

So, the person went to work. Then the test results came in: positive.

The tension between health and economic well-being can extend to as small a matter as simply asking a customer to wear a mask.

“Enforcing customers wearing masks is a hardship for tipped workers,” Ms. Linskens said. “The customers get angry with them, and that’s their tip.” It’s a loss that waitstaff, with a minimum hourly wage of \$2.83, can ill afford.

A subset of restaurant workers find themselves at the intersection of effects generated by the pandemic and immigration policy.

A majority of Latinos in Pittsburgh work in either the hospitality industry—which includes restaurants—or construction, said Monica Ruiz-Caraballo, executive director of Casa San José. The nonprofit provides a range of services supporting Pittsburgh’s Latino community, who make up less than 4 percent of the population.

When the pandemic hit, many were laid off or furloughed along with their co-workers. But for them, there was a difference.

“We’re talking about a population that doesn’t qualify for benefits that are funded by the federal government and that doesn’t qualify for unemployment,” she said.

That is because many of them are undocumented, and, as such, they do not have a Social Security number. Rather, they have an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). With an ITIN, a worker pays the taxes that fund federal benefits but is not eligible to receive those benefits.

“They were deliberately left out of any stimulus packages,” Ms. Ruiz-Caraballo noted.

After “hundreds and hundreds” of people needing food started showing up at Casa San José’s door, the agency began a food distribution program in March that spread into Allegheny County and surrounding counties, she said.

Then, between March and June, Casa San José raised \$1 million, which included support from The Heinz Endowments, that enabled the organization to provide more than 800 families with cash payments of \$700 each, hire new staff and prepare for the next phase of the pandemic challenge. **h**



Jared Wickerham

group has committed to addressing a second issue that long simmered in the Pittsburgh region: race-based disparities that have tended to leave artists of color marginalized.

Unemployment numbers

One of the largest and most obvious features of the pandemic economy is unemployment. Emergency business closures led to furloughs and layoffs.

“The downturn, in terms of jobs, has been larger in the Pittsburgh metro area and Pennsylvania than it has been nationally,” said Gus Faucher, chief economist for The PNC Financial Services Group. “The job losses were proportionately larger ... because the state put more restrictions on economic activity compared to many other states.”

Thus, while employment fell nationwide by 5 percent between February and April, in Pittsburgh it plummeted 19 percent.

In a separate survey, the University of Pittsburgh’s University Center for Social and Urban Research found that more than 20 percent of workers employed on March 1 were unemployed by early May, with the majority of those job losses — over 16 percent — being COVID-related.

But anyone assuming that the business closures that produced high unemployment would also produce a surge of bankruptcies would be wrong.

“In both the U.S. and in Pennsylvania, [bankruptcies] were down sharply in the second quarter of 2020 compared to the same quarter in 2019,” Mr. Faucher said. In fact, they were down 11 percent nationally, and a remarkable 61 percent in Pennsylvania (city-level data were not available).

He cited aid from the CARES Act as a likely reason, along with the fact that courts and law offices have been closed. “I do think business bankruptcies will increase in the second half of the year and into 2021,” he said.

Transition to PPE distribution

Since its formation in 1989, the Green Tree-based nonprofit Global Links has received excess medical supplies from hospitals and individual donors, repackaged them, and distributed them to hospitals and individuals around the world, focusing on where it saw the greatest need.

When COVID-19 struck, Global Links’ business model was hit with a double whammy: Hospitals were forced to halt donations of

supplies, and international shipments of all kinds were restricted.

The organization pivoted to respond to emerging local circumstances as area nonprofits serving seniors, the homeless, immigrants, and people who had a low income or were at risk found themselves unable to meet their clients’ need for personal protective equipment.

With funding from the Endowments, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, The Hillman Foundation and others, Global Links acquired and distributed personal protective equipment (PPE) throughout southwestern Pennsylvania. It also worked with local manufacturers to produce and distribute emergency masks and face shields in bulk.

By September, Global Links had distributed a million masks, face shields, gloves and other pieces of PPE to 299 nonprofit agencies, 600 childcare centers and 140 schools.

Another type of mission shift was made by Wigle Whiskey, a distillery founded in 2011 in Pittsburgh’s Strip District. After Gov. Tom Wolf’s initial disaster declaration in March, a run on hand sanitizer resulted in 8-ounce bottles selling for more than \$75 each in some places. Inspired by West Coast distilleries that had begun making hand sanitizer when the virus had taken hold there sooner, Wigle owners decided to repurpose their stills to do the same.

“There were a bunch of regulatory hurdles that we had to go through for several months,” said co-owner Meredith Meyer Grelli. So, the company wasn’t able to actually produce the hand sanitizer until May. “We were getting hundreds of calls and emails a day.”

Once it gained state approval, Wigle shut down its whiskey operations to produce two batches of sanitizer — 1,500 bottles — at a cost of \$80,000. By the time the company finished distributing them, mostly to the Pittsburgh Department of Public Safety, manufacturers like Purell had caught up with demand, and Wigle could return to making whiskey. **h**



When hand sanitizer became scarce in the opening months of the pandemic, Wigle Whiskey in Pittsburgh was among the businesses that took a temporary break from making its regular products to supplying hand sanitizer as a public service.



A tale of pandemics

As the coronavirus pandemic has spread across the U.S., its disproportionate impact on Black Americans and other people of color has been stark. Long-standing inequities are receiving renewed scrutiny, creating deeper understandings of crises that existed all along. By Deborah Todd

The double-doored glass entrance to the Sto-Rox Public Library is locked these days, as it has been on and off since March, when COVID-19 shut down nonessential operations in Pennsylvania and much of the nation. But beyond the rows of desktops and hip-height bookcases, Jackie Page can be seen rushing from behind the counter of Love Rocks Café to greet a visitor.

When Ms. Page relocated her busy North Versailles-based catering business 17 miles northwest to McKees Rocks borough in February 2019, the library already served as a popular gathering space, and it didn't take long to make an impact in the community. The aroma of cranberry rosemary chicken, shrimp and grits, and mac and cheese attracted

customers throughout the block. Ms. Page's easy banter and embracing personality pulled in new faces from across the neighborhood.

The first quarter of last year brought in around \$12,000, and by the end of 2019, the business saw around \$50,000, much of that due to a low overhead and Ms. Page serving as a one-woman shop. The successful start fueled plans for new locations, hiring employees, and an ultimate vision for a restaurant group that would feature an eatery and craft beer pub named for her deceased sister Raquel.

Then in March, Allegheny County's non-essential businesses shut down under Gov. Tom Wolf's order, and any ground gained last year was lost within weeks.

"It was busy, sometimes I would have every seat at the counter and tables taken. People

would be standing in line getting their to-go's, and I'd literally be standing here wondering, how am I going to do this? Then 10 minutes later I'd have everyone out the door," recalled Ms. Page from behind the empty counter, salt and pepper braids tied in a loose bun atop her head.

"The ideal is to sell 30 meals a day. I was lucky if I sold 30 meals a week the last month."

For Ms. Page, and Black and brown business owners in Allegheny County and across the nation, systemic financial inequalities that served as looming obstacles prior to COVID-19 have come crashing down in ways that could potentially bury these businesses en masse. By April, statistics began to reveal that a disproportionate impact on people of



Jackie Page is still preparing food at her Love Rocks Café in McKees Rocks borough, but she's relying on takeout orders to keep money coming in during the pandemic.

color was taking hold not only for business owners but also across almost all measurable aspects of life.

For example, a survey by the economic development consulting firm Fourth Economy showed that Black unemployment in the U.S. was 16.7 percent in April, compared to 14.2 percent for whites. By June, Black unemployment rates held steady at 16.8 percent while white unemployment fell to 12.4 percent.

In September, a compilation of COVID-19 statistics by race gathered by Carnegie Mellon University's CREATE Lab showed that Black Allegheny County residents had 1,745 cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 population, compared to 685 per 100,000 for white people.

“A lot of small business owners might be able to go to the bank, get a business loan, leverage their house or something they have equity in, and that is just not a reality for a lot of small Black business owners.”

Khamil Scantling, founder
Pittsburgh regional Black business
directory Cocopreneur

The pandemic's impact on Ms. Page illustrates several challenges. Savings weren't enough to support rent during the disruption to her business and, as a renter, she couldn't refinance property or repurpose the space to generate cash flow. When she tried to apply for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which provided small business owners \$659 billion for payroll costs, rent, mortgages, utilities and other expenses, she learned she was ineligible because her business does not support at least two employees.

Her application for unemployment was denied because, while she supported herself through the business, she never paid herself an actual paycheck. Now, to help keep some money coming in, she is selling pre-ordered family dinners for takeout from Love Rocks Café.

As Khamil Scantling, founder of the Pittsburgh regional Black business directory Cocopreneur, watched the PPP loan process unfold, it confirmed every fear she had that it would exacerbate inequalities during a time when Black entrepreneurs could barely hold their heads above water.

“A lot of small business owners might be able to go to the bank, get a business loan, leverage their house or something they have equity in, and that is just not a reality for a lot of small Black business owners,” she explained. “A lot of us start businesses through crowdfunding or [community development financial institutions]. We don't go through traditional institutions, so there was no working relationship where you could call up the bank and say, ‘Hey, Frank, can you walk me through my PPP?’ There was just a different dynamic for Black business owners.”

In an effort to close the gap in relief, Ms. Scantling teamed up with Brandon Brooks, CEO of the small business crowdfunding site Inventrify, to create the Pittsburgh Black Business Relief Fund. The Inventrify campaign, which started in an effort to support Black businesses whose property was damaged during social justice protests, raised more than \$80,000 to provide mini-grants to Black businesses affected by the shutdown. So far,

16 local entrepreneurs—including Ms. Page—have received funding for the effort. But scores more, unfortunately, were turned away.

“I had \$88,000 liquid and ready to go. Our requests for funding totaled about \$190,000, so I'm \$110,000 short of being able to give every person who applied everything they asked for,” Ms. Scantling said. “It seems like \$100,000, when you're splitting it amongst an entire community, is nothing.”

By the time the Inventrify campaign was underway, it had become part of a loosely affiliated network of intervention efforts sparked by nonprofits, foundations, grassroots organizations and activists across the county designed to support underserved communities during COVID-19.

The emergency nature and origin of the programs allowed for a level of collaboration and flexibility that delivered goods and services faster and distributed funds more efficiently than traditional models. The organic collaborations, ultimately, saved businesses and possibly lives in a time of crisis. But they also fall painfully short of what is needed in order to not only restore underserved businesses to the levels at which they were operating before the crisis, but ensure that they can survive the next disaster to come.

Before the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Allegheny County, Dr. Elizabeth Miller, medical director of Community and Population Health at UPMC Children's Hospital, had an inkling that the region's communities of color would bear the brunt of its impact in terms of health.

“Infections follow the fault lines of structural inequalities. This is not new, it's something we knew long before,” she said.

Beyond a disproportionate infection rate that would ultimately lead to higher deaths among underserved communities with preexisting medical conditions, Dr. Miller knew that essential workers who were people of color were putting themselves at risk for exposure at far higher rates than other groups. She also knew that the overall impact of the shutdown would further separate underserved

communities from much-needed resources and services.

In the first weeks of March, Dr. Miller deployed community health teams to underserved neighborhoods for deliveries of food, formula and medicine, and advocated for changes to late arrival penalties and other clinical policies that would discourage patients without transportation from accessing care.

Concurrently, Shanon Hughes, founder of the Wellness Collective, a membership group of neighbors who support each other through emergencies, was hosting meetings with other community service providers to assess how to prioritize needs of individuals and families suddenly cut off from income, transportation and potential sources of food. Within weeks, Ms. Hughes, who also founded the media accountability group The Narrative Justice, was able to establish a community delivery hotline that took groceries, prescriptions, medical supplies, hygiene products and other necessities to the doorsteps of the underserved.

Around the same time, the maternal and child health care provider Healthy Start was transitioning Demia Horsley from a role in program development and management to one overseeing a newly created COVID doula program, which connected expecting mothers with doulas to provide free virtual education and services before and during deliveries. The program intentionally reached out to Black doulas who were affected by the shutdown so they could serve Black mothers and keep their businesses going.

1Hood Media founder and activist Jasiri X and his team had already been handing out N-95 masks to frontline workers by April, when statistics made it clear who was being impacted most by COVID-19. Jasiri X also joined Dr. Jamil Bey, president of the “think-and-do” tank UrbanKind Institute, and Dr. Cheryl Hall-Russell, president of the diversity consulting firm Black Women, Wise Women, to create “What Black Pittsburgh Needs to Know about COVID-19,” a weekly Facebook Live chat that discussed resources, statistics and general information related to coronavirus in Allegheny County. Since that time, the program has evolved to discuss a range of topics affecting Pittsburgh’s Black community.



To address health needs during the pandemic, particularly in Black communities, Pittsburgh nonprofits like 1Hood Media have been stepping up to help. From left, 1Hood volunteers Shyheim Banks, co-founder Jasiri X, Farooq Al-Said and Brittney Chantele pack up masks for distribution.

While grassroots organizations were hitting the ground running to meet the overwhelming demand for supplies, Ms. Hughes said foundations and nonprofits were behind the scenes working to ensure that the groups had the resources that they needed to serve their clients.

“We have some dope people who work in the foundation community and recognized the gaps and barriers in resources and support, and they were really intentional from the beginning. I didn’t reach out to any of them [for funding], they reached out to me,” she said.

POISE Foundation President and CEO Mark Lewis said the organization made a point to reach out to engage smaller community organizations and churches because they directly serve under-represented communities but don’t traditionally receive foundation dollars. POISE put out a call for \$500,000 for the creation of a critical needs fund, ended up raising a little more than a million dollars—including support from other local foundations such as The Heinz Endowments—and distributed \$900,000 to support different groups’ efforts.

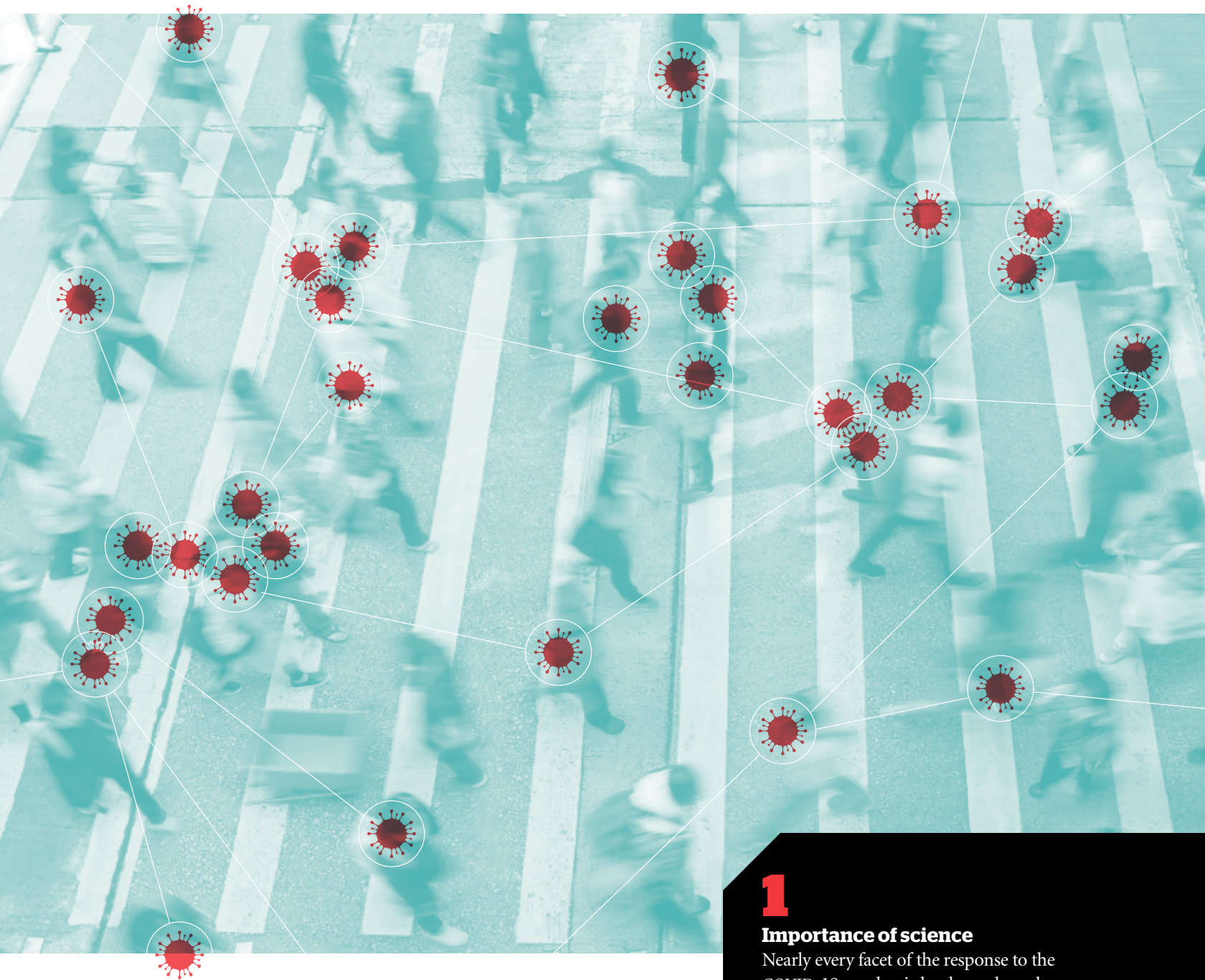
In late February, Mr. Lewis and several local entrepreneurs came together to form the Black COVID-19 Equity Coalition, a collective of epidemiologists, researchers, entrepreneurs and public officials determined to study the long-term impacts that the virus would have on the region’s Black communities.

Since its inception, the coalition has formed task forces, including a data research group tasked with gathering COVID health data by race, a task force that investigated how information about testing was being distributed to the Black community, and a Black Business COVID-19 Working Group in which Ms. Scantling and others work to fill gaps in funding for entrepreneurs of color. The coalition’s ultimate purpose is to move past the emergency to narrow down disparities exposed by coronavirus once and for all.

“We were either disinvested or not invested in for the last 400 years,” Mr. Lewis observed. “How do we get to where there’s a specific plan and investment into the Black community that provides us the resources we need to have the opportunities to become what this country says every citizen and individual has the right to become?”

For Ms. Hughes of the Wellness Collective, the unprecedented level of cooperation among providers was a start.

“2020 has been so foundational that it’s tearing away all of the things that weren’t right, that didn’t exist and weren’t working. The collaboration was beautiful and necessary,” she said. “Being able to see and hear people who typically weren’t seen or heard, to be person-centered and body-centered. I feel like that’s what society should be, and it’s never been that way before.” **h**



1

Importance of science

Nearly every facet of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been shaped by basic science research—or should be. Science helps us understand how the virus is transferred through the air and that transmission can be prevented by hand-washing and wearing masks. Test creation, infection rate calculations, treatment of severe cases in hospitals, and vaccine development and trials are instances of the scientific process at work. The pandemic highlights how scientists constantly learn through testing and experimentation and how through that process, controlling COVID can be realized.

TOP

From Twitter to the ozone layer, the coronavirus pandemic's impact has seeped into every stratum of daily life across the globe.

Here are 10 of the most significant lessons we've learned so far.

By Julia Fraser

2

Importance of health precautions, preventive measures and preparedness — and damage caused when these issues are politicized

Shortly after the first cases of COVID-19 hit New Zealand, the country issued a nationwide lockdown that lasted for seven weeks. By early May, community spread of the virus in New Zealand seemed to have ended — only to break out again in August. A second strict lockdown, lifted in October, has kept the virus at bay so far. In the U.S., health precautions became political. People stood in front of the City-County Building in Pittsburgh protesting stay-at-home orders and mask-wearing requirements. A motorcycle rally in Sturgis, South Dakota, attracting more than 460,000 tourists with few attendees wearing masks, dispersed the virus well beyond the small town.

3

Importance of a unified, coordinated public health message

Only seven people had died of COVID-19 in Taiwan as of the end of November. After quickly shuttering its borders as the virus exploded in China, the country banned the export of surgical masks and set up a contract tracing system, and medical officials held briefings daily. People bought into the centralized and coordinated response, lives were spared and the economy chugged along.

The U.S. responded to the virus in a patchwork of weak, incremental measures — every county and state recommended or rejected different precautions. People traveled across state lines, and more than 285,000 people have died from the virus in the U.S.



Masked and ready for work, Sidney Davis, a Port Authority of Allegheny County bus driver, makes a stop in Downtown Pittsburgh on April 3.

Jared Wickerham

4

Importance of health professionals, service workers, food processing workers and others who became “essential”

The pandemic has shone a spotlight on a group of workers who allowed life to continue for those who stayed at home. Supermarket workers, bus drivers, at-home care workers, nurses, food processing workers and many others showed up to work, often without access to adequate personal protective equipment and exposed to unsafe work conditions. Most have not received additional compensation, according to a June 2020 report on essential workers and hazard pay during the pandemic by the Economic Policy Institute, a Washington D.C.-based nonprofit think tank. Many of these workers are among those hardest hit by rising income inequality and the decline of unionization across the country. Their struggle will continue after the pandemic ends.



5

Importance of voting access (e.g., adequate number of poll workers and mail-in ballot options)

In June, Georgia’s primary election meltdown of malfunctioning voter machines, long lines and voter suppression in predominantly Black districts exposed fissures in the election process. Battleground states like Wisconsin reported a shortage of poll worker recruits, according to a report by the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis. And attempts were made to limit the expansion of mail-in voting in states such as Texas and to make mail-in voting more difficult in other states, including Pennsylvania. Despite these efforts, the November election saw record-breaking turnout. But such voter suppression tactics threaten the nation’s standing as a leader among liberal democracies.

6

Necessity of addressing inequality

The legacy of the pandemic will be exacerbated inequality. The economic shock and soaring unemployment deepened existing socioeconomic and racial disparities in the U.S. and throughout the world. Those at the bottom of the economic tier face increasing financial hardship and educational barriers. Nearly 60 percent of low-income households say their child may face digital obstacles with their school work, according to a survey on K–12 schooling during the coronavirus outbreak conducted in April by the Pew Research Center. There has been a sharp difference in deaths from COVID-19, adding to persistent racial disparities. Black Americans, for example, have died from COVID-19 at more than twice the rate of white Americans, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

7

Importance of good journalism

Spreading well-reported news proved essential as the virus reached across the globe. COVID-19 disinformation flooded the internet, creating confusion about medical facts for people around the world. Compounded by scientists’ evolving understanding of COVID-19 and data about the virus, journalists faced new challenges in reporting accurate information to the public. Newsrooms stepped up despite decades-long cuts to their staffs, reporting the latest research, case counts, economic impact and fact-checking rumors to help stop the spread of the virus and disinformation.

8

Necessity of good teachers and schools to family life and the economy

The pandemic brought the classroom home to students around the world. For parents working from home, it meant juggling work meetings with keeping their child on task. For parents who still went into work, they had to solve the complex puzzle of arranging child care during a pandemic. Working mothers and, in particular, single mothers have been more likely to lose their jobs and more likely to bear the burden of closed schools. The impact on women's roles in the household, future job opportunities and earning potential will outlast the pandemic.



9

Importance of internet access – for work, school, medical appointments, arts and entertainment

Zoom became a verb during the pandemic. The web conferencing app and others like it made working remotely possible for millions of Americans. It allowed friends living across the world to meet for happy hour, patients to consult their doctors and musicians to stage virtual concerts. When schools and universities closed, students continued their studies virtually. But for the nearly one in five Allegheny County residents without an internet subscription—and others across the country like them—logging onto the virtual world is a struggle, leaving them left behind or left out.

10

Possibilities that still exist for healing the planet despite the damage done by human activity

When the world locked down, highways were deserted and the buzz of aircrafts in the sky went missing. Estimates suggest that global greenhouse gas emissions fell roughly 10 to 30 percent during April, according to a report on COVID-19's impact on climate change in the journal *Nature Climate Change*. Experts warn that these drops are only temporary. But a post-pandemic corporate world with more remote work and less travel would be cheaper and use less fuel. Countries could line their economic recovery plans with "green" policies such as investing in low-carbon technology to extend climate gains from the pandemic. **h**



Dr. Debra Bogen reflects on the whirlwind of her first months as the new director of the Allegheny County Health Department and the experiences she draws on to coordinate a local response to the global pandemic.
By Julia Fraser

Through her lens

When Dr. Debra Bogen stepped up to the podium at a March 4 press conference to be introduced as the next director of the Allegheny County Health Department, she took questions from reporters on her past work at UPMC Children's Hospital and on how she would tackle the region's air quality.

COVID-19 was spreading across the world. The first U.S. case had been reported in January. But it hadn't reached Pittsburgh.

When asked about it, she confided she had been reading the latest research "extensively" and "will keep up." She wasn't due to start her new job until May. Two weeks later, the county and region were confirming cases of the novel coronavirus, and she was directing the county's public health response full time.

"The pandemic didn't quite feel real, even though I knew it was coming," Dr. Bogen said. "I thought I had two months to prepare. But then of course, I didn't. I knew that coronavirus would eventually come to Pittsburgh. I was reading about it every day in the news and thinking about it, but I just couldn't quite operationalize it in my head at that point. I thought I had time on my side to prepare."

Dr. Bogen has still kept up.



Dr. Debra Bogen assumed the position of Allegheny County Health Department director in March.

Organizing the local response to a global pandemic and spreading a clear message about coronavirus in an era when misinformation flies across social media were added to her job description. In her first nine months on the job, she has emerged as a recognizable public leader, conducting weekly press briefings, removing her mask, and calmly delivering the latest news about cases, deaths and trends that the latest data reveal, whether good or troubling.

In fact, Dr. Bogen shaped her career around tough public health issues long before she urged Allegheny County residents to social distance and wear masks.

“I was really excited about taking this position for the potential it offered to make progress in fields like maternal and child health, infant mortality, chronic disease, and broader public health,” she said.

“

I bring the lens of a community advocate — particularly as an advocate for issues of maternal and child health. I also bring the lens of a scientist — committed to making policies based on the best evidence available.”

Dr. Debra Bogen, director
Allegheny County Health Department

In her office, Dr. Debra Bogen follows the appropriate pandemic safety protocols that she helped establish as head of the Allegheny County Health Department.



She spent more than two decades as part of the medical community in Pittsburgh, most recently as a doctor and researcher at University of Pittsburgh and UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

Trained as a pediatrician, Dr. Bogen focused much of her work on issues of maternal and child health. She is a founder of the Mid-Atlantic Mothers' Milk Bank, a nonprofit that provides donor breast milk to medically vulnerable infants. Prior to becoming director of the Health Department, she co-directed the early childhood cohort of The Pittsburgh Study, a community-partnered intervention following children from before birth to adulthood over the next two decades.

At the March 4 press conference, she described "a fairly wide lens" through which she saw public health. It foreshadowed the leadership the pandemic would demand: the ability to address the needs of diverse populations and a commitment to using data to guide public health policymaking.

"My lens includes years of experience providing direct clinical care to diverse families—but mostly families impacted by economic and racial disadvantage," Dr. Bogen said. "I bring the lens of a community advocate, particularly as an advocate for issues of maternal and child health. I also bring the lens of a scientist, committed to making policies based on the best evidence available."

The coronavirus required a novel public health approach. The Health Department had to get county residents to act in step as soon as possible, something that isn't in the traditional public health playbook.

"Typically, when we talk about public health, we put the message out in pieces over time," she said. "We can talk about the dangers of smoking over time with research, messaging and public health campaigns. But now, it is an emergency, and we need everyone to get on the same page immediately."

"The entire world has to understand how this virus works, how it spreads, and how it impacts health for us to stay safe. Not everyone watches the 6 o'clock news. People get information in so many different ways."

The Allegheny County Health Department's messaging includes daily alerts via email, text and a variety of social media platforms on the latest COVID-19 case counts, hospitalizations and deaths, as well as updates on the latest orders and guidance from the state and local government. The county's COVID-19 website includes information on how to get tested; updated state and county orders; interactive data visualizations with breakdowns of cases by age, neighborhood and demographics; frequently asked questions; and a page devoted specifically to stopping rumors and misinformation about COVID-19.

The challenges of controlling the public health message are compounded by the challenges of controlling the resilient

virus. The county reported no new cases one day in mid-June, a local milestone during the pandemic. More than 330 new cases were reported in a single day less than a month later, setting a record that was later shattered this fall.

"What has really surprised me is how amazingly stubborn this virus is and how quickly it spreads," Dr. Bogen said.

"We've seen this all over the world and here: You're doing great, and you get the cases down, but you just need a few cases in the community and a couple events, and it sparks, and it rages, and then it takes weeks to quiet it down. The virus itself has been incredibly durable."

And this durable virus at the center of the pandemic is also a fickle one.

It has killed nearly 1.6 million people globally and almost 600 people in Allegheny County. But an estimated 40 percent of people who get COVID-19 have no symptoms, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"The variability in its health impacts is also surprising," she said. "That is a scary virus."

The pandemic has widened the cracks of inequality and exposed public health infrastructure in Allegheny County and the U.S.

"The pandemic has brought to light many needs in our region—most notably the need to make an all-out effort to eliminate long-standing health disparities," Dr. Bogen said. "That will take all sectors of our society to work together and can't be answered in a few lines."

The pandemic has also underscored the region's capacity to collaborate. Dr. Bogen described how from her earliest days in her new position, people from across all sectors of the community have reached out to offer help and support and kind words of encouragement.

The foundations, the business community, the health sector, universities, community groups and organizations, individual citizens, and local and state government have been working together.

"It has given me a great appreciation for what is possible when people work together, as we have seen to address this pandemic," she said.

As the pandemic rages on, Dr. Bogen believes it is important not to lose sight of other public health issues that have dogged the region long before COVID-19.

"Every day I remind myself that there is life after COVID," she said. "We have to continue the Health Department's work in all areas of public health—including improving air quality in our region, especially in the Mon Valley, eliminating childhood lead exposure, eliminating the disheartening disparity in infant mortality rate, improving access to care, food safety and more."

"We have serious work to do." **h**



REVIVING TREE OF LIFE

Leadership for the Tree of Life Congregation, which experienced a mass shooting in 2018 that killed 11 people, memorialized in the photograph to the left, has hired the Pittsburgh architectural firm Rothschild Doyno Collaborative to develop a plan for rebuilding the Tree of Life structure. The congregation also has tapped Lipton Strategies of Los Angeles to guide the capital campaign to cover the costs. Grants from the Endowments, the Hillman Foundation and an anonymous national foundation funded the hiring of the consultants.

Decisions on how the building will be used in the future have yet to be finalized, though the vision includes honoring Tree of Life's history and its role in Pittsburgh's Jewish Community. Chatham University and the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh have expressed interest in using space in the building for educational programming, exhibits and other activities, viewing it as a community asset.



Joshua Franzos

ROUNDHOUSE REDESIGN

During a tour in October of the 133-year-old railroad roundhouse at Hazelwood Green, shown above, developers described how the facility that once serviced trains transporting steel and steelmaking materials from Pittsburgh to the rest of the world is being transformed into a major technology hub known as the OneValley Innovation Center. It will be another component in the development of Hazelwood Green, the 178-acre former steel mill site owned by the Endowments and the Richard King Mellon and Benedum foundations.

OneValley, a Silicon Valley company that helps technology startups grow, has what it calls innovation centers in San Mateo, California, and Boston, and chose Pittsburgh as its next center location. The Hazelwood Green facility will offer educational programs, workshops and other events to support small businesses. It also will have garden areas and an outdoor space that can be used by Hazelwood residents. The architecture firm GBBN is redesigning the building.

CULTURAL COLLABORATION

The Heinz Endowments has received \$5 million from the New York-based Ford Foundation as part the \$156 million national "America's Cultural Treasures" initiative, which seeks to provide assistance to arts and culture organizations that have been historically marginalized, underfunded and under-represented in the U.S.

The Ford Foundation is distributing a total of \$35 million to 10 regional foundations across the country to help groups, such as the New York City-based Ballet Hispanico, below, that have experienced severe financial distress during the pandemic. The Endowments is matching the \$5 million from Ford with its own \$5 million to make grants to diverse arts organizations in the Pittsburgh region, beginning with Black-led arts and culture organizations. The Endowments also plans to seek support for the initiative from other foundations in the Pittsburgh region to extend the work.



Paula Lobo/Ballet Hispanico

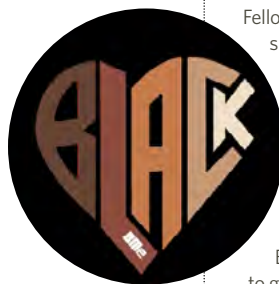
VETERAN FELLOWSHIP

BMe Community, a Black-led network of community leaders that promotes asset-framed investments in local communities, has selected 14 Pittsburgh-area veterans as 2020 Vanguard

Fellows. The fellowship, which is sponsored by the Endowments, is an elite leadership program aimed at shifting the narrative about Black people and pushing for concrete changes in society. The program also is part of BMe's Black L.O.V.E. strategy to go beyond battling injustices to building up Black America based on four emphases:

- **Live** Prioritizing the value of Black lives; heritage; and mental, physical and spiritual health
- **Own** Increasing financial literacy, asset ownership, and creation of generational wealth
- **Vote** Removing barriers to voting, ending corrupt policing, and turning out the Black vote and census participation
- **Excel** Amplifying narratives that make it impossible to ignore Black excellence

The Pittsburgh Vanguard fellows are: Kevin Alton, Monte Banks, Rashad Byrdsong, JaQuay Carter, Darnell Clark, Douglas Connor, LaQuala Hammonds, Kelvin Isom II, Sheena Hancock, Saloam Knox, Gordon Manker, Blair Mickles, Terri Williams and Bart Womack.



ARTISTS' CORNER

Arts and Crafts Home

In September, Contemporary Craft opened its new headquarters in a 13,000-square-foot renovated building, right, that formerly was a trophy manufacturing facility in Pittsburgh's Lawrenceville neighborhood. The arts center's new home was designed for LEED — Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design — Silver equivalency and features 2,500 square feet of gallery space; 1,800 square feet for studios that provide flexible areas for classes, workshops, lectures and artist community gatherings; and 1,100 square feet dedicated to a retail shop featuring works by both established and emerging artists. Contemporary Craft relocated from the city's Strip District, which is undergoing redevelopment, and reopened in its new location after a \$5.5 million capital campaign that received early support from The Heinz Endowments and the Eden Hall Foundation.

Artists Awards

This year's Investing in Professional Artists awards, totaling \$170,000, include grants of \$50,000 each to the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council and to the Office of Public Art for special initiatives in response to the coronavirus. The joint grant-making program of The Pittsburgh Foundation, The Heinz Endowments and the Opportunity Fund also is providing support to seven individual artists for their creative projects.

The Arts Council's \$50,000 grant will support its Emergency Fund for Artists, which is giving relief funding of up to \$500 to individual artists on a rolling basis until the money runs out. At least 90 percent of funds will support



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artists of color, with 70 percent of that amount going directly to Black artists and 50 percent of those designated funds going to applicants who identify as Black women.

The \$50,000 award to the Office of Public Art is for the Artists in the Public Realm in the Time of COVID-19 program, a new initiative supporting a series of artist commissions and professional development sessions for at least 20 artists in the Pittsburgh region who are working to support their own communities. The program will consist of three project cycles focused on groups most adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including Black, Latinx, Asian American and LGBTQIA+ communities.

The seven individual artists receiving grants of \$10,000 each are literary artist Jari Bradley, visual artist Darnell Chambers, glass artist Jaime Guerrero, dancer/choreographer Pearlann Porter, sculptor Lindsey Scherloun, film and video artist Mariah Torres, and sculptor Rachel Mica Weiss.

Outstanding Achievements

In October, the Heinz Family Foundation announced the winners of the 25th annual Heinz Awards, which recognizes the extraordinary contributions of individuals in the areas of greatest importance to the late Sen. John Heinz. Each of the following winners received an unrestricted cash prize of \$250,000:

- Pianist and composer Gabriela Lena Frank, who weaves Latin American influences into her classical music compositions

- Linda Behnken, executive director of the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association, which promotes sustainable fishing practices while supporting the rural fishing communities of Alaska that rely on the ocean for their livelihood and way of life
- Molly Baldwin, founder of Roca, a highly effective intervention program that serves young people dealing with traumatic experiences in their communities, including incarceration, poverty and violence
- Katy Kozhimannil, a professor and health services researcher at the University of Minnesota who examines the rising rate of maternal mortality in rural, low-income communities and among women of color, and the impact of structural racism on individual and community health
- Alfa Demmellash and Alexander Forrester, co-founders of Rising Tide Capital, which provides entrepreneurs from low-income and working-class communities with the business training, mentoring and access to funding needed to successfully launch and manage their own small businesses
- David Autor, Ford Professor of Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and recipient of the 25th Anniversary Special Recognition Award for his research in labor economics that has helped to transform the understanding of how workers and jobs are affected by globalization and changes in technology

MAGAZINE RECOGNITIONS

Last year's special criminal justice issue of *h*, "The Case for Reform," received three awards from the Press Club of Western Pennsylvania as part of its Golden Quill competition. The contest recognizes professional and student excellence in print, broadcast, photography, videography and digital journalism in Western Pennsylvania and nearby counties in Ohio and West Virginia. The publication won the top magazine awards in public affairs, politics and government reporting for "The Face of Force/Policing Relations" by Rob Taylor Jr.; education coverage for "Suspension Bridging" by Bill O'Toole; and enterprise/investigative reporting for the entire "Case for Reform" edition.

The Pittsburgh Black Media Federation (PBMF) awarded two honors to "The Case for Reform" issue as part of its Robert L. Vann Media Contest, which recognizes excellence in journalism coverage of African American and African diaspora communities, individuals and issues. The competition received entries from Pennsylvania, western and central Ohio, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Virginia and West Virginia. The Endowments' wins in the magazine category included several articles from the special criminal justice issue that were grouped together and given the Public Affairs Award. PBMF also honored the entire "Case for Reform" edition with its Enterprise/Investigative Award for magazines.






WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?
BY GRANT KILPATRICK

When I was a child, my father would take me to the beach every summer. We would spend hours building sandcastles, digging for shells, and watching the waves crash against the shore. It was a place of peace and tranquility, a place where I could escape the world and be with my family. But now, when I think of the beach, I think of the people who have been displaced from their homes by rising sea levels. I think of the people who have been forced to leave their homes because the water is too deep. I think of the people who have been left behind as the world changes around them. It is a sad reality that we are all facing, and it is one that we must address if we have any chance of surviving. The question is, which side are you on? Are you on the side of the people who are being displaced? Or are you on the side of the people who are causing the displacement? The answer is simple: we are all on the same side. We are all on the side of the people who are being displaced. We are all on the side of the people who are losing their homes. We are all on the side of the people who are being left behind. It is time for us to stand up and be counted. It is time for us to say, "I am on the side of the people who are being displaced. I am on the side of the people who are losing their homes. I am on the side of the people who are being left behind." Because that is the only side that matters. That is the only side that will win.

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ROAD SHOW. | PAGE 32



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