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Issue 2 2023

CLEARER SKIES INDICATE HEALTHIER LIVES FOR A SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITY—BUT THE WORK IS NOT DONE



ISSUE 2 2023

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CLEARING THE AIR

New York University researchers found connections between the closure of the Shenango Coke Works on Neville Island near Pittsburgh and fewer emergency room visits by residents of surrounding communities. Their study, released this year, supports concerns of citizens and activists who have insisted for decades that industrial air pollution in general, and from the Shenango plant in particular, is harmful to human health.

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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.

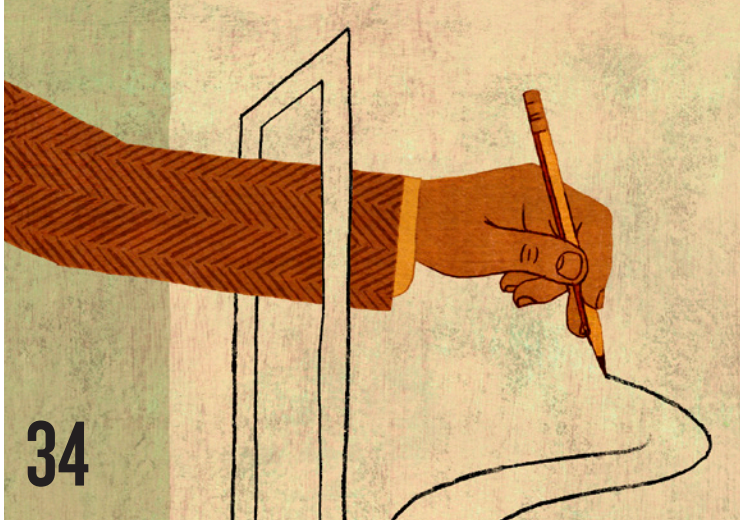
In life, Howard Heinz and Vira I. Heinz set high expectations for their philanthropy. Today, the Endowments is committed to doing the same. Our charge is to be diligent, thoughtful and creative in continually working to set new standards of philanthropic excellence. Recognizing that none of our work 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.

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About the cover Even with the Beaver Valley Power Station's smoke in the background, the air over the tip of Neville Island where the Shenango Coke Works once stood is markedly clearer than it was before the plant closed in 2016. A study released this year found links between the closure and fewer emergency room visits by residents of surrounding communities. Photo by Dave DiCello







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Brian Cohen

Residents of a community a few miles west of Pittsburgh breathed a collective sigh of relief when the Shenango Coke Works closed in 2016. The plant was located on Neville Island, a 5-mile strip of land in the Ohio River that also holds a small residential community. For more than 50 years, the plant, strategically placed on the rail line, turned coal into coke, an industrial fuel used for steel making. The process involves heating the coal in large ovens and emits what the National Cancer Institute calls "a mixture of dust, vapors, and gases that typically include carcinogens such as cadmium and arsenic."

Above: About four months before the Shenango Coke Works closed in January 2016, it was photographed as part of the project "In the Air." The book and traveling exhibit, funded in part by The Heinz Endowments, explored some of the issues that contributed to poor air quality in Western Pennsylvania.

CLEARING THE AIR

A STUDY SHOWING THAT THE HEALTH OF NEIGHBORS OF THE SHENANGO COKE WORKS NEAR PITTSBURGH IMPROVED AFTER THE PLANT CLOSED HAS LEFT RESIDENTS AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS FEELING ENCOURAGED AND VINDICATED. BY NICK KEPPLER

Over the decades, people living on the island and in nearby towns complained of a noxious "rotten egg" smell.

"You couldn't sleep with the windows open at night," said Karen Grzywinski, who has lived a few miles from the coke works since 1986.

"The odor was so bad it would wake you up. It was just horrendous," she said, adding that her children carried a stench when they came in after playing outside.

Ms. Grzywinski developed asthma. She is one of many to blame health problems on the plant.

But since the Shenango Coke Works closure, not only has the air cleared on Neville Island and in surrounding communities such as Avalon, Bellevue and Ben Avon, but also a study, released in the summer, linked the plant's closing to improved health outcomes in the area. New York University air pollution researcher George D. Thurston and doctoral candidate Wuyue Yu examined heart-related emergency room visits by people living in ZIP codes near the plant, before and after the closure.

The researchers found an immediate 42 percent decrease. Three years later, residents were making 61 percent fewer emergency room visits for heart problems than in the years when the plant was active. In that same time, inpatient cardiovascular hospitalizations dropped by 13 percent among residents.

This coincided with a profound reduction in air pollution. The study found that three years after the plant's closure, average daily sulfur dioxide levels dropped by 90 percent at the air monitor closest to the plant and by 50 percent at a monitor 6 miles away, within the city. The research was published this summer in the journal Environmental Research: Health and funded by The Heinz Endowments.

"As soon as they shut down the plant, [the improvement] was almost immediate. You didn't have the smells," said Thaddeus Popovich, co-founder of the activist group Allegheny County Clean Air Now, or ACCAN.

A staggering amount of research has linked air pollution to an increased risk of heart disease. A recent study from Kaiser Permanente, using data from 3.7 million American adults, found that living in areas with high levels of fine particulate matter increased one's risk of heart attack by 10 percent and risk of death from a heart attack by 16 percent. Organizations such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the American Red Cross and the British Heart Foundation have reported that these pollutants get absorbed into the bloodstream and damage and burden the circulatory system.

Program staff at the Endowments saw a unique opportunity to add to that knowledge base by examining the impact of the Shenango Coke Works closure.

"It's not common for such a large facility like this to just stop, and so this was seen as a research opportunity," said Philip R.S. Johnson, senior program director for Environment & Health at the Endowments.

The plant closing created what Dr. Thurston dubbed "a natural experiment." The population and demographics of the area stayed roughly the same, and there were no other profound changes that would account for a reduction in emergency room usage, he said.

"This kind of abrupt change, [where] everything else is staying the same and just this one thing is changing, gives you the opportunity to really evaluate it," he said.

Ray Winter, 73, a retired high school music teacher, has lived in the shadow of the Shenango Coke Works his entire life, most of it in Ben Avon.

"If you had your windows open at night, when it was warm, you would get like this grainy silt all over your window sills," he recalled, "and when you'd go out to use your patio furniture, you would have to clean it from all this filth that was coming around."

Mr. Winter developed allergies. He recalls waking up with a sore throat, which he attributes to the pollution. It hampered his ability to sing in church choirs, a major blow for the retired teacher who majored in voice in college, taught chorus classes, directed choirs and performed solos.

But after the plant closure, Mr. Winter noticed a significant improvement in his allergies.

"I have been feeling so much better since they have shut down," he said. "It's incredible."

A former business development specialist, Mr. Popovich said that when he moved to Ben Avon in 2004, neighbors had a very 2004 nickname for the Shenango Coke Works: Mordor.

In "The Lord of the Rings" novels and films, Mordor is the dark, smoky region of the fantasy world of Middle Earth ruled over by the villain, Sauron, who was represented by a fiery eye stationed atop a tower. To some near the Shenango Coke Works, the image from the blockbuster movie series reminded them of the flame that was continually ablaze on the plant's smokestack.

"It was like the Eye of Sauron," said Tanya Bielski-Braham, who lived with her husband in Bellevue, another Ohio River town, from 2009 to 2017. "It was just this red flame flickering when you drove down the highway."

Current and former residents said it felt like the area was in the clutches of some malevolent influence.

After almost a decade living in the nearby township of Ben Avon, Mr. Popovich underwent quintuple bypass surgery in 2012. He is certain his heart disease was worsened by the air.

"A bad air diet is equal to a bad food diet," he said. The plant's emission output "roughs up your endothelial layer arteries on your heart, and it's a great landing spot for calcium, lipids and other junk in your bloodstream."

On the advice of his cardiologist, Mr. Popovich moved farther north in the region.

Nick Keppler is a Washington, D.C.–based freelance writer. This is his first story for h.



Mark Dixon

LIVING WITH SHENANGO

Members of Allegheny County Clean Air Now, including co-founder Thaddeus Popovich, second row left foreground, stand next to the Ohio River with the Shenango Coke Works behind them as part of their participation in the 2015 "Walk for Paris" event. Developed by 350 Pittsburgh, a local group dedicated to addressing climate issues, "Walk for Paris" was intended to show a symbolic connection between the communities affected by air pollution from the Shenango plant, climate change and the U.N. climate treaty convention in Paris in December 2015.

"A BAD AIR DIET IS EQUAL TO A BAD FOOD DIET. THE PLANT'S EMISSION OUTPUT ROUGHS UP YOUR ENDOTHELIAL LAYER ARTERIES ON YOUR HEART, AND IT'S A GREAT LANDING SPOT FOR CALCIUM, LIPIDS AND OTHER JUNK IN YOUR BLOODSTREAM.

Thaddeus Popovich, co-founder of the activist group Allegheny County Clean Air Now

"IF YOU HAD YOUR WINDOWS OPEN AT NIGHT, WHEN IT WAS WARM, YOU WOULD GET LIKE THIS GRAINY SILT ALL OVER YOUR WINDOW SILLS. AND WHEN YOU'D GO OUT TO USE YOUR PATIO FURNITURE, YOU WOULD HAVE TO CLEAN IT FROM ALL THIS FILTH THAT WAS COMING AROUND.

Ray Winter, retired high school music teacher

"BEING TRANSPLANTS FROM BROOKLYN, WE WERE USED TO HANGING OUT IN THE PARK ALL WEEKEND BUT WE HAD TO CURTAIL OUR OUTSIDE ACTIVITY."

Tanya Bielski-Braham, former Bellevue resident



Phil Pavely/Tribune-Review





Nate Smallwood/Tribune-Review

"It made such a difference," he said, "getting away from all that clutter."

Ms. Bielski-Braham, who previously lived in Brooklyn, New York, has asthma, but it never bothered her as frequently as it did while she and her husband lived in Bellevue. "If I went from the basement to the top of the house, I would need my inhaler," she said. In other cities, she used it once or twice a month. In Bellevue, she puffed on it once or twice a day.

"Being transplants from Brooklyn, we were used to hanging out in the park all weekend, but we had to curtail our outside activity," she said. Bicycling the 4 to 5 miles to Pittsburgh's North Side left her huffing. In 2017, she and her husband moved out of the shadow of the coke works to the city's East End.

While the scaling down of industrial activity improved air quality in and around Pittsburgh in the 1970s and 1980s — and the city kept getting accolades for "livability" — residents near the Shenango Coke Works felt singled out, like they were living in the region's past.

When Michigan-based DTE Energy purchased the plant in 2008, neighborhood groups initially had a cordial relationship with the company, said Ms. Grzywinski, a member of ACCAN. She recalls regular meetings in a church basement with representatives from the company and personnel from the Allegheny County Health Department. DTE made promises to upgrade the facility, and it did spend $22 million doing so.

But after a few years, it seemed like the pollution had not improved, and the neighbors felt like props, Ms. Grzywinski said.

"It just got to the point where nothing good was coming from the meetings," she said. A representative from DTE asked them for help creating a community newsletter, she remembers, which seemed like a tone-deaf request, as if they were united in humdrum community boosting.

"They were just so adamant they were doing nothing wrong," she added.

In response to h magazine's efforts to contact DTE officials by phone and email about the NYU study and residents' concern over the air quality, a spokesperson emailed a reply that did not address the study but stated that, during the process of closing the plant, "we also had multiple productive discussions with members of the community."

Two organizations, the Group Against Smog and Pollution, founded in 1969, and ACCAN, established in 2014, led a wave of activism, which became more aggressive. Some members of ACCAN bought stock in DTE and showed up at shareholder meetings to question the company.

Carnegie Mellon University's Community Robotics, Education and Technology Empowerment Lab provided residents with air monitors that they used to collect data to bolster their argument. The groups complained that the health department wasn't doing enough to address the problem and urged the agency's officials to impose penalties on DTE.

The plant's history of receiving fines and paying settlements for violating clean-air laws included paying out penalty costs of $1.75 million in 2012 in a settlement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the Allegheny County Health Department, and a $600,000 fine in an agreement between the company and the health department in 2014.

Although it faced mounting pressure from community activists, DTE cited diminishing demand for coke as its reason for ceasing operations in January 2016.

Because it took some pushing for the residents to be taken seriously, the data from



2015: Shenango Coke Works on Neville Island near Pittsburgh emitting plumes of steam shortly before it was shut down at the beginning of 2016.
2016: The Shenango plant after its closure in January.
2018: Demolition of the Shenango Coke Works on May 8.

END OF AN ERA AND BEGINNING OF HEALTHIER AIR

42

According to a New York University study released this year, emergency room visits by people living near the Shenango plant dropped 42 percent immediately after its closure.

61

NYU researchers found that three years after the Shenango Coke Works closed, residents made 61 percent fewer emergency room visits for heart problems than in the years when the plant was active.

90

The NYU study also found that average daily sulfur dioxide levels dropped by 90 percent at the air monitor closest to the Shenango plant three years after it closed.

the NYU study has helped validate their long-standing concerns, they said.

Ms. Grzywinski said that her own breathing and comfort level have improved after the closure.

"It was noticeable that the typical smell that everybody could identify in the area was gone," she said. "It was just immediately fresher and cleaner. It was just totally different."

After Gretchen Anderson was hired as a conservator at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh in 2009, she moved from Minneapolis to an apartment in Bellevue while her husband stayed another two years in Minneapolis for his work. Within six months, despite having no history of breathing problems, she developed asthma, she said.

Like many in the area, Ms. Anderson, 68, described how the smell from the Shenango Coke Works used to filter into the home and wake her up in the night. The couple purchased a house in Avalon in 2011, but she still found herself using an inhaler daily. Since the plant's closure, she uses it sporadically, and the asthma symptoms have improved.

"It's gotten significantly better," she said. "I don't have to take medication at all regularly now. I only take it on really bad days."

Ms. Anderson thinks she and her husband have experienced better health, through decreased stress and improved sleep.

The NYU study elaborated on some research that the health department published in May 2018, showing a 38 percent decrease in emergency room visits for pulmonary diseases and a 26.5 percent decrease for heart problems after the closure, findings that county health officials dismissed as inconclusive at the time.

Mr. Popovich said it validated the decision he made to move to a different community. But he acknowledges that he has mobility advantages that others don't. He is 77, has no family rooted in town and is comfortably

retired from a corporate job. His time as an urban environmental activist has made him see the entirety of the social injustice around pollution and health.

"Some can't afford to move and they don't have good health care, and so on and so forth," he said. "It's a spiral downhill very quickly."

Lina Mu, director of the Office of Global Health Initiatives at the University at Buffalo in New York, said that, ideally, a study on the impact of a pollution source would use data from individuals and take into account their underlying health factors, instead of looking at aggregate data from something like hospital admissions. However, studies like the one by NYU researchers make for an important first step, she said.

"It's not the golden-standard type of design that can help us to make a final conclusion of, 'OK, here's the health benefits.' But certainly those types of design and studies are very, very helpful — for people, for a researcher and also the public — to have some preliminary evidence to understand a potential health benefit," said Dr. Mu, who was not involved in the NYU study.

Such studies often act as evidence to obtain funding for additional studies to deepen researchers' understanding, she said.

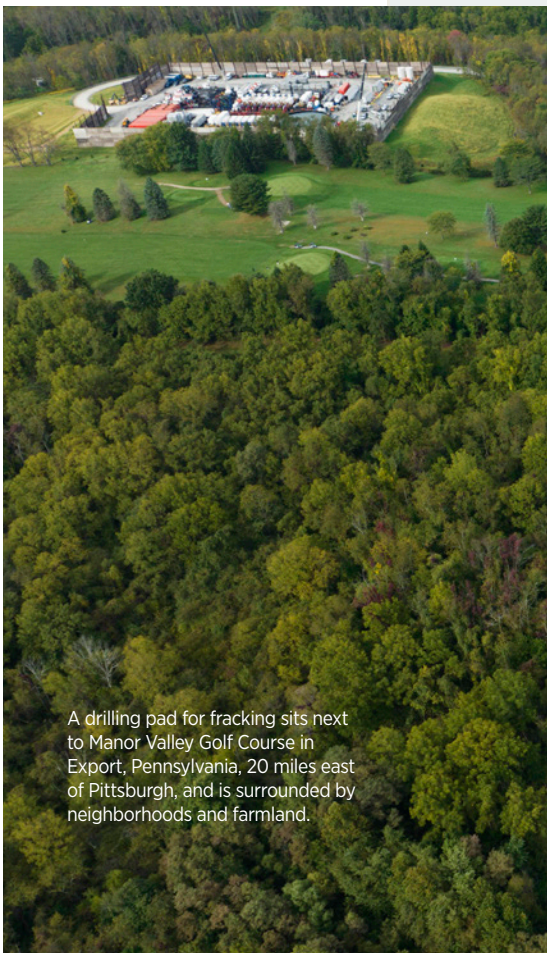
Allegheny County has several plants left over from its industrial era still in operation, including another coke plant, U. S. Steel's Clairton Coke Works. Dr. Thurston hopes the study can help arm groups trying to hold the companies accountable for the emissions that their plants release into the air. He also hopes it demonstrates the impact of breathing in the emissions, day after day, by using a metric people unfamiliar with environmental science terminology and measurements can understand.

"They can relate to changes in hospital admissions and things like that better than micrograms," he said.

And the implications are not just for coke plants. Their stew of emissions is worse than most fossil fuel burnings, but they share the same ingredients as other industrial sources, Dr. Thurston said.

"Coal is the worst, but they're all from the same family," he said. "They all have these characteristics that are highly toxic, whether it's oil or coal or gas or natural gas or gasoline or diesel. They all have these characteristics and share this toxicity, and that's why I think, if we do move forward and transition off fossil fuels, we're going to see a massive improvement in health in the United States, in the world. It really is almost like an opioid that we're addicted to." h

> "IT'S GOTTEN SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER. I DON'T HAVE TO TAKE MEDICATION AT ALL REGULARLY NOW. I ONLY TAKE IT ON REALLY BAD DAYS."
>
> **Gretchen Anderson,** Avalon resident



A drilling pad for fracking sits next to Manor Valley Golf Course in Export, Pennsylvania, 20 miles east of Pittsburgh, and is surrounded by neighborhoods and farmland.

DANGEROUSLY CLOSE

Another environmental health study that focused on the Pittsburgh region and received media attention this year showed connections between fracking and health concerns. By Nick Keppler

A series of studies by University of Pittsburgh researchers released this year found links between negative health outcomes and hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, in eight southwestern Pennsylvania counties with the greatest number of shale gas wells.

The PA Health and Environment studies, funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, looked at the relationship between proximity to fracking sites in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Washington and Westmoreland counties and the rates of childhood cancer, poor birth outcomes, and asthma in children and adults. The three studies, which were conducted over three years, also were included in the ninth edition of a compendium, or collection, of more than 120 studies on the industry's health impacts.

Among the findings were that children who lived 1 mile from a fracking well were five to seven times more likely to develop lymphoma, a cancer of the immune system, than those who lived at least 5 miles from one.

The researchers also determined that people of all ages with asthma living near wells had four to five times the risk of an attack while the wells were active, when compared with those with asthma who did not live near gas wells.

And another study showed that mothers living near fracking wells while pregnant gave birth to smaller babies.

Less clear were the results connected to Ewing sarcoma, a very rare kind of childhood bone and tissue cancer that occurs in 2.93 children per million, according to the National Organization for Rare Disorders. That's about 200 to 250 new cases in the U.S. each year.



Ted Auch, FracTracker Alliance, 2022

The disease had been of particular concern for parents and health officials in Washington County, southwest of Pittsburgh, who in 2019 noted that the county had seen about half a dozen cases of Ewing sarcoma in children since 2005. The population of Washington County is about 209,000, and about 45,000 of the residents are under the age of 18, so six cases was a frightening number.

And the count nearly quadrupled when young adults and cases from neighboring Westmoreland County were added, which included several who died of the disease.

According to the Pitt research results, the prevalence of Ewing sarcoma — or any childhood bone cancer — was not statistically significant in the eight Pennsylvania counties with the most fracking. Children who lived close to gas wells were also no more likely to develop leukemia or brain cancer.

Looking at Pitt studies as a whole, there are possible inquiries for further research, especially when considered in conjunction with other investigations, said James P. Fabisiak, director of the Center for Healthy Environments and Communities at the University of Pittsburgh and co-author of the studies. He noted, for example, that a Yale University study from 2022 found that children who lived near fracking wells were two to three times more likely to contract one type of leukemia.

"Lymphoma and leukemia do share some basis in that they are both cancers of the white blood cells," he said.

The studies from Pitt do not show cause and effect, he added, and further research may reveal some caveat that would undermine the natural takeaway that fracking is causing the cancer development or the asthma attacks.

Additional research would be valuable, agreed Sandra Steingraber, the lead author of the ninth edition of "Compendium of Scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking and Associated Gas and Oil Infrastructure."

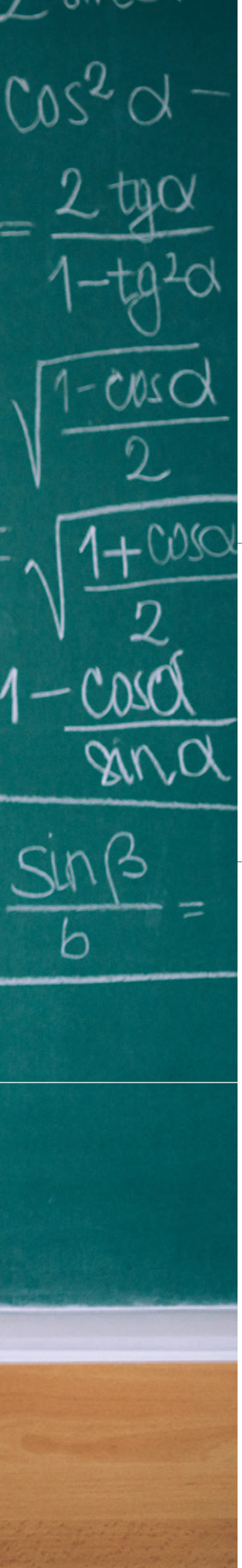
Dr. Steingraber is a senior scientist at the Science and Environmental Health Network and co-founder of Concerned Health Professionals of New York, which jointly published the 637-page document with Physicians for Social Responsibility.

She maintained that many aspects of the Pitt findings were alarming and corroborated results of studies on fracking and human health in other parts of the country, particularly those related to asthma, low birth weights and cancers such as lymphoma.

As for the Ewing sarcoma findings, because that type of cancer is so rare, a very large sample size is needed to see a pattern, Dr. Steingraber said. The sample size in the Pitt study might have been too small to reveal it. So, the study's authors are right to recommend additional studies, which could have larger sample sizes, she said.

"To put a finer point on this, we have strong evidence that fracking is sickening kids in southwestern Pennsylvania with potentially fatal illnesses. That's wrong," Dr. Steingraber said. "The ethics of public health require that we protect kids while the wheels of scientific proof-making grind slowly on. Any remaining scientific uncertainty should not be used to delay action. Just stop drilling. And then do the research." **h**


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ABSENTEE LIST

Teacher shortages are plaguing school districts across the country and increasing alarm about the future of education in the U.S. But efforts are underway in Pennsylvania and elsewhere to rebuild the pipeline for recruiting and training teachers and boost their numbers in the classroom.

By B. Denise Hawkins

As millions of elementary and high school students across the country donned new backpacks, gathered their notebooks and prepared to head back to the classroom this fall, administrators in rural, suburban and urban public school districts scrambled again this year to make sure that they would have a teacher in their classrooms.

Education scholars have said that for school leaders, it's been a desperate search for those who matter most in the classroom when it comes to student learning — teachers, who are in short supply nationwide — and the recruiting measures have had to be creative and often costly.

B. Denise Hawkins is a Washington, D.C.–based freelance writer and editor. This is her first story for h.



Pittsburgh Public Schools

On August 28, the first day of school, Pittsburgh Public Schools Superintendent Wayne Walters visited first-grade students at Colfax Elementary School where Emily McBeth, immediate left, is a student teacher. Joining him was Ebony Pugh, center, the school district's director of public relations and media content.

"Come work in paradise," beckoned one social media advertisement to prospective educators in Florida. "Picture yourself enjoying the best sunsets in the world every night and using your weekends to finally get some much-needed rest and relaxation."

That was the enticing, sundrenched appeal Florida's Monroe County School District featured on its website just days before classes were set to begin in August. School leaders hoped that images of turquoise blue waters, white sandy beaches, and teacher starting salaries that ranged between $61,500 and $97,000 in the pricey Florida Keys, would be enough to fill its 30 vacancies from elementary to high school.

Just in time for the new fall term, school leaders in Stockton, California, raced to prepare the almost 100 new educators it hired. They said that "hiring bonuses of $7,000 to $10,000" made the difference in filling vacancies.

Then there is Pennsylvania's Upper Darby School District, which doesn't have the same dollars as Florida and California districts to compete for qualified teachers — or the promise of sandy beaches — as it searches for certified teachers to start the new school year. In Pennsylvania, where the number of certified educators is at "crisis" levels, according to state officials, Upper Darby Superintendent Dan McGarry has faced stiff competition from other districts for teachers, he told Philadelphia's WHYY FM in August.

"We've had somebody say they're gonna take it, and then literally the next day someone offers them $4,000 or $5,000 more and we can't match it," he said in the interview. "We thought we had the job filled and it gets taken away from us."

Teacher shortages are roiling school districts nationwide, according to the U.S. Department of Education, with the greatest demand for teachers in a few subjects, including special education (48 states), science (46 states) and math (44 states). A 2022 Annenberg-Brown University study suggests that there were nearly 200,000 vacant positions for the nation's education core — classroom teachers.

Although an alarm is sounding across Pennsylvania and the rest of the nation, it has done so before.

"The teacher workforce shortage is not new," said Kathleen Keating, a Learning program officer at The Heinz Endowments, adding that there had been little national recognition that the problem has continued.

What's different now, though, Ms. Keating noted, is that "the COVID-19 pandemic and teacher burnout have exacerbated the growing crisis."

Tim Dohrer, an education professor at Northern Illinois University College of Education, agrees.

It's not a question of whether there is a shortage, as some in the education community have suggested, Dr. Dohrer noted, but what concerns him is that "it has been erupting for decades with little change."

The reasons for the shortage, he acknowledged, "are complicated," but for nearly two decades, there were warning signs: The number of new college graduates earning education degrees has been declining and the number of new certified teachers decreasing. Crushing workloads, an increasingly hostile and violent school environment, job dissatisfaction, low wages, and poor benefits have played huge roles.

"When we begin to unpack these things, we can start to understand why we are having a teacher shortage," Dr. Dohrer said.

A year ago, when the National Education Association, the nation's largest union representing nearly three million educators, released its latest member survey, a staggering

55 percent said they were "thinking about leaving the profession earlier than they had planned."

Fears of a mass exodus of burned-out schoolteachers captured media headlines after the height of the pandemic in 2020–21. In most states, including Pennsylvania, there were only slight bumps in the rate of teachers leaving. But there was still a crisis brewing.

The demand for new teachers grew, but for nearly a decade in Pennsylvania — between 2012–13 and 2021–22 — there was a 73 percent decline in the number of teachers entering the profession. Also, fewer people were pursuing and earning teaching certificates, a recent analysis by the Penn State Center for Education Evaluation & Policy Analysis showed.

During the 2021–22 school year, the state issued a record-low number of teacher certificates — 4,220 for in-state graduates of teacher preparation programs, according to Ed Fuller, a Pennsylvania State University associate professor who released research on the teacher workforce in April. It marked a steep decrease from the more than 16,000 teaching certificates awarded in 2012–13.

Dr. Fuller, who directs the university's Center for Education Evaluation & Policy Analysis, said the state's teacher attrition rate increased from 6.2 percent in 2020–21 to 7.7 percent in 2022–23, the highest on record for Pennsylvania. That shift is the latest in a series of troubling data points about teacher attrition and teacher shortages in Pennsylvania. According to the Penn State center, that translates to 9,587 teachers in the state who left the profession.

"This was the largest number of teachers leaving on record," Dr. Fuller said. "I didn't expect the rate to go up as much as it did."

While teachers in Pennsylvania and across the nation are leaving the profession, less evident is that the severity of the teacher shortage is not equal in school districts across the country, Dr. Fuller pointed out. He believes it's having the most acute impact on "teachers of color, schools that serve high proportions of students living in poverty and students in the poorest school districts."

For Ms. Keating, that reality is troubling. "Students most in need and already disadvantaged schools are paying the price when they can't hire a qualified teacher," she said.

And the decline has been particularly acute for Black male teachers. In 2022, almost 18 percent of Black men who had been teachers in Pennsylvania the year before were no longer in the classroom. That means that nearly one of every five Black male teachers vanished from the state's teaching workforce. According to Dr. Fuller's findings, Black women teachers saw a 16.4 percent attrition rate that same year, with Hispanic and multicultural men leaving in 2022 at rates greater than 15 percent.

As a longtime advocate for racially diverse and quality teachers for students in Pennsylvania schools, Laura Boyce, executive director of Teach Plus Pennsylvania, works daily with hundreds of educators from across the state. In recent years, Teach Plus Pennsylvania, which is supported by the Endowments, has focused its efforts on "saving the educator pipeline."

Her view of the education landscape: "We are in the midst of the worst teacher shortage crisis the Commonwealth has ever seen.

"All signs point toward it only getting worse," added Ms. Boyce, a former high school teacher and a former elementary and middle school principal in Philadelphia.

Because Pennsylvania school districts lost nearly 10,000 teachers between 2021 and 2023, many were forced to rely on long-term substitute teachers and emergency-certified teachers with little to no teaching qualifications or experience. Pennsylvania does not collect detailed data on teacher supply and demand, but "PA Needs Teachers," a 2023 report supported by the Endowments and issued by Teach Plus and the National Center on Education & the Economy, warned of a "dire and worsening teacher shortage crisis" and the "dramatic and unprecedented challenges" the state faces in recruiting and retaining highly qualified and diverse teachers.

Erica McDill, a veteran educator, said she "could see it [the teacher shortage] coming." Her barometer: the dwindling number of applicants she helped review over the past six years for the education school at her alma mater, Penn-West California in California, Pennsylvania,

> "We are in the midst of the worst teacher shortage crisis the Commonwealth has ever seen. All signs point toward it only getting worse."
>
> **Laura Boyce**
> executive director, Teach Plus Pennsylvania

DOING THE MATH

According to a National Education Association survey of its three million members a year ago, 55 percent said they were considering leaving the education profession earlier than planned.

55%

9,587

Research by Penn State University's Center for Education Evaluation & Policy Analysis found that the state's teacher attrition rate increased from 6.2 percent in the 2020–21 school year to 7.7 percent in 2022–23, representing a loss of 9,587 teachers and the highest attrition rate on record for Pennsylvania.

Penn State researchers also determined that for the 2021–22 school year, Pennsylvania issued 4,220 teacher certificates for in-state graduates of teacher preparation programs—a record-low number of certificates for the state and a steep decrease from the more than 16,000 teaching certificates awarded in 2012–13.

4,220

and the shrinking pool of student teachers she could tap to support her in the classroom. She said that while teaching in Philadelphia public schools for a decade, she always worked with student teachers. Circumstances changed in 2017 when the Pittsburgh native returned home to teach in Pittsburgh Public Schools.

With so few college students choosing to enter the profession, "I've only had one student teacher," said the middle school geography and American history teacher at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy 6–12. "The pipeline is shrinking, and I've been noticing a number of teacher retirements."

Ms. McDill also must teach larger classes at Westinghouse, and her workload has mounted without enough teachers in the front of the classroom.

"It's been difficult, and I've felt like leaving," she acknowledged. "I tell myself, 'I've put in a good 30 years in education. I can go home now.' " But like a refrain, she returns each day to Westinghouse, eager "to make a positive difference" in the lives of her students. Ms. McDill extends the same kind of determination to new and longtime teachers she mentors and offers wisdom-packed pep talks when they are struggling and talk about leaving the classroom and the profession behind.

After nearly 11 months into the year, Robert E. Frioni, the principal of Pittsburgh's South Hills Middle School, has something to celebrate. He finally filled two of three vacancies for paraprofessional positions in special education. "Today was a good day," Dr. Frioni said of the positions that have been open since the summer. But at this point in the school year, he knows the prospect of finding more full-time teachers, even substitutes, is bleak.

"We just don't have anybody on the bench, not even available substitute teachers," said Dr. Frioni of the reality that consumes the conversations he has with other education administrators across the district. "Teachers are just not available to staff classrooms and fill in for those on long-term leave."

What will it take to bring new teachers into the profession and to retain quality classroom teachers?

"Paying educators a fair and living wage, to start," Dr. Frioni responded when asked. Addressing the problem of teacher attrition will require a state response, he added.

But "throwing money alone at the problem isn't the answer," said the former Pittsburgh schools' social studies and English teacher. "It will take a paradigm shift in how teachers and education as a profession are perceived by the

IT DOESN'T ADD UP

According to the nonprofit education research organization Research for Action, students of color in K-12 make up nearly 36 percent of the student population in Pennsylvania public schools while teachers of color represent only about 6 percent of the teaching workforce.

36% | **6%**

Other research by Penn State University's Center for Education Evaluation & Policy Analysis found that in 2022 almost 18 percent of the Black men who had been teachers in Pennsylvania the year before were no longer in the classroom.

18%

public. Years ago, a general disrespect for our profession and having seasoned teachers leaving the classroom was unheard of."

Elevating the visibility and voice of teachers has been part of Teach Plus Pennsylvania's mission. The organization works to empower and train classroom teachers, some who considered leaving, and to encourage them to instead lead and advocate for key education policy and practice issues that have an impact on student success, such as school funding and teacher preparation.

> "We just don't have anybody on the bench, not even available substitute teachers. Teachers are just not available to staff classrooms and fill in for those on long-term leave."
>
> **Robert E. Frioni,** principal, South Hills Middle School, Pittsburgh

Today's teacher shortages are crippling the public education system at a time when Pennsylvania students need qualified and diverse teachers the most, Ms. Boyce asserted.

When Teach Plus Pennsylvania's policy and leadership work began, it focused its efforts on eastern Pennsylvania. But it wasn't long before "The Heinz Endowments saw the potential for our work to have a statewide focus and helped us launch our first cohort of Pennsylvania Teaching Policy Fellows [in 2021]," Ms. Boyce said.

Teach Plus Pennsylvania will have a special two-year focus on attracting and retaining teachers of color in Philadelphia, where the teacher attrition is the highest in Pennsylvania, Ms. Boyce said. That city's turnover rate is the highest among teachers of color, who are 34 percent of the educator workforce while 86 percent of the student population are youth of color.

According to Research for Action, teachers of color in Pennsylvania public schools comprise 6 percent of the teaching workforce, and students of color in K–12 make up 36 percent of the student population. During the 2020–21 school year, nearly half of all public schools in the state employed no teachers of color, said Donna-Marie Cole-Malott, co-director of Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium.

Troubling still is that "some students can graduate high school without ever having been taught by a teacher of color," added Dr. Cole-Malott, who is also an education professor at East Stroudsburg University in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania.

Leon Smith, who attended Philadelphia public schools growing up, came close to being one of those students.

"Throughout my education, I never had a Black teacher until 11th grade when Mr. Haynes, a student teacher, came to our school," recalled Mr. Smith who is also Black. In part, because of Mr. Haynes, Mr. Smith today teaches social studies at the mostly white, suburban Haverford High School and is a 2022–23 Teach Plus Pennsylvania Policy Fellow focused on opportunities to put more Black males and teachers of color at the front of the classroom.

The Learning Policy Institute's report, "Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color," is among the growing number of studies that reveal how a diverse teacher workforce is needed to bridge that gap and improve outcomes for all students. For Black and other students of color, though, those benefits can be transformative.

For example, students of color who have teachers who look like them also have higher test scores, higher rates of attendance and lower drop-out rates, these studies show. And when Black students are taught by Black teachers by third grade, they are less likely to be expelled or suspended, and more likely to graduate high school and enroll in college.

With those results in mind, a new summer academy at the University of Pittsburgh called Genius, Joy, and Love, is focused on fueling the teacher pipeline by making teaching careers more attractive and accessible, especially to Black and other students of color who attend Pittsburgh Public Schools. The program's name also represents aspects of teaching that founder Valerie Kinloch, former dean of Pitt's School of Education and currently president of Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina, said she hoped the young "Genius Scholars" will embrace and someday carry into the classroom.

For its part, Teach Plus Pennsylvania believes centering the voices and perspectives of teachers, particularly teachers of color, is critical to understanding and improving their experiences so that more of them will enter and stay in the education system, Ms. Boyce said.

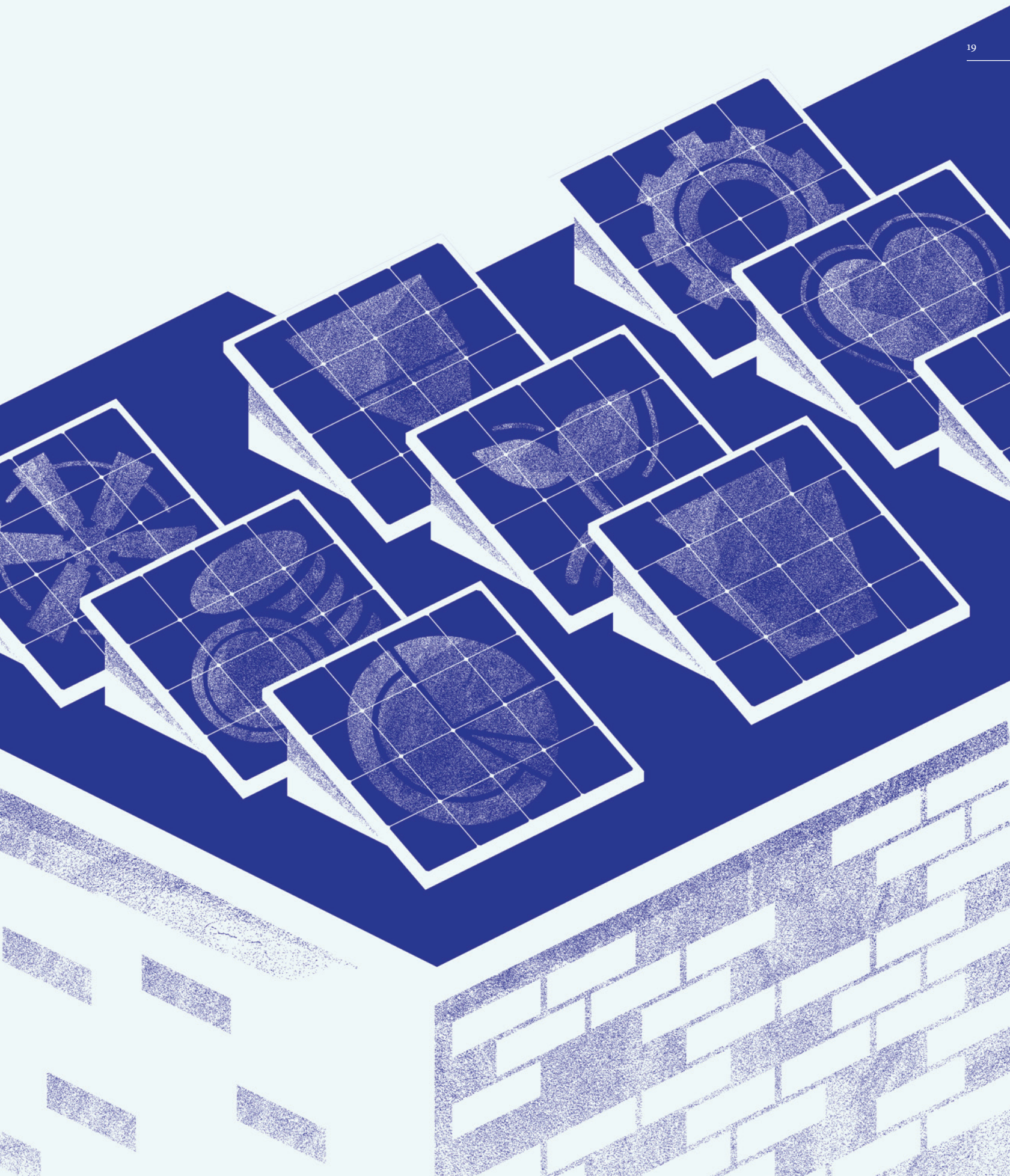
This work, she added, is a part of what it means to address Pennsylvania's teacher shortage crisis. "It will require broad public support, political will, investment of public resources and a willingness to disrupt 'the way things have always been done.' " h

UNLOCKING GROWTH POTENTIAL

The federal Inflation Reduction Act contains billions in investments and tax breaks to support a range of projects in areas such as energy savings and job creation. Foundations and nonprofits in southwestern Pennsylvania are preparing to do their part to ensure the region doesn't miss out on the opportunities. By Joyce Gannon



Joyce Gannon is a Pittsburgh-based freelance writer. Her last story for h was in Issue 1, 2023, and explored the ways the Endowments and other local foundations have been looking for ways to decrease racial health disparities among mothers and their children.



When the historic Centre Avenue YMCA in Pittsburgh's Hill District neighborhood reopened in 2021 after an extensive renovation project, the facility featured a host of energy-efficient updates, including insulation, new windows, and new heating and air-conditioning systems.

The $7.4 million project budget didn't include solar panels that would significantly cut energy usage and electricity bills at the century-old brick building where 74 low-income men occupy single-room, affordable housing units.

But with tax incentives made available through the federal government's Inflation Reduction Act, the panels could be installed on the roof by next spring.

Building developer Centre Avenue Housing plans to use the incentives to help cover costs for the $118,000 solar installation, said Lena Andrews, vice president of real estate development for ACTION-Housing, which partnered with the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh on the property's restoration.

The IRA is sweeping legislation signed by President Joe Biden in August 2022 that includes roughly $500 billion worth of investments and tax breaks in energy savings programs, job creation, and measures to lower prescription drug prices and expand the Affordable Care Act.

The clean energy portion of the bill — estimated at $400 billion — includes tax breaks and rebates for consumers, developers and manufacturers that invest in solar systems, electric vehicles and charging equipment, energy-saving appliances, battery storage systems and heat pumps.

THE IRA IS SWEEPING LEGISLATION SIGNED BY PRESIDENT BIDEN THAT INCLUDES ROUGHLY $500 BILLION WORTH OF INVESTMENTS AND TAX BREAKS IN ENERGY SAVINGS PROGRAMS.

While nonprofits like Centre Avenue Housing aren't tax-paying entities, a provision of the IRA allows them to qualify for direct payments of 30 percent to 60 percent of the cost of energy-saving initiatives like solar panels that convert light into electrical energy.

The Centre Avenue Y received payments of 60 percent of the cost, Ms. Andrews said. With the IRA incentives, "solar power on that building will be viable," she explained. "And we're hoping that this model will now work for other existing buildings."

The Heinz Endowments — which provided a $250,000 grant for the Centre Avenue Y's rehab in 2020 — last year granted $1 million to nonprofit lender Bridgeway Capital for a Solar Energy Loan Fund that Centre Avenue Housing tapped for the project. Another Pittsburgh nonprofit and Heinz Endowments grantee, Pennsylvania Solar Center is partnering with Bridgeway to provide free technical assistance for organizations that apply for the loans, tax credits and rebates.

30%-60%

IRA PROVISIONS ALLOW NONPROFITS TO QUALIFY FOR DIRECT PAYMENTS OF 30% TO 60% OF THE COST OF ENERGY-SAVING INITIATIVES.



The Solar Energy Loan fund is among the ways the Endowments hopes to raise awareness about the availability of IRA funds and help nonprofits and local governments in accessing them.

"It's a once-in-a-generation level of investment … the opportunity is significant," said Endowments Sustainability Vice President Andrew McElwaine about the IRA.

"The benefits to the region's health and economic environment could be considerable," said Rob Stephany, the Endowments' senior program director for Community & Economic Development.

Well before the IRA legislation was passed, the Endowments began strategizing with community development experts, business leaders, legislators and other Pittsburgh-based philanthropies on how best to leverage the federal money for projects and job creation in southwestern Pennsylvania.

The legislation aims to generate "jobs that are green and clean-technology related," Mr. Stephany said, "not just fossil fuel or high-tech jobs. And it's about bringing meaningful, competitive manufacturing back."

But while the potential is vast, Endowments officials said putting the IRA funds to work effectively is a challenge. Mr. McElwaine and Mr. Stephany each described the process as "building the plane while we're flying it."

A big obstacle is attracting private investment to clean energy manufacturing in Pennsylvania because the state has outdated alternative energy target goals, Mr. McElwaine said.

Pennsylvania ranked 45th out of all states in energy production from wind, solar and hydropower, with only 3 percent of total energy from those sources, according to a March report from the Energy Information Administration.

The state hasn't updated its target goals since 2004, the report said. The result is that investment frequently flows to places with more aggressive goals or better business incentives, Mr. McElwaine said.

The Bank of America Institute reported in August that $132 billion in IRA funding has already been invested in new clean energy projects that could yield more than 86,000 jobs.

But according to the institute, Pennsylvania ranked near the bottom of states where those jobs were generated.

"We have to step it up — we don't see Pennsylvania being in the front of the pack," Mr. McElwaine said.

There are causes for hope, however. One example is Eos Energy Enterprises, which makes zinc battery storage systems and is located in a former Westinghouse Electric facility in Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania. The company plans to use a $400 million loan from the U.S. Department of Energy and tap tax credits available through the Inflation Reduction Act to add 650 clean energy jobs to its workforce by 2026.

The loan, when finalized, will help fund a $500-million production expansion, which Eos calls Project AMAZE — American Made Zinc Energy. The New Jersey–based company aims to "bring manufacturing back from China and try to develop an American supply chain" for clean energy systems, said Chad FitzGerald, Eos' vice president of strategic partnerships and public affairs.

After Eos launched local operations in 2018, the Endowments played a key role in helping the company develop a workforce initiative and engage in community outreach to make long-term clean energy careers available to a diverse range of individuals from the region's Mon Valley and elsewhere.

About 80 percent of its manufacturing employees came to Eos with high school educations, Mr. FitzGerald said.

When the Endowments' Mr. Stephany visited the plant for the first time, Mr. FitzGerald recalls him observing that its factory floor truly reflected the population of the surrounding community.

> **"THE BENEFITS TO THE REGION'S HEALTH AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT COULD BE CONSIDERABLE."**
>
> **Rob Stephany**
> senior program director,
> Community & Economic Development,
> The Heinz Endowments

Of its 300 workers, about half are people of color, 25 percent are veterans and 25 percent are women, Mr. FitzGerald explained.

"Rob helped me understand an approach to building a workforce just by being open to anyone who wanted a shot at a new career and being very open to the surrounding towns," Mr. FitzGerald said.

Eos has partnerships with the nonprofits Trade Institute of Pittsburgh and Partner4Work to recruit and train employees, and is also collaborating with regional economic development groups, colleges and Woodland Hills High School, which is in a suburb east of Pittsburgh, Mr. FitzGerald said.

The expansion of Eos' facility will qualify for the IRA's production tax credit, and clean energy project developers who use Eos' technology will also be eligible for tax breaks, he said.

"I think it's really cool that Westinghouse was credited with making a lot of the last century's energy infrastructure, and Eos is making a footprint to 21st-century clean energy infrastructure" on the same site, Mr. FitzGerald said.

Bruce Katz, co-founder of New Localism Advisors, an Arlington, Virginia–based firm that consults with cities and regional leaders on initiatives to promote sustainable growth, said figuring out how best to obtain and utilize IRA funds "is kind of chaotic out there now."

"I think the federal government has provided the investment floor, but it's up to individual states, cities, metro regions and communities to figure out how to deploy it," he said.

Mr. Katz founded the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution and won the Heinz Award for Public Policy in 2006 for his work in understanding the function and value of cities and metropolitan areas. He said the IRA differs significantly from prior federal spending packages because of its "disproportionate reliance on tax incentives" rather than government grants.

In an article he co-authored for New Localism's April newsletter, Mr. Katz advised communities that want to maximize the impact of IRA funds to establish networks of government and business leaders, developers, workforce training experts, nonprofits and other stakeholders that will identify projects ripe for IRA funds.

That's where players like the Endowments and other philanthropies come in.

The Endowments gave a consulting grant to Mr. Katz to help Pennsylvania maximize resources from the IRA by working with mayors across the state to advocate for statewide action to access the funds and with state officials to develop a strategy to ensure that Pennsylvania uses the federal money to its maximum potential.

"It would be a very good investment on all our parts to make sure we have a high hit range [for IRA funds] in our region," said David Roger, president of the Hillman Family Foundations, which administers 18 foundations created by Hillman family members.

He envisions Hillman, the Endowments and other foundations as resources where "organizations can come to us and say they see opportunities under the IRA, and we can help them with seed funding to go after a large grant."

The IRA dollars can "really help the Pittsburgh region finish its transition from steel and metals to a diversified technology economy," he said.

Among Hillman's contributions to date are a $330,000 grant to PA Solar Center to provide technical assistance to communities, schools, small businesses and nonprofits trying to access IRA funds, and a grant of $575,000 by the Henry L. Hillman Foundation to the Green Building Alliance, which will also assist nonprofits competing for IRA money.

The Pittsburgh Foundation is sponsoring Pittsburgh's application to Solar for All — an initiative of the IRA that will make $7 billion available to help lower energy bills for residential customers in low-income and disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Pittsburgh is one of 10 places in the Midwest seeking funds through a multi-city application; the Endowments also participated in putting that effort together.

"It's an example of a program that aligns perfectly with our strategic plan, which calls on us to create a vibrant, equitable and just Pittsburgh region that supports everyone, regardless of race, identity or circumstance," said Lisa Schroeder, The Pittsburgh Foundation's president and chief executive.

The Endowments also surveyed about 75 grantees this summer and found that what the organizations need most is technical assistance "to succeed in obtaining these funds," Mr. McElwaine said. In addition, the foundation is turning to its grantees that have expertise in energy savings, housing, workforce development and other specialties for model initiatives that could qualify for IRA funds.

> **"CO-OPS RESULT IN A BUNCH OF NEW PEOPLE GOING SOLAR."**
>
> **Henry McKay**
> Heartland regional director,
> Solar United Neighbors

"We're leaning on what works to see if more resources can produce more and better outcomes," Mr. Stephany said.

Solar United Neighbors, for instance, organizes co-ops that bring together consumers in a single county who select a single solar installer for lower costs.

"Co-ops result in a bunch of new people going solar," said Henry McKay, Heartland regional director for Solar United's operations in Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and Indiana.

"We do a lot of education, hand holding and guidance … mostly for homeowners … so it's not just them on their own trying to parse a [solar] sales pitch."

Earlier this year, the nonprofit, which has received $540,000 in grants from the Endowments since 2017, provided free solar rooftop installations for three low- to moderate-income households in Pittsburgh's Hazelwood neighborhood. It plans four more installations in the community for homes under construction, Mr. McKay said. All seven



Heather Mull

SOLAR UNITED

Pittsburgh resident Heather Mull joined the nonprofit Solar United Neighbors' Allegheny Solar Co-op to get help with installing solar panels on the house she shares with her partner, Dan Barnhill, and their family. Solar United launched the co-op in 2022 to provide free solar rooftop installations to low- to moderate-income households.

residences are part of an Allegheny County co-op that Solar United launched in 2022.

Applying IRA incentives, such solar projects "can dramatically grow the ranks of low- and mid-income households" getting relief from high energy costs, Mr. McKay said. They also generate jobs for the solar installation firms, he noted.

The Energy Innovation Center in Pittsburgh's Hill District aims to use tax credits from the IRA legislation to boost its solar energy capacity, said Don Evans, chief executive and president of Pittsburgh Gateways Corp., the nonprofit that owns and operates the facility that houses 20-plus businesses and nonprofits — many of which focus on green energy and energy conservation.

Among its tenants is PA Solar Center, which is partnering with Bridgeway Capital on the Solar Energy Loan Fund and helping other organizations figure out "how you can stack the different elements of credits to get the full leverage and benefits" of IRA funds, Mr. Evans said.

Besides the loan fund, PA Solar's efforts include a partnership with the Congress of Neighboring Communities — a nonprofit based at the University of Pittsburgh and known as CONNECT — to help 11 municipalities in Allegheny County and the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority as they consider switching to solar energy for their facilities.

Through the Galvanizing our Energy Transition Solar (GET Solar) program, municipalities and the PWSA can get guidance on the IRA incentives, said PA Solar Executive Director Sharon Pillar.

"We're walking the walk to provide technical assistance to any non-residential entity — nonprofits, businesses, municipalities, schools — to help them understand their solar capabilities and the financing around it," she said.

The Energy Efficiency Alliance, a Philadelphia-based nonprofit, is also doing outreach to help municipalities obtain IRA, funds, said Jeaneen Zappa, the alliance's executive director.

Earlier this year, the alliance received a $60,000 grant from the Endowments that she said will be used to provide information to 20 municipalities in southwestern Pennsylvania about how to access money from the IRA, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, legislation signed by President Biden in 2021 that calls for $550 billion in new spending on roads, bridges, mass transit, broadband internet access and clean water.

"The IRA funding has the potential to be an unprecedented catalyst for clean energy if we embrace it fully and leverage it effectively," said Ms. Zappa. "But it will require a multisector approach and commitment from public leadership."

Reimagine Appalachia, a coalition of representatives from organized labor, local governments, and faith, racial justice and environmental groups, has been working since 2020 to provide input on federal stimulus programs, including the IRA, with the aim of bringing good-paying jobs and environmental benefits to the region that includes parts of Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and Kentucky.

The nonprofit has met with members of Congress and the Biden administration and developed a blueprint that includes clean energy systems, sustainable transportation, promoting unions and workers' rights, and growing manufacturing with a focus on electric vehicle production and alternatives to single-use plastics.

"If we're at the table at the federal level … we can make sure the region gets the resources it needs and those are spent in the right way," said Amanda Woodrum, co-director.

Reimagine Appalachia has received grants totaling $1.15 million from the Endowments since 2020.

"I'm super optimistic," Ms. Woodrum said. "This has the potential to be a very transformative moment not just for growing the economy in a way that's good for climate but a way that's good for workers and disadvantaged communities." h

(RE)OP



From left, Claire Sabatine, Jalina McClarin, Alex Manalo and Mia Kurlfink performed in "Morning Reckoning" at the New Hazlett Theater in April. The play by Pittsburgh-based multidisciplinary theater artist Kelly Trumbull explores adolescence through the experiences of eighth-graders in the Morning Reckoning fan club whose plans for the Morning Reckoning concert go awry before the event.



EN

Grants from The Heinz Endowments during the pandemic helped several local arts organizations maintain their venues during the health crisis and upgrade them for future use.

By Adam Reger

Renee Rosensteel

Few industries were hit as hard by the pandemic as the arts. In Pittsburgh, most performance-based nonprofits were forced to close their doors as COVID-19 cases rose. Many discovered inventive ways of surviving and reaching their core audiences, but even three years on, challenges remain.

In early 2021, The Heinz Endowments distributed a round of venue reopening grants to 19 arts organizations in Pittsburgh and surrounding counties, totaling $3 million. The grants were made in anticipation of sufficiently fewer cases of COVID-19 such that patrons of the arts could return to in-person events by the fall.

"We planned our reopening assistance grants to coincide with what was anticipated to be the first full programming year of the pandemic," said Creative Learning Program Officer Mac Howison. "Organizations were beginning to plan for how they might welcome patrons back. That's what these grants were intended to do."

The ways Pittsburgh arts groups used the funds were as varied and creative as their responses to the pandemic's challenges. Many addressed the health and safety concerns patrons would have upon returning to their spaces, while others leaned into the technological innovations COVID-19 had forced them to adopt. Among the projects made possible by the funding are those that follow.

ACH CLEAR PATHWAYS

In the Hill District, the youth arts organization ACH Clear Pathways found that many parents of the children who came through its doors were considered essential workers, unable to stay home with their school-age children as classes went virtual.

"In order for me to continue the mission of ACH Clear Pathways and keep supporting the arts, we had to pivot the mission to provide supportive programs to families," said Ms. Tyian Battle, founder and executive director.

Ms. Battle and her staff turned the former Hill House building into a learning hub where children could work with certified teachers to complete their remote schooling. At the same time, ACH Clear Pathways' arts-focused mission remained central.

"We are an artistic hub for the community and whatever we did within our pivot, it had to tap into the arts," said Ms. Battle.

She used the $160,000 Endowments grant to update the sound system in the organization's Kaufmann Center theater. By adding speakers, microphones and switchboards, the grant provided state-of-the-art streaming capabilities that made performances broadly and safely accessible through the organization's YouTube channel.

SANKOFA VILLAGE FOR THE ARTS

Sankofa Village, a Homewood-based cultural center offering classes in African dance, drumming and martial arts, never fully shut down during the pandemic, said founder Shabaka Perkins. The organization followed social-distancing guidelines by moving many of its classes to nearby Westinghouse Park.

To make patrons more comfortable with returning to the indoor space, Sankofa Village used its Endowments venue reopening grant of $70,000 to replace furniture and bolster sanitation efforts, installing temperature scanners in its lobby.

But the most impactful use of the grant, said Mr. Perkins, was the purchase of computers that allowed Sankofa Village to offer classes virtually. For those who felt uneasy about attending in person, even in the park, offering classes through platforms such as Google Meet and Instagram Live created an opportunity to continue participating.

Those offerings also made Sankofa Village visible to many who had never heard of the cultural center before.

"A lot of people found out about us because of virtual classes," he said. "We were able to start a website, which we didn't have before. That really put Sankofa on the map."

Adam Reger is a Pittsburgh-based freelance writer. His last story for h was in Issue 2, 2018, and looked at how 1Nation, a nonprofit that provides out-of-school-time programming and in-school mentoring, was providing needed support to hundreds of Pittsburgh students.

ALUMNI THEATER COMPANY

Alumni Theater Company (ATC) gives Black youth in grades 6 through 12 training and opportunities in the performing arts. With an emphasis on offering youth a platform to voice their own experiences, ATC's work felt especially vital during the tumultuous first year of the pandemic.

"I'd say to our kids, 'I'm a whole grown person experiencing this pandemic. I can't imagine what it must be like to be your age and experience this,'" recalled Executive Director Bridgette Perdue.

When ATC was forced to close, it shifted to virtual performances. Its goal for the $42,000 Endowments grant it received was to improve its streaming capabilities, along with adding microphones and other equipment to further enhance its ability to share work in digital formats.

"We make the majority of our shows accessible on our YouTube channel," said Ms. Perdue, who added that using microphones has resulted in a higher-quality product across the board.



Mark Simpson

Ayanna Bennett was 13 when she performed during the Alumni Theater Company's event ATC World in 2019. The nonprofit arts organization's productions focus on the issues urban teens face to encourage greater understanding and appreciation within the community.

NEW HAZLETT THEATER

The New Hazlett Theater used its venue reopening funds to both improve its video and streaming capabilities and address health and safety concerns.

The $271,400 grant it received from the Endowments enabled the New Hazlett to work with a freelance video editor to create online content, including broadcasts, promotional videos and archival footage, for audiences reluctant to return to live theater performances. These capabilities became an additional service the New Hazlett could offer to theater companies looking for a venue to stage their work.

Built in 1889 as the first Carnegie Music Hall, the venerable North Side theater last saw its heating, ventilation and air conditioning system updated in the 1970s, estimated Executive Director René Conrad. Renovating the system not only addressed ventilation concerns related to the spread of COVID-19 but also brought the theater up to actors' union standards. Much like its enhanced video capabilities, that expanded the New Hazlett's pool of clients, impacting its bottom line.



UNION PROJECT

Union Project, a Highland Park community center that provides ceramics classes, makes a substantial portion of its revenue from renting out its space. It typically hosts 200 to 300 events a year, estimated Executive Director Jeffrey Dorsey.

But Union Project is housed in a church built in 1903. Rentals of its largest space, the sanctuary, typically plummeted in the summer because it was simply too hot due to the lack of air conditioning.

Union Project used the $246,500 Endowments grant it received to update its HVAC system, converting from steam heat to a system that provides cooling and heating to multiple areas in the building, including the Great Hall, where many activities and performances take place.

"We knew it was an upfront cost and believed that not only is it benefiting our community members," said Mr. Dorsey, "but that the return on investment will pay off in several years."

CONTINUING CHALLENGES

However, the additional financial support did not mean that the building improvements were easily or quickly made. Supply-chain woes caused both the New Hazlett's and Union Project's HVAC upgrades to drag on, reported Ms. Conrad and Mr. Dorsey.

"Remember the world supply-chain disruption?" asked Ms. Conrad. "It definitely affected that project."

Supply-chain delays and inflated prices are prime examples of what Mr. Howison called the "trailing effects" of the pandemic, those lingering disruptions and unanticipated consequences that remain years after the emergence of COVID-19.

Despite the resilience and creative spirit demonstrated by Pittsburgh arts organizations, challenges remain, even as many facets of society have returned or come closer to pre-pandemic norms.

Drawing audiences back to live performances has proven a particularly difficult task.

"For two and a half seasons, we were virtual," said Ms. Perdue, of Alumni Theater Company. "We're building back that momentum of having people knowing about our work and coming to see our shows. Pre-pandemic, we always had a sold-out house. Since then, there have been moments we've reached that, but it has not been as consistently."

Ms. Conrad, of New Hazlett Theater, echoed that sentiment. Audiences today are unpredictable: One production might sell out while the next struggles to fill seats. Revivals, musicals and touring productions of familiar work draw audiences, but new productions sell poorly.

"We're a new work theater, and theaters focusing on new work have struggled," said Mr. McNeel of City Theatre. "Riskier work, unfamiliar and racially diverse work, has struggled to bring in audiences compared to a big Broadway show on tour."

While theaters are competing with alternatives like streaming services, he said, "Our art requires human beings to be on stage. Costs are way up, revenues are down. That first year back, our subscribers were down 40 percent."

Many of those subscribers have now become individual-ticket purchasers and are attending fewer shows.

But Mr. McNeel remains optimistic. "We're going to get through it," he said. "It's just going to take a little bit of time."

The New Hazlett Theater has adjusted to this unpredictability by adopting a model in which four theater companies make the New Hazlett their home base. The companies benefit by pooling resources, and they receive marketing support and work on audience development with Ms. Conrad and her staff. It's an innovative approach, and one that calls upon artists to work together to survive.

For Mr. McNeel, art's indispensability is part of the answer of why, if not how, live theater will continue to survive.

"Our society needs theater, it needs live performance," he said. "I don't think our society has done a good job of dealing with the trauma of the pandemic, and I believe to my core that spaces like City Theatre can be part of that healing process." h

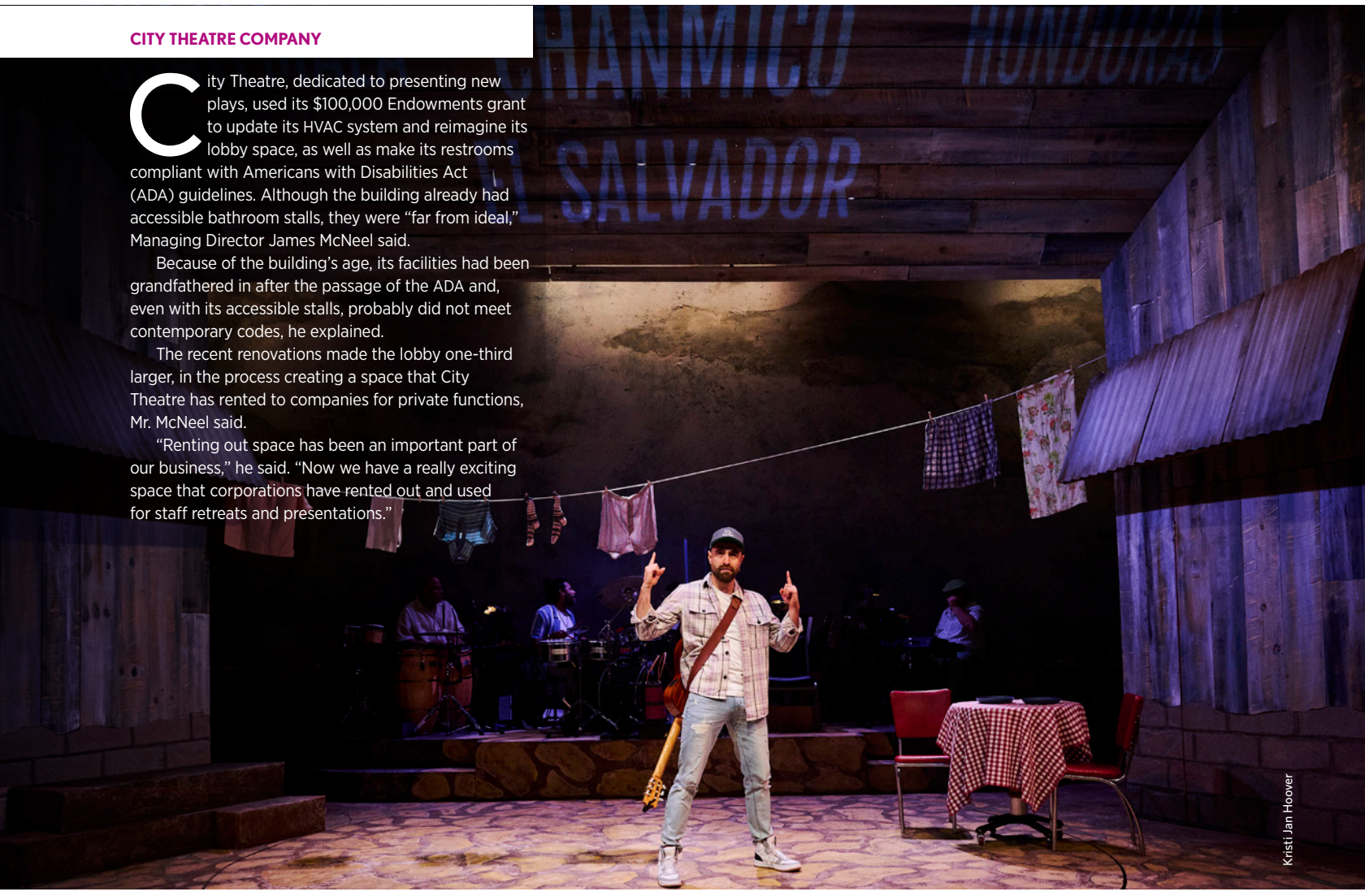
CITY THEATRE COMPANY

City Theatre, dedicated to presenting new plays, used its $100,000 Endowments grant to update its HVAC system and reimagine its lobby space, as well as make its restrooms compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. Although the building already had accessible bathroom stalls, they were "far from ideal," Managing Director James McNeel said.

Because of the building's age, its facilities had been grandfathered in after the passage of the ADA and, even with its accessible stalls, probably did not meet contemporary codes, he explained.

The recent renovations made the lobby one-third larger, in the process creating a space that City Theatre has rented to companies for private functions, Mr. McNeel said.

"Renting out space has been an important part of our business," he said. "Now we have a really exciting space that corporations have rented out and used for staff retreats and presentations."



Kristi Jan Hoover

A new Heinz Endowments–funded study is underway to determine the impacts of the PAServes care network and the Veterans Affairs health system—separately and together—on veterans and their families as they transition to civilian life. By Julia Fraser

military to civilian care

Every day those serving in combat zones face risk, uncertainty and peril. A stadium of fans at a baseball game stand and applaud those contributions, a neighbor says "thank you for your service," but for many returning service members, hardships await back home.

Waves of transition challenges hit returning service members and veterans: a new career, housing, medical care, transportation. But even more than finding a job, a 2014 study by Syracuse University's D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF), found that the most significant challenge was navigating the many fragmented resources in the community available to help these returning veterans and their families. This finding sparked change.

"The main thing we needed was someone to own providing services," said Gilly Cantor, director of evaluation and capacity building at IVMF. "We needed a backbone organization in the middle that we call a coordination center to manage referrals across all of the organizations that are willing to participate."

PAServes is one of 18 AmericaServes network locations that help military personnel veterans and their families connect with health and social service providers. It launched as the backbone of a regional coordinated support network in October 2015 with a $300,000 grant from The Heinz Endowments to help establish the network. Since then, PAServes has helped more than 10,000 veterans, providing guidance and referrals to those seeking assistance in 30 counties across Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio, and connecting veterans to three Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health systems.

The needs of returning veterans haven't changed, but the expansion of the care coordination by PAServes has tapped into veterans who haven't historically connected with their local VA. Starting in October 2023, a major study funded by The Heinz Endowments began digging into the health care outcomes and costs for those who used PAServes and the region's VA medical centers. The results of the study will quantify the impact of the program, shedding light on how veterans fare after receiving care and offering a better understanding of how health care and human services organizations should evolve to work together.

The backbone process

The work of PAServes is set in motion when veterans contact the support network and are paired with staff who make the calls and connect them to the resources they need and then follow up to see if they received help. Veterans Leadership Program, an organization that provides services to veterans and their families, arranges the care connections for PAServes with the help of a single technology platform that helps staff match a veteran's needs with participating organizations, from the Pittsburgh Veterans Affairs Healthcare System to ACTION-Housing, a nonprofit developer focused on providing affordable housing.

Julia Fraser is a Pittsburgh-based freelance writer. Her last story for h ran in Issue 1, 2023, and examined The Heinz Endowments' Creative Learning initiative and its work to connect youth to local arts organizations and provide professional development to local teaching artists.



In Western Pennsylvania, benefits navigation remains the top need for veterans who contact PAServes, followed by clothing and household goods and income support. The median time it takes the program to match veterans to providers is 18 hours after a referral, according to Megan Andros, director of The Heinz Endowments' Veterans program.

A key factor in PAServes' success is its partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

PAServes has been a boon for social workers who interact with veterans every day. PAServes' online referral system allows social workers to make a referral to PAServes, and then the network coordinates the process to meet a veteran's needs from multiple local agencies at once, instead of calling each agency individually. This has allowed the social workers to address their patients' non-health-related needs more quickly and accurately.

"The PAServes electronic system facilitates a collaborative effort between the VA social worker and the PAServes coordinator who are helping the veteran," said Laura Akers, social work supervisor at VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. "This presents a great opportunity to maximize all supports that may be available through both the VA and community providers."

A recent study of PAServes showed that the program provides a critical connection for populations of veterans who traditionally are less likely to receive health care services at the VA, including women and Black veterans. Of the veterans in the region who used both PAServes and the regional VA Medical Center, 30.5 percent were Black and 16 percent were women. These populations make up a smaller slice of those who only use the regional VA Medical Center, where 8.6 percent of the population served were Black and 7 percent were women.

"For whatever reason, female veterans feel comfortable coming to PAServes," Ms. Cantor said. "These are people the VA is trying to reach."

The scope of care

PAServes stands apart from other health networks by providing "the whole scope of care," according to Michelle Shumate, research professor and director of the Network for Nonprofit and Social Impact at Northwestern University. PAServes was among the first programs that she was aware of that connected people with services and tracked them in what's called a closed loop referral system.

"[One of] the best things that were available eight years ago was a resource directory — maybe it's a pdf, maybe it's on a website — early 2-1-1," Ms. Shumate said. "And they don't make the call for you. The idea of being more concierge and

PASERVES: RESPONDING TO NEEDS

10.8K unique clients



31.3K service requests

SINCE 2015, 10,800 CLIENT INQUIRIES TO PASERVES HAVE RESULTED IN 31,300 SERVICE REQUESTS, AN AVERAGE OF 3 RESOURCE CONNECTIONS PER CLIENT.



THE MEDIAN TIME TO MATCH A CLIENT TO A RESOURCE IS 18 HOURS.

18 hours



87% success rate

87% OF 31,300 SERVICE REQUESTS WERE SUCCESSFULLY FULFILLED.

Source: Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families.

shepherding a referral all the way through completion and following up was absolutely not done. This was a brand-new idea. This was an innovation."

The most widely known referral system is still 2-1-1 — a phone number used to reach information on health and human services organizations. But only 36 percent of 2-1-1 callers received assistance from the referral, according to a 2016 study of 2-1-1 in Missouri published in the Journal of Social Service Research. For the people who contact PAServes, 87 percent of them were able to get the service they needed from the referral, according to data from PAServes and the VA.

State government agencies and nonprofits outside of Pennsylvania and the veteran community have taken note of the PAServes model as a potential way to address entwined public health needs in their communities.

"A lot of people are peeking over the fence and asking, 'Is this scalable? What can we do?'" Ms. Schumate said. "'Is this a model we could do statewide?'"

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in Ohio, Arizona and North Carolina have technology that would allow for this type of service coordination, according to Ms. Schumate. "They're trying to figure out how did they do this? What's the human element to this? Because the technology itself won't get you there," she said.

Meanwhile, PAServes has expanded across the region, partnering with the Butler and Erie VAs. A big part of the expansion is due to two $750,000 grants through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program.

Veterans are 1.5 times more likely to die by suicide than nonveteran adults, according to the American Psychological Association. Financial hardship, housing insecurity, isolation, and underlying mental or physical health conditions are some of the leading risk factors for suicide, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC's findings, along with studies published in journals such as Archives of Suicide Research and the Journal of General Internal Medicine, show that suicidal risk among veterans does not come only with mental health diagnoses, as some have believed. Instead, social and economic factors strongly influence suicidal fantasies and suicide attempts, even after adjusting for mental health issues.

"These are factors that vets are dealing with every day," said Aaron Melius, team leader at PAServes. "It's a chance to alleviate that need at a time when they are most vulnerable. It's going to play a huge role in the suicide prevention work that this community is doing — to have options to meet those needs and not have to call 44 organizations and be told no. We take on that burden. I know that it plays a big role in the reduction of suicide among veterans in Western Pennsylvania."

Measuring the impact

A better understanding of the impact of the program on the health outcomes of veterans will emerge from the Endowments-funded study that launched in October. It will compare those who used PAServes and the VA with those who just used the VA's services, between 2018 and 2020.

"We don't know whether connecting with PAServes reduces things like emergency room visits or hospitalizations, or increases use of important preventive services, like primary care or mental health care," said Leslie Hausmann, a researcher at the Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion housed within the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, who leads the study. "The new study will examine these possibilities."

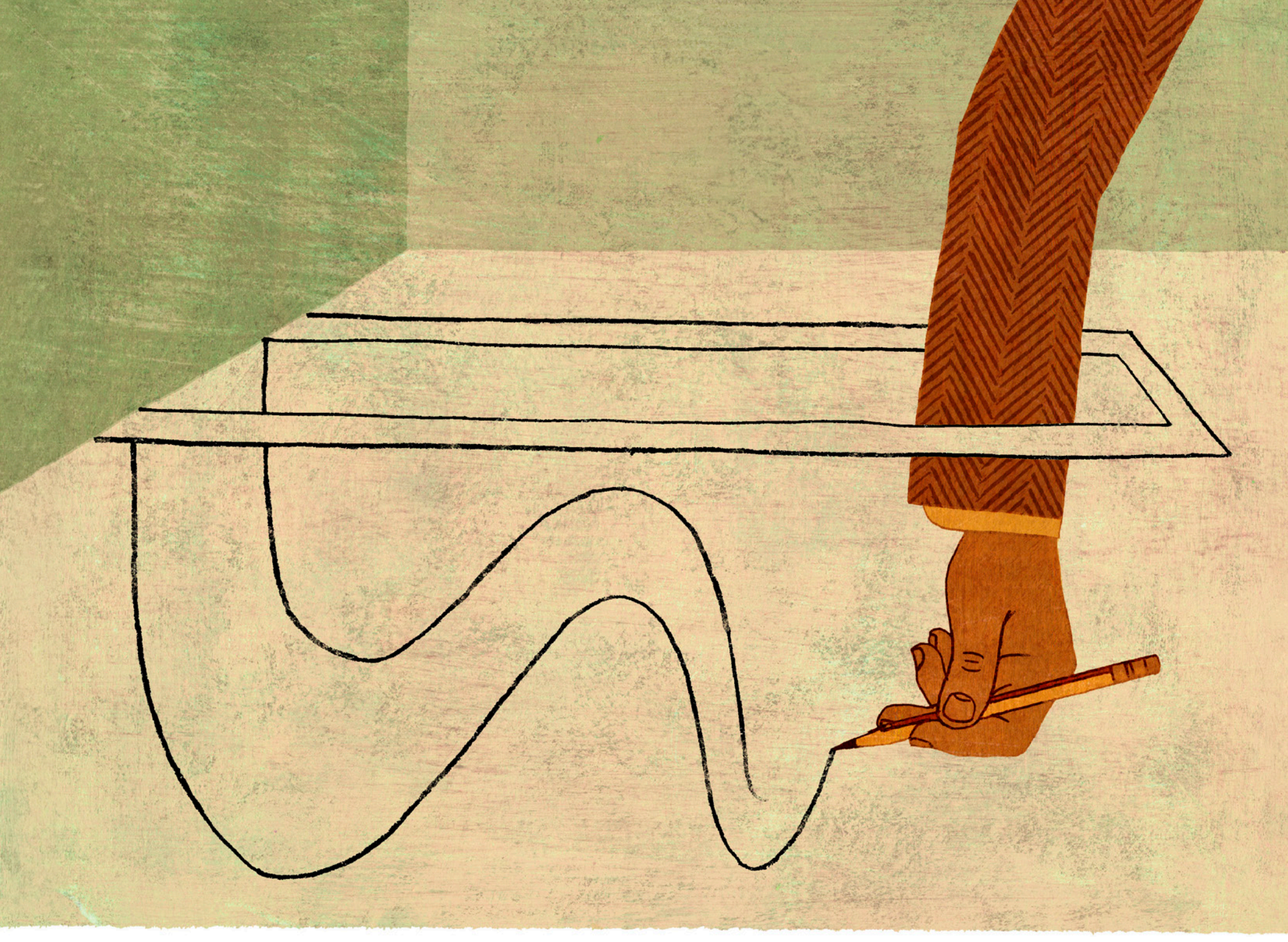
The study will also explore if receiving support through PAServes is similar across racial and gender groups. This new research could provide data showing what is or isn't working to improve the health of the vulnerable populations of veterans.

"We're trying to demonstrate to the VA through completely evidenced-informed and data-backed findings that these approaches can work and under what conditions they do work, so we can move the needle on policy and help make this more common across the country," Ms. Cantor said. "Can we objectively say someone is getting better or not? Is it saving money and time for the VA to have this approach? Are there cost savings to the health system?"

The overlap between PAServes and VA Medical Center patients shows the flow of people through the veteran assistance community — from a human services system to a health care system and back. This new research could help quantify its value and show its worth in ways that can go beyond veteran support, Ms. Andros explained.

"What we're learning is how health care and health and human services organizations should be collaborating to make sure there isn't a wrong front door," Ms. Andros said. "A person who shows up in a doctor's office and needs food. We can get them food now, and we know that we got them food. A person who shows up at a food organization that needs health care, we can get them there. We know how to do that now."

This means the model can serve non-veterans in the community, but if such a move is made, there are bigger questions that have yet to be answered, Ms. Andros added. "What are the policy implications of that? And who's the responsible party? Who pays for it?" h



PATH TO THE TOP

The Executive Leadership Academy began as a project to help Black professionals in the Pittsburgh region attain head-office positions. Today, the vision and the program have spread nationally. By Rob Taylor

Seven years ago, Evan Frazier, then the senior vice president for community affairs at Highmark Health, had a vision to build a pipeline of African American executives who could become CEOs or attain other executive-level management positions at corporations in the Pittsburgh region.

To him, the number of African Americans in those positions in Pittsburgh was miniscule at best.

By the summer of 2017, Mr. Frazier shared his vision at the Corporate Equity and Inclusion Roundtable Pittsburgh's annual conference, which brings hundreds of leaders from the corporate, university and nonprofit arenas together to increase diversity, equity and inclusion efforts annually throughout the region.

One of those nonprofits, the POISE Foundation, signed on to become a fiscal sponsor of Mr. Frazier's newly formed program, The Advanced Leadership Initiative (TALI), and his idea soon became reality.

In May 2018, TALI began soliciting applications for its inaugural Executive Leadership Academy, a cohort of 20 to 25 local Black professionals who would participate in a series of executive coaching sessions designed to prepare them for top-level positions within a company.

The first cohort of professionals turned into a second, a third, a fourth and, as of the summer of 2023, a fifth group. More than 100 Black professionals have graduated from the Executive Leadership Academy since the first cohort completed the program in 2019.

Mr. Frazier said the cohort members successfully completed the series of courses and workshops assigned to them in partnership with Carnegie Mellon University's Tepper School of Business, and many of the graduates have gone on to earn promotions or secure executive-level management positions at what is sometimes called "the C-suite" level, because the job titles often begin with the word "chief," e.g., chief executive officer, chief financial officer, chief operating officer.

Mr. Frazier explained that 87 percent of the graduates from the 2019 cohort had received promotions or significant additional responsibilities.

"And for our 2020 cohort, it was 96 percent. That's real growth, very tangible, measurable growth," he said.

The success of the Executive Leadership Academy in the Pittsburgh region led Mr. Frazier to expand the program nationally.

The first cohort of the National Executive Leadership Academy was unveiled Aug. 17, 2023, during a reception at Carnegie Mellon University. While Mr. Frazier expects 20 to 25 cohort members in the future, for the first national cohort, there are 16 members.

Of the 16 participants in the national academy, six are from Texas and two are from Pennsylvania, while the other states represented are Georgia, New Jersey, New York, Tennessee, Florida, Virginia, California and Louisiana.

Expanding TALI nationally helps "strengthen Pittsburgh-based companies who have national footprints, allowing their employees from across the country to be able to participate in the unique programming TALI provides in partnership with Carnegie Mellon," said Mr. Frazier, who serves as president and CEO of TALI.

He added that the "high-quality programming, mentorship and coaching" that the academy provides can be a benefit to more African Americans who don't currently reside in the Pittsburgh area.

The academic instruction that cohort members are receiving includes topics such as "Resilience for Executives of Color," "Asset Framing" and "Global Strategy and Management." Mr. Frazier explained that it's usually difficult in the business world for African Americans to find mentors to help them through various challenges in the corporate world because there are fewer Black people in those top executive positions to begin with. But as part of the academy, mentors are identified for them.

The Heinz Endowments provided $500,000 in startup funding for TALI. Carmen Anderson, the Endowments' vice president of Equity & Learning, said the foundation helped launch the program "because it was an important opportunity to support a new model of leadership advancement in the region, particularly Black leadership."

"The challenge is that we don't have adequate representation or opportunities for growth for Black leaders in executive-level positions in the Pittsburgh region. Equally important is the challenge to maintain executive-level talent once we acquire it," she explained. "People are here for a limited time, and then they move on to other opportunities in more welcoming locations. If we're able to retain talent in addition to preparing leaders for executive advancement, we all benefit."

Ms. Anderson lauded TALI for its ability to merge the educational aspect of partnering with Carnegie Mellon University's business school with executive mentoring and a peer network "so that people don't feel isolated, and they have opportunities to convene as a cohort and can grow and develop as part of a collaborative process."

The Advanced Leadership Initiative eventually became The Advanced Leadership Institute, and Mr. Frazier reached out to Pittsburgh-based companies that had offices in other cities to see if they had employees who wanted to participate in a National Executive Leadership Academy. TALI also reached out to its alumni, some of whom had moved to other parts of the country, to gauge interest from their list of personal and professional connections. Social media also played a role, along with some members of TALI's board of directors, Mr. Frazier said.

For the locally based Executive Leadership Academy, cohort members undergo executive coaching sessions in person, at Carnegie Mellon, two days per month for seven months.

But for the national cohort, Mr. Frazier said, all 16 members had in-person executive coaching sessions at Carnegie Mellon for the first week, followed by virtual coaching sessions from September through November. The final week of the academy, scheduled for December, would bring the 16 members back to Pittsburgh for in-person sessions at Carnegie Mellon, followed by the graduation ceremony.

Mr. Frazier said plans are in the works to have a national cohort for 2024 and beyond.

"We hear very often, when people describe the program, words such as 'transformational' and 'confident' are used," he said. "We're finding that our graduates are showing up more confident and better prepared to be stronger leaders within their organizations and community. You're getting someone who has taken the time to sharpen their skills, but also [has the ability to] reflect and have deeper conversations about strategic issues and opportunities."



Evan Frazier, right, president and CEO of The Advanced Leadership Institute, founded the organization to help increase African American executive leadership in companies, institutions and communities in the Pittsburgh region and across the country. The institute's signature program is its Executive Leadership Academy, which the fifth cohort of participants, far right, completed in July. Members of the group were required to attend two full days per month for seven months.

Many of TALI's graduates, he said, are "more engaged in leadership roles, getting on boards, and being more proactive about how they can have an impact on their organizations and in their careers."

Samantha Hartzman, a graduate of TALI's fifth local Executive Leadership Academy cohort that ended in July 2023, said that the program helped her leap from a position as a senior manager of environmental, social and governance (ESG) and corporate giving, at Pittsburgh-based Duquesne Light Holdings to the company's head of social impact and chief diversity officer. Duquesne Light announced Ms. Hartzman's appointment Aug. 1.

"TALI helped me have conversations with my leadership team to talk about my reflections of the culture of our company," Ms. Hartzman said. Members of her leadership team soon realized that she would be the best

Rob Taylor is a Pittsburgh-based freelance writer. His last stories for h ran in Issue 1, 2021, and explored how philanthropic support for nonprofit journalism is shoring up local news and helping to increase newsroom diversity.



Emmai Alaquiva



Brian Cook

> "WE'RE FINDING THAT OUR GRADUATES ARE SHOWING UP MORE CONFIDENT AND BETTER PREPARED TO BE STRONGER LEADERS WITHIN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY."
>
> **Evan Frazier,** president and CEO, The Advanced Leadership Institute

candidate for the open chief diversity officer position, she said.

Ms. Hartzman, a Pittsburgh native, added that the Executive Leadership Academy also helped her understand "how to be effective in spaces that we [African Americans] are not the majority. All of that is built into the way TALI is structured with the coaching, the mentoring, the sessions we have with the professors."

Another member of the fifth Executive Leadership Academy cohort is Russell Ivey, a finance leader in architectural coatings at Pittsburgh-based PPG Industries. A Rhode Island native, Mr. Ivey came to Pittsburgh 13 years ago when he joined the company. When he heard about TALI's Executive Leadership Academy, he jumped at the opportunity.

"One of the things that stands out in the program is there is a shared experience among Black leaders," Mr. Ivey said. "As you go through these classes with the folks in your cohort, you start to hear their stories, and many of the stories, the experiences, are similar. It gives you a sense that, in situations where you may have questioned yourself, you realize that you're not alone . . . others have had similar experiences."

Both Ms. Hartzman and Mr. Ivey noted how TALI is helping to increase the number and retention of Black professionals in the Pittsburgh region.

"This program is demonstrating that we're here, and we're excited to take on different opportunities and challenge ourselves and grow," Ms. Hartzman said.

There are nearly 200 graduates in the TALI alumni network, including the members of the first two cohorts of the Emerging Leaders Program, an initiative similar to the Executive Leadership Academy but geared toward younger African American professionals.

"The cohort experience is such a strong experience that they're benefiting with the connection with one another," Mr. Frazier said.

Mr. Ivey, who aspires to become a vice president or chief financial officer within one of PPG's business divisions, said that TALI's Executive Leadership Academy will give participants "a better understanding and perspective of what it takes to be successful as a Black leader in corporate America." h



Elan Mizrahi

South Allegheny High School students, from left, Adriana Rodriguez, 17; MaKayla Drye, 18; Jordan Gamret, 16; and Aaron Marts, 16, started an Eradicate Hate Group at their school last year after attending the 2022 Eradicate Hate Global Summit in Pittsburgh. The first summit was in 2021 in response to the 2018 mass shooting at Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. Summit organizers added a youth session at this year's event in September after learning about the South Allegheny High School group.

VOICES *Against* HATE

A high school anti-hate club inspired by the Eradicate Hate Global Summit in turn inspired conference organizers to add youth programming to this year's event as it continues to expand its work. By Cristina Rouvalis

Cristina Rouvalis is a Pittsburgh-based freelance writer. Her last story for h was in Issue 2, 2022, and looked at how organizations that carry on the legacy of children's television host Fred Rogers have supported children during the COVID-19 pandemic and other life challenges.



Elan Mizrahi

Aaron Marts, 16, and Adriana Rodriguez, 17, are two of the founders of the South Allegheny High School Eradicate Hate Group.

Adriana Rodriguez had never heard of the Tree of Life synagogue mass shooting in Pittsburgh until she attended the Eradicate Hate Global Summit held in the city's Downtown last year when she was a high school sophomore.

She and Aaron Marts, her classmate at South Allegheny High School, watched the documentary "Repairing the World: Lessons from the Tree of Life" at the summit, held in Pittsburgh's David L. Lawrence Convention Center, and they were horrified that the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in U.S. history had taken place in their backyard. That point was driven home when the teens saw two women in tears behind them and recognized them from the screen as relatives of one of the 11 people killed on Oct. 27, 2018.

"They were right behind us, crying," said Aaron, now a 16-year-old junior. "It was like, 'Wow, this is real. These are real people.'"

As a Latina, Adriana, 17, could relate to being singled out and taunted as a minority.

"I have been told to 'get deported,' even though I'm Puerto Rican, and Puerto Rico is an American territory," said the high school student, now a junior.

Adriana, Aaron and other students were so moved by the 2022 summit and how the city rallied behind the Jewish community that they started an Eradicate Hate Group at their suburban high school southeast of Pittsburgh. During the last school year, they held events for Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month and other activities celebrating diversity. They even went on field trips to meet leaders in the Civil Rights Movement, and the group hosted a showing of the "Repairing the World" documentary for the community.

Inspired by the South Allegheny students, organizers of the Eradicate Hate Global Summit added a youth session this year, inviting groups of high school students from 14 school districts around Western Pennsylvania to watch the documentary and discuss ways to combat hate crimes. The film's producers also attended the event to talk to the students.

The youth session is a new feature of the third annual summit, which was held Sept. 27–29 at the convention center and brought together researchers, law enforcement

members, tech executives, survivors and others from around the world to fight identity-based hate crimes. The summit included panels and presentations and convened working groups around specific topics that will continue their projects after the event. It attracted 1,151 in-person registrants and 1,575 livestream views.

The summit took place just a month and a half after the trial of Robert Bowers, who was convicted of the Tree of Life mass shooting and in August was sentenced to death for the massacre inside the synagogue in Pittsburgh's Squirrel Hill neighborhood.

"Our goal is to empower participating students to return to their home schools and communities as impactful leaders in the anti-hate movement," said Mark Nordenberg, co-board chair of the Eradicate Hate Global Summit, chancellor emeritus of the University of Pittsburgh and chair of Pitt's Institute of Politics.

He has worked with David McDonald, superintendent of the South Allegheny School District; Bill Isler, president emeritus of Fred Rogers Productions; and Robert Scherrer, executive director of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, a regional public education agency, on the youth-centered project.

Organizers of this year's summit emphasized reaching young people.

"After last year's summit, we talked about how we were missing an important piece here. These things don't just happen when people are 30 or 40 years old," Dr. Scherrer said. "It builds up over time from when they are kids."

A working group led by Kenneth Stern, staff director for the Bard Center for the Study of Hate at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, is developing a model anti-hate curriculum to reach young people at the university level.

"It is being developed with the idea that it needs to be flexible," Dr. Nordenberg said. Such a model would give faculty members the option to implement the curriculum in its entirety, use parts of it, or work some of the ideas into existing course offerings.

This year's summit cost was about $1.5 million, with virtually all of the support coming from foundations, Dr. Nordenberg said. The Heinz Endowments has been a steady

Photo courtesy of Not In Our Town



Repairing the World

As part of its new youth session, the Eradicate Hate Global Summit screened "Repairing the World: Lessons from the Tree of Life," a film and community engagement project from Not In Our Town that looks at Pittsburgh's response to the tragedy. Not In Our Town is an initiative dedicated to stopping hate, racism and bullying, and to building safe and inclusive communities.

WE'RE RESILIENT. WE'RE COLLABORATIVE. WE'RE MULTI-DISCIPLINARY. WE ARE 'MR. ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD.' AND YOU SEE SO MUCH OF THAT IN THE SUMMIT."

Joshua Donnor
executive director, The Shapira Foundation

source of funding for the event since its inception, providing $100,000 in 2021, $150,000 in 2022 and $200,000 in 2023.

"Launching a new fight against hate in a community in a city that was a source of a very visible, horrific act of hate is an important step for our community's healing," said Carmen Anderson, vice president of Equity & Learning for the Endowments. "It demonstrates nationally and internationally that this is not acceptable. We have a long way to go because hate is woven through our culture in so many different ways. But every step is important."

Other foundations in Pittsburgh also have been loyal supporters of the event, including The Beacon Foundation and The Shapira Foundation, both chaired by David Shapira, former chief executive officer of the Giant Eagle supermarket chain.

"We came to understand and appreciate the importance and the power of memorialization and commemoration. And a memorial isn't necessarily a physical thing," said Joshua Donner, executive director of The Shapira Foundation. "It can be a mission-driven organization or it can be something to change the world … and prevent future tragedies."

Mr. Donner said the summit reflects the spirit of Pittsburgh.

"We're resilient. We're collaborative. We're multi-disciplinary. We are 'Mister Rogers' Neighborhood.' And you see so much of that in the summit," he said.

The first day of the conference focused on the survivors and families impacted by hate-fueled incidents around the world, including the 2022 attacks on Black supermarket customers in Buffalo, New York, and members of the LGBTQ+ community in Bratislava, Slovakia, as well as the 2019 attacks on Muslim worshippers in mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand; Jewish worshippers at a synagogue in Poway, California; and Latinos and immigrants shopping at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas.

"This year's summit was very global, with participants coming from Asia, Canada, Europe, the Middle East and New Zealand, as well as from all corners of this country," Dr. Nordenberg said. "We were joined by two women who had lost loved ones in the

Christchurch attack in New Zealand, and their participation added greatly to our discussion. The presence of H.E. Ahmed Obaid Al Mansoori, who created the first Holocaust museum in the Arab world, added another inspiring dimension to the summit. At his request, the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh also hosted a dinner for him with leaders from the local Jewish community while he was here in Pittsburgh."

The conference opened with a presention on statistics showing the rise of hate crime. Hate crimes reported to police in 42 major cities rose to 3,320, up 10 percent from the number in the previous year, according to the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino.

In addition to the working group developing the university-level anti-hate curriculum, other groups whose projects are going beyond the three-day summit include one that is addressing how the traumatic experience of legal trials can be improved for relatives of victims.

"Family members will talk about what was supportive for them and what was frustrating for them," said Laura Ellsworth, co-board chair of Eradicate Hate Global Summit and partner-in-charge of Global Community Service Initiatives at the multinational law firm Jones Day.

Another focus is exploring ways to alert psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and others to some of the warning signs of potentially dangerous behaviors in patients who may be flirting with the idea of identity-based violence.

"They may not realize the behaviors, the tattoos, the hand gestures, the clothing associated with these more dire movements," Ms. Ellsworth said. The working group plans to develop a training program to be presented to those mental health professionals that would highlight the best practices for identifying and treating those getting sucked into hate-filled ideologies.

Other panels from the event focused on the types of groups that commit identity-based violence and how to reach people who have already started down the rabbit hole of hate.

One potent route of recruitment for these groups is through the chat rooms of video games and e-sports, said Chuck Moellenberg Jr., president of Eradicate Hate Global Summit and a retired partner from Jones Day. "It's a big problem."

Panelists discussed the breadth of the problem and what gaming companies can do to prevent chat rooms from turning into recruiting sites.

The summit also has partnered with the United Nations and Fenway Sports Group, the owner of the Pittsburgh Penguins and other teams, to use sports as a way to combat hate.

"The typical mass shooter in the U.S. is a white male in the mid-teens to mid-20s. They are probably playing e-games or going to sporting events," Mr. Moellenberg said. "So, the game plan is to partner with the U.N. to reach out to all the major professional sports leagues and associations and bring them together to communicate an anti-hate message to the public."

Many sports teams have signed up for the initiative, including the Pittsburgh Penguins and the Boston Red Sox, the latter of which is also owned by Fenway Sports Group, as well as the Pittsburgh Steelers, the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Buffalo Bills.

Dr. Nordenberg said the interest in the summit from people coming from a variety of fields has grown every year.

"The amazing thing is that the first year, people came in the middle of the [COVID-19] pandemic and paid their own way to participate," he said. "They thought this was a distinctive opportunity. They came back and brought their friends and colleagues the next year. They have become more enthusiastic and committed to the summit every year."

Adriana, the South Allegheny High School junior, was excited to come back this year and hopes other students will be inspired to form their own clubs against identity-based hate.

"I really love this group because it has given us all the chance to have a voice in calling out problems and trying to find solutions to those problems and to have everyone feel included," she said. "I feel like we have accomplished a lot of milestones in the last year. I am going to love watching more schools become passionate the same way we are passionate about it." h



Lifang Vision Technology

A rendering of a proposed rebuilt and expanded Tree of Life synagogue shows the signature feature, a skylight that would span the length of the roof, from the sanctuary ark, where the Torah is stored, to a 45-foot-high glass atrium. The 45,000-square-foot structure would include a museum, memorial and synagogue, and would be used for national education programs, outreach initiatives, and events. Architect Daniel Libeskind, who is known for his work on Jewish museums, Holocaust memorials and the master plan for the redevelopment of the World Trade Center after 9/11, created the design for the new building.



Joshua Franzos

New eyes



Brad Berkstresser

determination

Chris DeCardy became president of The Heinz Endowments earlier this year, fully aware of the challenges ahead for the region and world. He's optimistic that determined citizens, with support from equally determined philanthropy, can work together to create a better future for all.

I'm new here.

Around the world, "dis" words are ascendent. In an unprecedented period of uncertainty, we face massive dislocation with tens of millions moving for economic and environmental reasons, disruption from the pandemic still straining political and cultural institutions, and disadvantage only growing from increasing economic disparity. All of that driving greater discord and disharmony.

I came to Pittsburgh because over the coming decade, this region will sit at the fulcrum for U.S. electoral politics, for the transition from the fossil fuel economy of the industrial age to the clean energy economic engine of this century, and for the social and cultural stresses between urban and rural, wealthy and poor, those of Western European descent and those not.

To make it out of our global "dis" era, those of us in Pittsburgh and the Upper Ohio River Valley must lead, listen and collaborate.

I came here because I believe philanthropy is the ultimate expression of hope — stewarding wealth generated in the past toward a future where everyone can see themselves economically as well as socially and culturally. A future with, as the late Sen. John Heinz said, "a thriving society with citizens determined to see shared ideals realized — and not just for the few, but as our pledge says, for all."

I love that phrase — "citizens determined to see shared ideals realized" for everyone.

Those determined citizens among us can feel lonely these days. It is hard to find shared ideals through the fog of discord driven by anxiety, unfairness and uncertainty. But they are not too far from the surface. Each one of us wants a better future for the next generation, for clean air and water, for healthy and plentiful food, for a safe place to live and rewarding work, for deep connection with others and to truly be seen for who we are.

I am blessed to be somewhere entirely new to me, several thousand miles away from my home of the past 20 years. Looking at my community with a beginner's mind is far easier when it truly is all new. And those determined citizens are everywhere I look here.

They are (among many others) doctors, nurses, counselors and administrators working in health and human services, who though wracked by the pandemic, are coming out the other side more determined to build a better future. They are workforce development leaders focused on securing a full range of support to those seeking opportunity as well as the skills needed to succeed in today's economy. They are performing artists striving to deliver quality work amid the changing landscape for performing arts in our digital age. They are rural moms demanding clean air and water for their kids and our future. There are so many others. People deeply care.

The Heinz Endowments' legacy is solidly rooted in this region. Our board and staff are committed to these determined citizens, and we are part of a robust and engaged local



Joshua Franzos

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philanthropic fabric that is somewhat unique in this country. So, what is the role of philanthropy right now?

Leo Tolstoy wrote a short story called "The Three Questions" a century ago. The children's author and illustrator Jon Muth updated it more recently. I loved reading that story with my sons when they were younger. In it, the young boy, Nikolai, is working hard to find his place in the world. When is the right time? he asks. Who is the right person? And, what is the right thing to do?

Through a lovely, kindly hero's journey involving a wise turtle, a panda mother and child, and a fierce storm, he comes to discover his answer. The right time is now. The right person is the one you are with. The right thing to do is to help.

Because philanthropy has resources, it can take the privilege of ignoring Nikolai's hard-earned wisdom — acting alone, even imperiously. But we shouldn't. To have the best impact for our community, we need to work closely with those determined citizens. To be proximate and connected.

We need to be curious about what they know and what they love, and to act with compassion in playing our part to help them act fairly in fully achieving their visions for change that can be shared by all.

Living up to our shared ideals is not simple work. But we know the right time, the right person and the right thing to do. I came here to play my part in that. h

here&there

STAFF ADDITIONS

At the end of this summer, the Endowments welcomed two new staff members. Corinne Connor is a program analyst for the Endowments' Sustainability strategic area. Prior to joining the foundation in August 2023, Corinne served as research assistant and coordinator at West Virginia University's Institute for Policy Research and Public Affairs, where she oversaw the collection, organization and management of large data sets for a range of projects.





She also was the policy coordinator for the West Virginia Innocence Project at the West Virginia University College of Law, and was the Judith A. Herndon Policy Fellow for the West Virginia State Legislature and the Office of the Attorney General.

Dean Richards is an Endowments Learning program officer who previously was a philanthropy fellow with BNY Mellon Foundation of Southwestern Pennsylvania. His work centered on grantmaking for regional nonprofit organizations with a core focus of workforce development and business technology.

While with the BNY Mellon Foundation, Dean was project manager for the 2022 and 2023 UpPrize Social Innovation Challenge programs, which provided financial assistance and educational resources to help nonprofits, local entrepreneurs and other competitors bring their equity-, economic justice– and sustainability-focused ideas from concept to reality. From 2015 to 2021, he held several leadership roles with the Black Male Leadership Development Institute, and prior to that served as program coordinator with Pittsburgh Cares.

WE CAN BE: NEW TOPICS, NEW HOST

Production of new episodes for the Endowments' "We Can Be" podcast's fifth season is underway. Endowments President Chris DeCardy takes the reins as host for this latest season, with episodes diving into of-the-moment topics, including the region's maternal health crisis, the enormous potential of the Inflation Reduction Act, and the forward-thinking training of former mine workers for clean energy jobs. Ten new episodes will be released early in the new year, with the second half of the season debuting in fall of 2024.

SUPPORT IN TRYING TIMES

A new "trauma-informed" courthouse opened in October at the Family Law Center in Pittsburgh.

The region's Allegheny County court system opened the facility to provide a more comfortable and supportive environment for children experiencing trauma or navigating the court system for the first time. The resources offered include a playground, a sensory room, a wellness clinic, behavioral health assessments and crisis response services.

The Heinz Endowments was among the funders of the project, contributing $350,000 toward its development.



Murphy Moschetta

WEAVING ARTS AND TRADES

"Braids of Hope," a 50-foot-long, 12-foot-high metal and paint mural produced by 12 students in the Industrial Arts Workshop's Summer Welding Bootcamp, was unveiled this fall across a white brick wall of a commercial building in Pittsburgh's Hazelwood neighborhood. The bootcamp is one of the main programs of the Endowments grantee, which provides professional welding classes with an artisanal focus to youth and adults.

Located in a 5,200-square-foot space that was formerly a car restoration business and a soda bottling company in Hazelwood, the Industrial Arts Workshop has been recognized as offering an innovative way to give local youth both professional arts exposure and technical training.

AWARDS SEASON

ARTISTS APPRECIATION



The Heinz Endowments awarded a total of $346,000 to 16 artists this fall through the foundation's Creative Development Awards program. Projects by the regional grant recipients included a series of sculptures centered on a home on Pittsburgh's North Side that was a critical gathering space for civil rights activists in the early 1900s; an album featuring legends of Pittsburgh's jazz and Cuban music communities; photographic documentation of a basketball team consisting of players with deep family connections to indigenous communities in Mexico; and virtual reality experiences that immerse viewers in the worlds of African deities and Pittsburgh's future as an AI-influenced robotic hub.

The artists and organizations receiving awards, ranging from $16,000 to $35,000, were selected from 116 applicants and represented a range of disciplines, including filmmaking, photography, theater, virtual reality animation and dance.

The Endowments launched the Creative Development Awards in 2021 to celebrate the region's professional artists and broaden their national profile, with a special focus on those whose artistic achievements show great promise. The announcement of these awardees brings the program's support of regional artists to a total of nearly $1 million in the past 30 months. To find out more about the awards and the recipients, go to the News and Media page at www.heinz.org.

RECORD NOMINATIONS

The Carol R. Brown Creative Achievement Awards, named for the former president of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust who played a key role in the development of Pittsburgh's thriving Cultural District, received a record number of artist nominations for its 2023 awards. A total of 243 names were submitted during a three-day public nomination period in early October.

The awards are co-presented by the Endowments, from whose board Ms. Brown retired earlier this year, and The Pittsburgh Foundation. They honor one Emerging Artist and one Established Artist, with each receiving $50,000 in recognition of their exemplary artistic achievements and promise of future work. The recipients will be announced at the end of 2023.



Photo courtesy of HOK

FORGING AHEAD

Pittsburgh's Planning Commission has approved construction of Pitt Bioforge, a $250 million biomanufacturing facility that the University of Pittsburgh plans to develop in the city's Hazelwood neighborhood.

The proposed 185,000-square-foot facility will produce cell and gene therapies for diseases that currently do not have medical solutions. The anchor tenant will be ElevateBio, a Massachusetts-based company focused on developing cell and gene therapies.

Pitt Bioforge will be part of Hazelwood Green, a 178-acre former steel mill site that is being transformed into a sustainable, mixed-use development. Hazelwood Green is owned by Almono Limited Partnership, a joint venture of The Heinz Endowments, the Richard King Mellon Foundation and the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.



EXPERTISE RECOGNITION

In September, the Heinz Family Foundation announced the six recipients of the 28th annual Heinz Awards. The awards, which each include an unrestricted cash prize of $250,000, recognize the achievements of individuals who have expertise in areas that were important to the late Sen. John Heinz: the arts, the economy and the environment. This year's winners and their categories are:

Arts >

Kevin Beasley, a multidisciplinary artist whose work has been inspired by his personal experiences with history, generational memory, power and race in America.

Roberto Lugo, a ceramicist, activist, poet and educator whose works portray social resistance movements, hip-hop culture, and his own Puerto Rican and African heritage.

Economy >

Kathryn Finney, author and managing general partner of Genius Guild, a Chicago-based venture firm that invests in innovative companies that build, grow and promote healthy people, communities and environments.

Leah Penniman, co-founder of Soul Fire Farm, a community farm in Petersburg, New York, that centers Afro-Indigenous culture and practices and is committed to ending racism and promoting universal food access, sustainable agriculture and environmental justice.

Environment >

Nicole Horseherder, co-founder of Tó Nizhóní Ání, a water conservation organization in Kykotsmovi, Arizona, that is committed to protecting the waters of the Black Mesa Plateau on the Navajo Nation.

Colette Pichon Battle, co-founder of Taproot Earth, an environmental organization in Slidell, Louisiana, that works to assist and empower communities on the front lines of challenging environmental conditions to develop solutions and advance climate justice and democracy.

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