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The Magazine of The Heinz Endowments

Philanthropic investment is transforming Downtown Pittsburgh into a popular tourist destination, a bustling entertainment hub — and the city's new "in" neighborhood.



inside

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

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

That mission is to help our region thrive as a whole community—economically, ecologically, educationally and culturally—while advancing the

state of knowledge and practice in the fields in which we work. Our fields of emphasis include philanthropy in general and the disciplines represented by our five grantmaking programs: Arts & Culture; Children, Youth & Families; Community & Economic Development; Education; and Environment.

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

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

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

About the cover Although the iconic Point State Park fountain has been a hallmark of Pittsburgh's distinctive skyline for decades, recent foundation-supported renovations have made the fountain and the park even more picturesque. The postcard overlay on the cover highlights how both, along with the rest of Downtown Pittsburgh, appeal to residents and visitors. Photo by Dave DiCello.



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Middle school is often portrayed as a challenging phase in the lives of many students, but a Heinz Endowments grantmaking strategy is betting that it's the right time to encourage girls to reach their fullest potential.

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Downtown Pittsburgh is on the upswing, attracting an increasing number of people and investors to the heart of the city. That's been a big plus for Pittsburgh's economy, reputation and even its self-image.



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A growing number of talented artists are finding their niche and making their mark in Pittsburgh, thanks to support from an innovative grantmaking partnership between The Heinz Endowments and The Pittsburgh Foundation.

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In Issue 1 of *h* this year, the story “Rebound,” by former Endowments communications intern David Golebiewski, looked at the Pittsburgh region’s recovery after the collapse of the steel industry, with a focus on young adults. The article examined the economic resurgence, but also discussed some ongoing challenges, including persistent air quality problems. Jamin Bogi, policy and outreach coordinator for Group Against Smog and Pollution — GASP — and Bill Flanagan, executive vice president of corporate relations for the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, describe their organizations’ views on how environmental conditions and economic opportunities affect efforts to attract young people to the region.

Getting a “soft” edge on the competition

Pittsburgh’s recent history provides a rich field of study for those interested in understanding how a city can weather a sustained, unnatural disaster. Like other “legacy” cities once known as manufacturing powerhouses, Pittsburgh suffered from decades of population loss after the decline of the steel industry. Strong civic leadership, long-term planning and workforce reinvention led by universities, foundations and entrepreneurs guided us through the storm. Population levels stabilized. Pittsburgh’s progress is now touted by pundits, and the city is on the short lists of many from outside the region looking to make a move.

Allegheny County’s unemployment rate is lower than those of surrounding counties and the national average. Our strong job market attracts young people—but so do employment opportunities in many other metro regions. It’s here that “soft” criteria become important in Pittsburgh’s effort to attract new residents as we compete with other cities in the U.S. and worldwide.

Soft criteria are somewhat unquantifiable. When visitors entering Pittsburgh come through the Fort Pitt Tunnel, the view of Downtown—a small triangle of gleaming office towers bordered by flowing rivers and rolling hills—often enchants them. For many, it’s a first impression that can sprinkle their entire visit here in feel-good magic dust.

Conversely, the brown haze that shrouds the city on some days, visible from airplane windows or high buildings, consists of an entirely different kind of dust. What good is that beautiful and affordable Victorian-era home if it’s engulfed in the stench of rotten eggs or warm asphalt for days on end? Which

factor carries more weight with a young homebuyer, proximity to transit or increased cancer risk from inhaling air toxics?

Pittsburgh wrestles with some of the nation’s highest levels of ozone, fine particles and other pollutants linked to serious health effects from cradle to grave. The Group Against Smog and Pollution works to reduce air pollution in southwestern Pennsylvania, with initiatives such as working with local leaders to shape new regulations and teaching schoolchildren about air issues.

People race to or away from cities for many reasons—and air quality is on that list. GASP knows that clean air gives our citizens longer, healthier lives *and* makes our region more attractive to younger people, allowing Pittsburgh to continue its resurgence.

Pittsburghers are proud of our city’s industrial heritage and our survival of that industry’s downfall. To not only recover but to thrive again, we must confront our air quality issues head-on. Our economy needs it—our residents deserve it.

Jamin Bogi is the policy and outreach coordinator for the Group Against Smog and Pollution.

Making connections to improve quality of life

The Pittsburgh region is entering a new phase of its 70-year journey toward sustainable prosperity. From the mid-1940s through the 1970s, Renaissance I largely focused on big environmental challenges: air quality, water quality, flood control and urban blight. The past 35 years, particularly after the decline of the steel industry, have been marked by the “comeback,” with a major focus on the creation of a diverse, knowledge-based economy. If Pittsburgh’s first transformation was about

the environment and the second the economy, what is the challenge for the generation to come? The Allegheny Conference on Community Development is increasingly convinced that it will center on people.

Local population dynamics have changed; more people are moving to Pittsburgh than are leaving each year. But the death rate exceeds the birth rate, and we’re experiencing a Baby Boom “bulge”: Our region is home to about 140,000 more people ages 45 to 64 than those ages 25 to 44 who must replace them. To meet this challenge, we need to better educate and train people who live here, and we must attract and retain young people.

The Allegheny Conference has been paying close attention to emerging leaders. We have learned that they value quality of place as much as economic opportunity. Fortunately, our region has both. With more than 22,000 open jobs in our region today, the opportunity is here, and it is only going to get better. Similarly, our rivers and air are cleaner today than at any time since the start of the Industrial Revolution. A generation of investment in arts and culture, outdoor recreation and “green” building has made a huge difference. Yet there is still more work to do.

When we asked young emerging leaders about their top priorities to increase the competitiveness of our region, an improving economy and a cleaner environment both made the list. However, their top concern by far was “connectivity”—improvements to transit, transportation and other systems that would make it possible to live with less dependence on automobiles. Investing in such world-class infrastructure would have enormous environmental benefits as well.

Over the past seven decades, the Pittsburgh region has come full circle—from mobilizing support for a cleaner environment, to encouraging innovation to stimulate the economy, to focusing once again on cultivating an attractive quality of place. We must remain committed to ongoing improvement of both our economy and our environment. If we want to attract and retain the next generation, we have no other choice.

Bill Flanagan is executive vice president for corporate relations at the Allegheny Conference on Community Development.

celebrate



Remember when the first day of school was a time of innocence and wonder? The building seemed huge and imposing. The floors were well-scrubbed and waxed. And the classroom doors were flung wide with possibilities. On Aug. 18, Propel Hazelwood Principal LaKiesha George, left, warmly greeted children like Aalajja Ellis-Johnson, foreground, as they paraded along a path of hopeful expectation that often accompanies opening day of a new school. Pittsburgh school board members had twice rejected proposals to sell the former Burgwin Elementary building to the Hazelwood Initiative, a community development organization, for use as a charter school. Then in March, the third attempt proved to be the charm as the board allowed the group to buy the building, enabling the regional Propel Schools network to open a charter elementary school in Hazelwood. The neighborhood had been without a school since 2006, and Propel Hazelwood is a welcome — and welcoming — addition to the community.

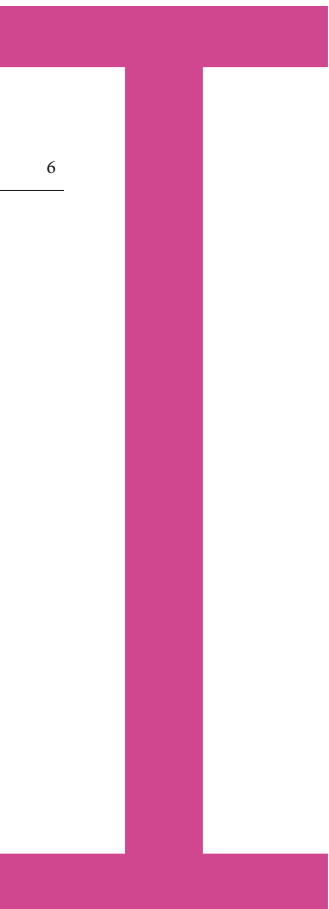
GIRL POWER

AFTER YEARS OF FUNDING VARIOUS PROGRAMS TO HELP GIRLS NAVIGATE ADOLESCENCE AND YOUNG ADULTHOOD, HEINZ ENDOWMENTS STAFF HONED A STRATEGY THAT FOCUSES ON AFRICAN AMERICAN GIRLS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL. THE RECALCULATION TO GO DEEP RATHER THAN BROAD HAS THE POTENTIAL TO STOP PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY START AND TO PLANT SEEDS OF SUCCESS WHEN THE GIRLS ARE MOST RECEPTIVE.

BY LEAH SAMUEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN ALTDORFER



The challenges facing young girls don't go away during the summer months. Gwen's Girls' Camp Destiny provides an alternative to weeks of unstructured time when school is out, empowering girls like 13-year-old Rayquel Stevenson, above, to reach their potential — with a heavy dose of Kennywood and other fun.



t's late winter, and 40 adolescent girls, most of whom are African American, gather at Chatham University on a chilly weekend morning for the YWCA Greater Pittsburgh's Saturday Academy.

In one classroom, the desks are pushed aside toward the walls. A dozen girls spread out in the open space, their sneakers and boots squeaking across the floor. Each then balances awkwardly on one foot, lifting her arms up high, posing as a wobbly, giggly tree. The group had watched and discussed a brief film about stress, and students from the college are now showing the girls how yoga can help relieve tension.

"That part is good for me because I have anxiety on tests," says 12-year-old Jalaya Sudduth. "I can study, do homework and recite it all back to you, but when it's time to take a test—whoa!"

Seventh-grader Hunter Harper says the yoga helps her, too. "I know I have anger issues," she acknowledges, a bit sheepishly, "and I don't like to be that way."

A participant in Saturday Academy for the past two years, Hunter enjoys the program's focus on science and math, since she is considering teaching math as a career.

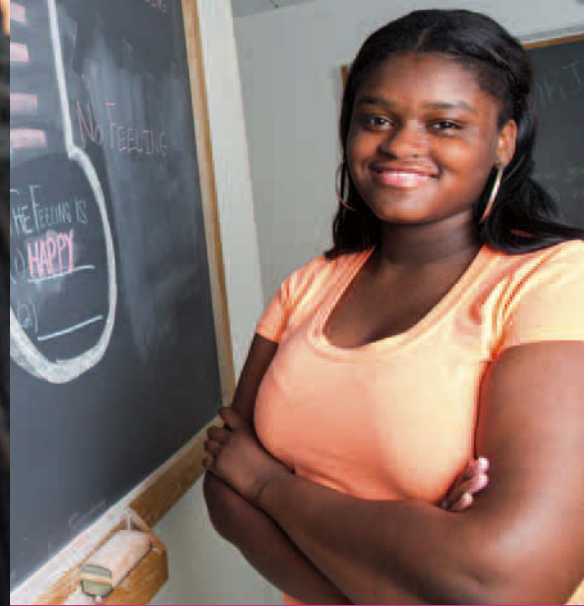
"It's my favorite subject," she says. "So I like that we get help with it."

In another classroom, girls sit at long tables passing around bottles of clear nail polish. But it's time for physics, not pedicures. The girls discuss light reflection and refraction as they gently place small patches of black paper into pans of water. Each opens a bottle and holds the brush over her pan until a single drop of polish lands on the floating paper, quickly spreading and drying into an iridescent rainbow.

The Saturday Academy is part of STEM—Science Technology Engineering Math—Stars, which is a collaborative project of the local YWCA's TechGYRLS initiative and the Carnegie Science Center's GEMS—Girls Engaged in Math and Science—program. The academy not only aims to assist girls with their academic performance, but also to guide them in expanding their expectations for the future. It introduces girls to science and technology, encourages them toward college studies and careers in those fields, and helps them develop coping skills for everyday life.

"We teach the girls how to leverage their strengths," says Alexis Howard, YWCA's teen services director. "We encourage discussion and hand-on activities, and incorporating what they learn into their lives."

For the past 20 years, The Heinz Endowments' Children, Youth & Families Program has helped groups like the YWCA that advocate

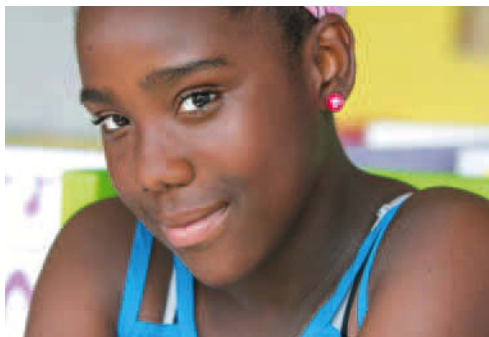


These young women — Mikayla Woods, above, and Hunter Harper, left — spent weekend mornings this year exploring science and math through lab experiments and craft projects with the YWCA Greater Pittsburgh's Saturday Academy. Physics and geometry lessons were interspersed with group activities about stress management and conflict resolution. Helping girls like seventh-graders Loren Burke, Tekenna Carter and Rylee Socolove, left to right below, to cope with real-world problems is also the focus of the Gwen's Girls program based in Pittsburgh's North Side.



"I've learned if you put your mind to it, you can do it."

LOREN BURKE, 13
SEVENTH GRADE
CURRENT CAREER GOAL:
HIP-HOP DANCER



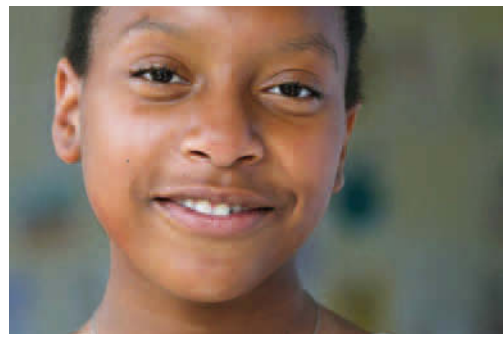
"I'm prepared because I used to be shy, but I'm not shy anymore."

TEKENNA CARTER, 12
SEVENTH GRADE
CURRENT CAREER GOAL:
DOCTOR OR LAWYER



"If I make a mistake... I will remember it [now] before doing it again."

JORDAN ROUSE, 12
SEVENTH GRADE
CURRENT CAREER GOAL:
R&B AND HIP-HOP SINGER



"I ASPIRE"

The girls above are looking forward to the years ahead, though they may settle into adult careers that are different from the ones they're considering now. They all agree that Gwen's Girls, a program founded by the late Gwen Elliott, a retired Pittsburgh Police commander, has helped them to be more disciplined and focused in school and in life. As seventh-grader Rylee Socolove put it, "[The program] shows you the pros and cons about your future. It leads you in the right direction."

for girls to establish and build their programs. Various initiatives show girls how to maintain their overall well-being, evaluate life options and set goals. Several also aid young women in avoiding or coping with struggles, such as teen pregnancy, that can derail them in pursuing their objectives.

But after reviewing grantmaking in this area—its accomplishments and its challenges—staff decided to step up the foundation's efforts to help middle school girls, resulting in a program investment of \$820,000 since 2012. The focus also has been on reaching African American girls, who face race- and gender-driven needs and challenges that are especially acute.

"Middle school is a time when girls are beginning to make independent decisions, and the importance of identity increases," says Carmen Anderson, senior program officer for Children, Youth & Families at the Endowments. "This emphasis is less of a new

grantmaking agenda and more of a fine-tuning of a specific prevention strategy."

CY&F Senior Director Marge Petruska explains that "there was not one glaring clarion call" leading to the decision to direct funding to programs for middle school girls. Instead, after years of supporting initiatives designed to address a variety of concerns affecting girls and young women, Endowments staff re-evaluated the foundation's approach.

"What mattered? How are girls faring? We didn't ask these questions all the time," Petruska says. "We were not in the wrong places. But we couldn't say where we were had moved the needle."

The Endowments' special focus on African American girls in middle school is well-timed, adds Kristy Trautmann, executive director of the FISA Foundation. The 103-year-old organization is dedicated to programming for women and girls in southwestern Pennsylvania and has partnered with the Endowments on some initiatives. Trautmann explains that both foundations are trying to support African American girls during a historic moment in gender awareness.

"We need to be reaching girls earlier," she says. "Something happens developmentally in the tween and teen years, with many of the issues we're most alarmed about starting to emerge in the middle and high school years."

The Rev. Brenda Gregg, director of Project Destiny, explains that her organization focuses on middle school girls to address social and behavioral challenges that have become as serious as those for boys. "With poor academics, domestic violence in dating and other problems, we want to give girls supportive relationships," she says.

The program offers enrichment activities such as dance, art and photography in addition to tutoring and homework support. Project Destiny also partners with the organization Strong Women,

“You can’t be shy when you want a job, you have to speak up.”

VICTORY DAVIS, 12
SIXTH GRADE
CURRENT CAREER GOALS:
DISC JOCKEY AND ARTIST

“I want to help people.”

RYLEE SOCOLOVE, 12
SEVENTH GRADE
CURRENT CAREER GOALS:
GWEN’S GIRLS INTERN, ENGINEER



Strong Girls to provide mentors and with TWOgether Pittsburgh to offer a teen-focused curriculum that helps the girls in areas such as self-esteem and career enhancement.

These and other girls initiatives generate long-term benefits to the broader society as well, Trautmann notes. “African American girls are the bellwether of our society,” she says. “And girls are now internationally recognized as a good investment for raising all boats in a community. In that context, the Endowments can really help change the conversation.”

CY&F’s strategy began with developing a fundamental understanding of the hardships facing many black girls. The latest research reveals that expectations, held both by and for African American girls, feature a lower quality of life overall compared to their white peers. Those beliefs can become a self-fulfilling prophecy of poverty, early parenthood, violence and poor health. In turn, these struggles often deplete the mental resources essential for black girls to prevail over difficult circumstances.

To take a closer look at these challenges, the Endowments funded a study, “Gender Norms: A Key to Improving Health and Wellness among Black Women and Girls.” The report was co-written by Scyatta Wallace, CEO of Janisaw Co., which assists organizations in creating leadership development and life-skills programs for girls, and Riki Wilchins, executive director of TrueChild, an organization that provides consulting services to agencies, policymakers and philanthropies on issues related to gender, race and class. Their research focused on three main problem areas: basic health and wellness, reproductive and sexual health, and intimate relationships.

The report, which can be found at www.heinz.org, points to particularly destructive realities for black girls. Among them is what “Gender Norms” describes as a “weathering effect,” a physical and mental wearing down of black girls: “[They] have unique race and

gendered experiences of discrimination, which results in multiple stresses that impair their immune system and expose them to higher rates of disease and lower levels of health and well-being.”

Also of concern, according to the report, is the lingering perception that black girls are hypersexual, promiscuous and without control over their lives. That perception drives social hostilities and pressures to conform to stereotypical notions of behavior and appearance. Those ideas often combine dangerously with an expectation that black masculinity is about anger, violence, coercion and control. “Gender Norms” points to evidence that internalizing these beliefs as they are propagated in media and the community is connected to lower self-esteem, sexual risk-taking and the experience of violence among black girls.

Gwen’s Girls is another Pittsburgh agency confronting those challenges with the support of the Endowments. The 12-year-old organization was founded by the late Gwen Elliott the same year she retired as a Pittsburgh Police commander. Young women are placed with the program through social service agencies or law enforcement.

Denise McGill heads the residential program for Gwen’s Girls, which has operated a 15-bed group home for teens since 2006. “We take shelter placements, and we get kids who have been to nearly every other group home in the county,” she says. “Our girls typically come to us due to parent–child conflict, abuse or parental addiction. They often have a history of abuse and neglect; some of them are pregnant, and yet are still going through puberty.”

The girls in the residential program are offered counseling for themselves and their families, assistance with schoolwork, transportation to medical and other appointments, and classes in parenting and job readiness. But even as McGill protects and supports the girls in her care, she believes that prevention is better than intervention. She points out that the choices girls make—and the risks



After being placed in foster care, Angela Campbell, above, arrived at Gwen's Girls in need of help when she was 14. She is now pursuing a master's degree in social work at the University of Pittsburgh.

At Gwen's Girls' Camp Destiny, Jordan Rouse, 12, and Loren Burke, 13, right, spent their summer days in a safe, fun environment and learned to make positive life choices with the help of community role models like artist Anqwenique Wingfield, far right. Wingfield taught the eight-week camp session as an Arts in Action Teaching Artist with MGR Youth Empowerment.

they take—are part of a structure of attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that begin long before they are sexually active, under arrest or in foster care.

“We live in a reactive society, where we get to things after they become a problem,” she says. “But we need preventative programs that are realistic to the population we are dealing with.”

Housed in a former school building, Gwen's Girls offers space and materials for study and homework help for girls in its after-school program. Mentors and guest speakers introduce the girls to various career fields and community resources. The girls go on field trips and tours of workplaces and colleges. And community outreach coordinator Crystaline Barger regularly visits local elementary and middle schools, where she leads group discussions and other activities.

“Our life-skills program focuses on self-esteem and healthy relationships,” she says. “We want to help the girls' transition through challenges.”

The Endowments' refocusing of its support for girls' issues comes as its initiatives for black male students from elementary school through college have gained a higher public profile. The foundation's African American Men and Boys Task Force was formed in 2007 in response to sobering socioeconomic statistics about black men in Pittsburgh and community requests to help address the situation. The task force funds programs that emphasize academic and professional achievement, increased economic opportunity, identity and character development, and more well-rounded media depictions of black men and boys. Those more widely known efforts, however, often overshadow the Endowments' work on behalf of girls and young women.

“Our work in the boys' space has received more attention because it had an intentionally public component,” Anderson says. “We are trying to change the negative perception, impressions and images of black boys and men. A public awareness component

within our communications strategy is a significant part of our work in this area.”

To ensure that the Endowments' efforts on behalf of black girls include a broad and culturally relevant context, the CY&F Program enlisted the help of Patricia Cluss, a psychologist and researcher with the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Cluss examined the effectiveness of prevention and intervention programs across the country that cover issues such as teen pregnancy, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS.

“I did two things,” she says. “One was a literature search for the kinds of interventions that had been tried, what worked and what didn't. Then I looked at outcomes and how they had been measured.”

For some of the programs she examined, there was not enough evidence of their effectiveness for black girls. “These were programs that had great measures for outcomes,” Cluss explains. “They had determined the effects of programs by using questionnaires to measure things like self-esteem and self-concepts. But they had only been used with a white, middle-class sample.”

Cluss also points out that the programs she studied sometimes did not measure the kinds of development that are most relevant to black girls. “The areas we're interested in are things like empowerment and resilience, and there aren't good studies of programs that have been tested in that way,” she says. “But that's where [Endowments-funded] programs can feel free to innovate.”

Measuring effectiveness rather than relying on anecdotal evidence of success has become a much larger part of programs serving African American girls in the Pittsburgh region. Agencies are using surveys for girls, parents, mentors and teachers that are given before and after the girls' program participation.

Groups also are measuring the girls' progress in their initiatives through comparisons. For example, because the Saturday Academy is part of a larger YWCA initiative for middle school girls, the



organization has a way to learn whether the program is working relative to its other efforts.

“One thing we want to do is follow all our girls and look at their grades, school attendance, pregnancy rates and other things, and compare the Saturday Academy girls to our participants who are not in it,” teen services director Howard says.

Determining the true effectiveness of programs and where changes might be needed helps the Endowments better target its investments in programming for black girls. Individual stories of young women avoiding pitfalls or getting by in spite of them—while inspiring—are no longer enough.

“We’ve always supported programs that help girls avoid behavior that may lead to negative consequences, have healthy birth outcomes if they are pregnant, or increase their parenting skills if they have a child and receive supportive services as needed,” Anderson says. “But it’s important to move beyond that. The question now isn’t just, ‘What does it take to survive?’ We are asking, ‘What does it take for black girls to thrive?’”

Petruska adds that the Endowments staff members also will be looking at the long-term, systemic impact of the different girls initiatives as they consider more than just participation numbers in evaluating results. “We’re hoping to examine issues around professional development, as well as create a new model for establishing future programs.”

But that doesn’t mean that individual successes aren’t celebrated.

“The rewarding moments come when we have kids that call back and thank us, or when you run into a young woman someplace, and she’s doing well,” says McGill of Gwen’s Girls.

On the 22nd floor of the University of Pittsburgh’s Cathedral of Learning, Angela Campbell settles onto a sofa in the graduate student lounge. Her back and shoulders are straight as she leans slightly forward, her large eyes alert, her face eager and curious.

Campbell’s lightly upswept hair gives full display of two ebony crosses hanging from her ears and tapping her shoulders as she turns toward a sunny window overlooking the university campus and the city beyond.

Campbell arrived at Gwen’s Girls when she was 14, after being placed in foster care. “I went into the child welfare system because of truancy and unhealthy, abusive things going on at home,” she says.

She remained with the program for three years. “Vans picked us up to go to Gwen’s Girls after school. We did homework, had counseling, went on field trips and did a lot of other things.”

Campbell eventually became a camp counselor for Gwen’s Girls and improved her grade-point average. She went on to attend Bennett College, a historically black women’s college in North Carolina. There, she worked as a resident assistant in her dorm, served as president of the social work students’ club and volunteered at an orphanage in Costa Rica, among other accomplishments. After graduating from Bennett last year, Campbell is now pursuing a master’s degree in social work at Pitt.

“I want to work with foster youth who are transitioning [to adult life],” she says. “They are very vulnerable, and since I’ve done it myself, I think I can really advocate for them.”

With a focus on her goals, Campbell has little interest in those who expect less of her because she’s a black woman. Talking about it turns her welcoming smile into an impatient grimace.

“You know, I just don’t have time for that,” she says, sighing and rolling her eyes. “If you don’t like me or you want to make assumptions about me, go ahead. That’s your problem. I’ve got better things to do than worry about that.”

Her achievements and her positive attitude are the result of years of support that started early. “The combination of being at Gwen’s Girls and then going to a women’s college really helped me,” she says. “Now, I’m more empathetic, I connect with other black women better, and I’m learning to be comfortable in my own skin.” *h*

Transformed into a European-style piazza and reinvigorated with more life than ever before, historic Market Square (circa 1764) is once again a hub of Downtown activity. During weekday lunchtimes, office workers and Downtown students fill the Square, where you'll also find concerts, rallies, public art and unique boutiques. And perhaps the biggest attraction of all — Market Square is Pittsburgh people-watching at its finest.

DOWNTOWN AND UPBEAT



THE TRANSFORMATION UNDERWAY IN DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH IS STILL A CONVERSATION STARTER FOR MANY PEOPLE WHO REMEMBER HOW MUCH WAS LACKING AS RECENTLY AS A DECADE AGO. PHILANTHROPIC AS WELL AS GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS AND UNIVERSITY INVESTMENTS HAVE PUMPED NEW LIFE INTO THE CITY'S CORE, WHICH GETS STRONGER WITH EACH SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVE.

BY JEFFERY FRASER

IT'S A COLD MID-MARCH EVENING IN PITTSBURGH'S MARKET SQUARE.

Ned Aland is getting a kick out of watching his 8-year-old triplets and niece screech with delight as poses they strike are captured in light and projected as silhouettes onto a large outdoor screen. It's all part of "Congregation," a temporary public art installation imported from the United Kingdom that transforms the Downtown plaza into an interactive stage after sundown with a mesmerizing combination of video, light and sound.

What's most remarkable, though, is that Aland and his family are not alone.

At least 40 others are bundled against freezing temperatures in what a decade earlier was a dingy, bus-congested part of Downtown that people avoided rather than sought out as a place to congregate—especially at night.

Restaurants surrounding the square hum with the conversations of diners. One block away, live jazz streams from the warmth of the Fairmont Pittsburgh hotel lobby. In the Cultural District, the theaters are lit with offerings such as "An Iliad," based on Homer's epic poem, Ravel's "Boléro" and the Tony Award-winning musical "Once," which includes pre-show entertainment and audience members buying drinks on stage to create a cabaret mood. Even when the performances are well into their first acts, a couple arriving at Six Penn Kitchen nearby is lucky to find a table. The larger party behind them must wait at the bar, where they find little elbow room.

The scene isn't lost on the 55-year-old Aland, who lives in North Versailles, east of Pittsburgh, but grew up in the city's Greenfield neighborhood. "I remember Market Square when you could drive through it," he says. "I don't know if I'd have taken the kids here the way it was. Not at night. Nobody was down here. I wouldn't have come down here at all at night."

Downtown Pittsburgh has been infused with a new vitality in recent years. Visible evidence of rebirth includes the more vibrant nightlife Aland witnessed that winter evening, which stands in sharp contrast to Downtown's long-standing reputation as a place that closed shop at 5 p.m. Other noticeable changes include a proliferation of new restaurants, once-rare sidewalk dining and public art, fewer empty storefronts, new hotels and apartment complexes, and an expanded urban college campus.

Data also show the emergence of a record-setting tourism industry over the past 10 years, billions of mostly private dollars invested in new development and renovation, and a sizable increase in people who choose to make Downtown Pittsburgh their home.



The American premiere last February of "Congregation" dazzled passers-by, who became the performers in the captivating sound and light installation that marked the inaugural project of the Market Square Public Art Program. The program is produced by the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership with technical assistance from the Office of Public Art and will bring another temporary project to Market Square this winter.

“I DIDN’T HAVE FAMILY HERE, AND I DIDN’T KNOW ANYONE HERE. I WANTED TO BE CLOSE TO WORK. I WANTED TO MEET PEOPLE. I WANTED SOME EXCITEMENT, AN AFTER-WORK KIND OF VIBRANCY. I WANTED TO BE DOWNTOWN, WHERE I THOUGHT THAT WOULD BE POSSIBLE.”

Melanie Harrington, CEO, Vibrant Pittsburgh

Melanie Harrington, left, CEO of the workforce development organization Vibrant Pittsburgh, and Candi Castleberry-Singleton, right, chief inclusion & diversity officer for University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, both live Downtown where they enjoy lifestyle amenities such as alfresco dining at one of the city’s newer restaurants, Seviche.

The transformation—which remains a work in progress—hasn’t followed any single master plan, public or otherwise. Rather, it’s been the result of a mosaic of initiatives undertaken or supported by city government, corporations and commercial developers, as well as arts organizations, civic groups and local foundations, including The Heinz Endowments.

The Endowments alone has invested more than \$35 million since 2000 to support various initiatives that have contributed to the revitalization of Downtown. Among them are major components of a Downtown ecosystem that has blossomed since the dawn of the 21st century: the continued development of the Cultural District, the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust that oversees it and the environment-friendly David L. Lawrence Convention Center.

“It is very exciting to realize how high-quality design and cultural activity are central to all these efforts,” says Janet Sarbaugh, senior director of the Endowments’ Arts & Culture Program. “I believe that the early example of the Cultural District’s development set a tone and a direction for the explosion of activity we have now.”

Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council CEO Mitch Swain makes a similar connection between creation of the 14-block Cultural District and the improvements that extend beyond it. “The arts were successfully used as an economic driver to redevelop the Cultural District,” he says. “And that was a signal to commercial developers and others that if you do it the right way, people will come Downtown.”

USING THE ARTS AS AN ANCHOR

H.J. “Jack” Heinz II was the driving force behind the Cultural District and a founder of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, established in 1984 as a nonprofit arts organization to spur economic and cultural development in Downtown. The Trust emerged as one of the largest owners of Downtown property and has been instrumental in removing the porn shops and other “noxious” uses that long populated the streets. It has renovated historic theaters and built new ones. In the process, the Trust has transformed a red-light district into a world-class arts and entertainment corridor that is a model for urban redevelopment.

The Cultural District today includes more than a half-dozen performance venues and is home to the Pittsburgh Symphony, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Opera, Pittsburgh Public Theater, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera and other arts organizations. Also lining its streets are galleries, a growing number of restaurants and apartments, and the Pittsburgh Public Schools’ Creative and Performing Arts magnet school. What once was the seedy underbelly of Downtown is now a destination for more than 2 million people a year.

“In the early days, we thought of the Cultural District almost as an island or oasis within Downtown—a finite zone where cultural activity and design excellence lived,” Sarbaugh says. “Today, the idea of the district as an island seems quaint. Our challenge going forward is to establish clear standards for future development, coordinate our efforts and create more resources to build on this work to make all of Downtown Pittsburgh an outstanding urban center.”

The Cultural Trust has explored that idea over the past decade. Theater Square was developed in 2003 to fill out the block on Penn Avenue that held the Pittsburgh Public Theater, adding a box office, a cabaret theater that the Cultural District lacked and a much-needed 790-space parking garage. The project stands as an example of the public-private partnerships that have defined Downtown revitalization, with support from the Endowments, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, the Eden Hall Foundation and others.



John Altendorfer

Theater Square also includes space for an upscale restaurant, now occupied by Meat & Potatoes, in hopes of casting the Cultural District as fertile ground for such establishments. In the years since, Six Penn Kitchen and Sonoma Grille opened nearby, along with more than a dozen other eateries.

The Trust experimented with a riverfront parcel acquired as part of the Theater Square project, partnering with developer Lincoln Properties to build The Encore on 7th, an apartment high-rise that opened in 2006 as the first new Downtown residential construction in 35 years.

A year after The Encore began renting its apartments, Piatt Place opened in the abandoned Lazarus department store on Fifth Avenue, offering luxury condominiums atop a few ground-floor restaurants and shops. The units sold, kindling a Downtown condo market that in 2012 topped \$11 million in sales. Apartments also multiplied as residential construction and renovation projects responded to the newfound demand for Downtown living.

“We wanted to prove that if you build it, they will come,” Cultural Trust President and CEO J. Kevin McMahan says. “Lo and behold, it leased up immediately, and it’s been full ever since. Now there are hundreds of new apartments happening Downtown, and they’re filling up.”

MAKING DOWNTOWN HOME

Stimulating the market, in fact, has required years of effort, including city tax abatements for residential development. More than 126,000 people work Downtown, which has long been a strong employment center. The challenge for several decades, however, has been cultivating a healthy residential population that could turn Downtown into a 24-hour neighborhood, which would help sustain businesses and enhance safety. In the mid-2000s, the Endowments was among the philanthropic supporters of the Downtown Housing Working Group and joined the McCune and Richard King Mellon foundations in helping to create the Downtown Living Initiative to encourage housing development.

DOWNTOWN CENSUS

DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL POPULATION (2013):

12,344

POPULATION INCREASE SINCE 2000

21%

POPULATION INCREASE SINCE 2010

10.5%

NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS (2012):

4,300

PERCENT OF THOSE UNITS THAT WERE OCCUPIED (2012):

96



ROAD TRIP

Doug and Amy Cook of Carlisle, Pa., packed up the minivan and drove their three kids west to Pittsburgh over the Fourth of July weekend. Their younger son, Benjamin, 12, documented the getaway on his iPod Touch; he and his brother, Jonathan, 15, have plenty of photography experience as tech team members at their family's church. It was the second trip for the Cooks to Pittsburgh — or "Picksburg" — as daughter Ariella, now 9, pronounced it during her first visit four years ago. Jonathan's photos, above, capture some of the highlights of their weekend, from Just Ducky Tours to dinosaurs, Zambelli fireworks to incline rides.

Mary Navarro, former Endowments senior program officer for Arts & Culture, was the foundation's representative to the Working Group and remembers how hard it was for developers to get their ideas financed.

"We knew that housing was an important complement to the cultural and business life, and with the right combination of housing options and amenities, people would be attracted to live Downtown—but the market was untested," recalls Navarro, now a nonprofit consultant. "The foundation community was able to help support some demonstration projects that we hoped would spur private development. As you can see today, many more people are living Downtown. Several new housing projects have been completed, and new ones are breaking ground."

**IN 2012, VISITORS SPENT
\$5.5 BILLION
IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY, AND THE MOST
POPULAR DESTINATION IN THE COUNTY
IS DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH.**

Rob Stephany, director of the Endowments' Community & Economic Development Program, notes that perceptions of Downtown change when individuals and families make it their home. "It's now become somebody's neighborhood, and people vest themselves differently when it's their neighborhood."

That was the case for Melanie Harrington, CEO of the workforce development organization Vibrant Pittsburgh, who settled in Downtown after moving from Atlanta in 2010. "I didn't have family here, and I didn't know anyone here," she

says. "I wanted to be close to work. I wanted to meet people. I wanted some excitement, an after-work kind of vibrancy. I wanted to be Downtown, where I thought that would be possible."

After seeing places in a number of other city neighborhoods, she chose The Pennsylvanian, a Downtown apartment and office building housed in a historic train station. It was a decision some Pittsburghers she later encountered found curious. "When I began telling people I lived Downtown, I got these surprised looks and questions: 'Why? Is anybody down there with you? Is anything going on? Where do you go grocery shopping?' All of these things that were not issues for me."

Along with stories like Harrington's, data suggest that the aggressive efforts to promote Downtown living are bearing fruit. Downtown held nearly 4,300 residential units in 2012—45 percent more than were available in 2000. Nearly 96 percent of those apartments and condos were occupied.

The Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership estimates the residential population of Greater Downtown reached 12,344 in 2013, which, when compared to U.S. Decennial Census data, suggests a 21 percent increase in residents since 2000 and a 10.5 percent increase since 2010. The central business district has the largest residential population in the Greater Downtown area, which also includes the North Shore, lower Hill District and near Strip District.

Harrington saw signs of this trend not long after moving Downtown. "I began to notice more people catching up and meeting after work; bigger crowds in the restaurants; longer waiting lists for Downtown apartments, rentals and condos; and more people on walks Downtown in the evening," she says. "I decided that Downtown was where I wanted to stay, where I'm the happiest."

Downtown Pittsburgh also is developing a demographic profile distinct from many other parts of southwestern Pennsylvania. Some 45 percent of those living Downtown are under the age of 40 and 27 percent are younger than 30, according to a recent survey of residents. Only 7 percent are over 70 at a time when Census data estimate the elderly account for 17.7 percent of the population in the seven-county Pittsburgh Metropolitan Statistical Area.

"We're seeing the Downtown residential population reach that tipping point where restaurants and bars are able to extend their hours and get a second or third seating," says Robert Rubinstein, acting URA executive director. "They're younger. They're more diverse. They're the new Downtown population."

VISITING PITTSBURGH

Another barometer of Downtown revitalization is tourism trends—and the tourism business has never been more robust in the Pittsburgh region. Business travelers, sports fans, theatergoers and photo-snapping vacationers on Just Ducky

DREAMS DEFERRED

For all of the progress, not every goal of Downtown revitalization over the past 10 years has been realized.

Signs of the impending economic recession led the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust to delay its ambitious plan to develop a block of Eighth Avenue in the Cultural District into a riverfront residential district not long after it was announced in 2006. "If we hadn't put it on hold, it would've been a financial disaster," says Cultural Trust President and CEO J. Kevin McMahon. "Sometimes big plans take a little longer."

The development initiative, which the Cultural District hopes to reactivate soon, includes apartment buildings, a riverfront park, shops, restaurants and arts space.

The long-term sustainability of the \$40 million August Wilson Center for African American Culture also remains in question despite successful efforts by The Heinz Endowments and the Pittsburgh and Richard King Mellon foundations, along with the Urban Redevelopment Authority and city and county officials, to fend off a bid to convert the site into a hotel. The center had fallen into a deep financial crisis that left it unable to pay its mortgage and other bills. It was handed over to a state-appointed conservator in 2013, only four years after it opened in the heart of the Cultural District. A deal was reached at the end of September that allowed the foundation-led coalition to purchase the building for \$8.49 million to cover much of the center's debts and preserve its mission to provide black cultural programming. Strategies must be further developed for establishing the leadership and programming needed to ensure that the city's premier African American arts and culture venue does not face the same troubles in the future.

And despite community and philanthropic support for maintaining the August Wilson Center, additional hotel space still is coveted for Downtown Pittsburgh. When the David L. Lawrence Convention Center opened in 2004, it did so lacking its front door: an attached mega hotel that was intended to rest on what today are two surface parking lots. The demand of developers for up to \$50 million in government subsidies is the chief reason the hotel was never built.

The lack of an adjacent hotel is a disadvantage for the Downtown convention center when bidding for large national conventions against a highly competitive field of cities with complexes built to host such events. These include smaller metropolitan centers such as Austin, Texas, where two 1,000-room convention hotels are in development with private money thanks to the growth of tourism. Large national conventions can require 3,000 or more rooms on peak nights close to the convention center, and their planners prefer to negotiate with as few hotels as possible to secure them. Downtown Pittsburgh typically can offer up to 2,400 peak-night rooms.

How the new hotels scheduled to open Downtown within the next few years will affect the city's chances of landing major national conventions is unclear. Continued growth of the region's tourism trade, however, could help convince a developer to build a convention center hotel with little or no public subsidy as in Austin.

Another challenge to the revitalization of Downtown Pittsburgh is the lingering public perception among some in the region that the heart of the city is unsafe — an attitude that belies crime data.

Crime in the City of Pittsburgh is low compared to other cities of similar size, and Downtown is no exception, FBI Uniform Crime Report statistics suggest. Pittsburgh's rates for burglary, rape, homicide, robbery, car theft and larceny all fall below — and, in several cases, well below — the average rates of the 15 benchmark cities tracked by Pittsburgh Today, a regional indicators project at the University of Pittsburgh.

"It just amazes me," says Robert Rubinstein, economic development director for the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh. "People who haven't been Downtown in the last few years are still afraid. They think it's dangerous. They have no idea how it has changed."

One real safety risk, however, is the high levels of diesel pollution that have been measured in Downtown. Cancer-causing emissions from diesel-powered buses, trucks, barges and trains can become trapped in "canyons" formed by tall buildings, limiting their dispersion. Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health are working with the Allegheny County Health Department to map when and where diesel pollution levels are elevated and to better understand how each source contributes to the problem so that specific recommendations for improvement can be developed.

boat tours are spending unprecedented amounts of money. Visitors added a record \$8.5 billion to the regional economy in 2012, the most recent data available from the Pennsylvania Tourism Office. The top travel destination in the region was Allegheny County, where visitors spent \$5.5 billion, and the most popular destination in the county was Downtown Pittsburgh.

That kind of business has led to more Downtown hotels and a broader range of lodging options and price points in the past decade. Key hospitality industry rates, such as revenue per available room and occupancy, have soared and are expected to continue to climb, making the Pittsburgh region and Downtown, in particular, one of the nation's hottest hotel markets. At least six more Downtown hotels are scheduled to open in the next few years, including the Kimpton chain's latest Hotel Monaco with its eclectic décor, wine hour and morning tea. In addition, plans were recently announced to renovate a 104-year-old building to house a 225-room hotel operated by Embassy Suites, along with a conference room, ballroom and restaurant.

"Pittsburgh from a hotel standpoint was always a strong Monday-through-Thursday market because of all of the corporations and travel related to them," says Kevin Kilkeary, president of Prospera Hospitality, a Pittsburgh-based hospitality management company. "Now it's become a regional destination for a lot of social venues, whether it is sports, the arts, education or history.

"If you look at the most dominant hotel markets — Manhattan, Boston, Miami, San Francisco — what they have is a strong combination of corporate and related business and a strong social venue of attractions. That is what is happening in Pittsburgh."

The 2004 opening of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center gave the Downtown tourism and hospitality industries a major boost. With its sweeping roof and appealing riverfront location,

the building has added another distinctive feature to the Pittsburgh skyline. It has attracted worldwide attention thanks to its green building designation and enabled the city to host signature international events, such as the 2009 G20 Summit.

Convention center events drew fewer people in 2012 than in 2004, its first year. Yet those who attended in 2012 had a greater economic footprint, filling more hotel rooms and pumping an estimated \$118.2 million into the local economy, which is 32 percent more tourism dollars than were generated in 2004.

“Our whole life changed the minute the convention center opened,” says Craig Davis, president and CEO of VisitPittsburgh, the tourism promotion agency for Allegheny County. “It has a deeper significance in this renaissance than a lot of people give it credit for. The area around it has changed dramatically with the new hotels and restaurants. Penn and Liberty avenues have become beautiful streetscapes. The city is a lot more saleable now.”

The convention center initially earned Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design—LEED—Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. In 2012, it became the first convention center to receive LEED Platinum designation. Support from the local philanthropic community, including the Endowments and the Hillman, Claude Worthington Benedum and Richard King Mellon foundations, helped make that achievement possible. It has fueled a local green building movement—particularly in the heart of the city—that has established Pittsburgh as a leader among cities.

The Gardens at Market Square, for example, is planned as a LEED Silver skyscraper housing a hotel, offices and restaurants. But at the forefront of corporate investment in Downtown and green building development is The PNC Financial Services Group, which has transformed several city blocks as it expanded in Pittsburgh, where it is headquartered.

Construction of The Tower at PNC Plaza, which is expected to open next year as the first LEED Platinum skyscraper in the country, has removed a block of dilapidated buildings in the heart of the Downtown. In 2010, PNC opened Three PNC Plaza, replacing another stretch of rundown buildings with one of the nation’s largest mixed-use green buildings, which holds office space, the Fairmont hotel, condominiums and ground-floor retail. PNC’s other Downtown holdings include PNC Firstside Center, considered the largest LEED-certified building in the world when it opened in 2000, as well as the bank’s One and Two PNC Plaza buildings.

Still, it is The Tower at PNC Plaza that James Rohr, Endowments board member and retired PNC chairman and CEO, described to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in

2011 as an “exclamation point” on the bank’s investment in Pittsburgh and “another symbol of our deep bond with this city and this region.” PNC is funding the project without public help, and the 40-story, nearly all-glass structure will be a sparkling testament to both the city’s continuing renaissance and its stature in green building.

“That whole green movement has taken the steam out of the argument that we’re still a Rust Belt city,” Davis says.

“THAT WHOLE GREEN MOVEMENT HAS TAKEN THE STEAM OUT OF THE ARGUMENT THAT WE’RE STILL A RUST BELT CITY.”

Craig Davis, president and CEO, VisitPittsburgh

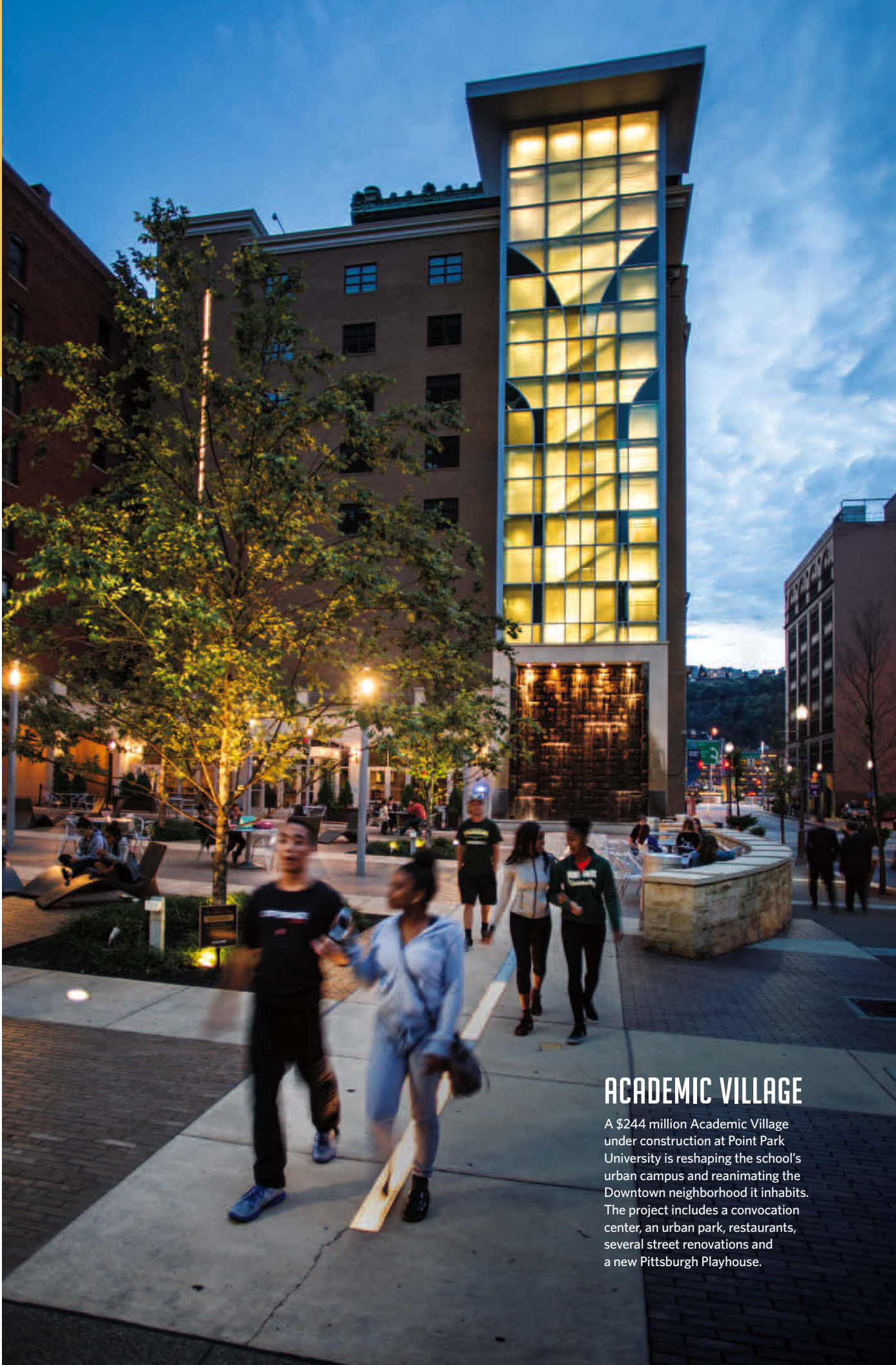
EXPANDING THE TURNAROUND

Such large-scale projects highlight an unanticipated aspect of the Downtown renewal that has seen more than \$5 billion invested in new development since 2006. In some cases, disappointing attempts at Downtown revitalization in the 1990s were salvaged to help seed the new office and residential development that later followed.

The collapse of the city’s plan to remake the core of Downtown into what was to be called the Marketplace at Fifth and Forbes left the URA holding properties that were acquired to accommodate the controversial urban shopping and entertainment complex. Control of those properties later enabled the URA to assemble and sell parcels, which became key pieces of sites for the Tower at PNC Plaza, Three PNC Plaza and The Gardens at Market Square.

The Lazarus department store, another unsuccessful effort to resuscitate the Downtown retail business, closed in 2004, six years after the city invested heavily in its development. A few years later, the building was sold and renovated as Piatt Place condominiums.

Nearby, Market Square had been in a state of decline for decades as traffic congestion, failed businesses and crime turned the city’s historic central public space into a place to avoid. Its renovation into a European piazza-style meeting place, completed in 2010, stands as a milestone



ACADEMIC VILLAGE

A \$244 million Academic Village under construction at Point Park University is reshaping the school's urban campus and reanimating the Downtown neighborhood it inhabits. The project includes a convocation center, an urban park, restaurants, several street renovations and a new Pittsburgh Playhouse.



Cheryl Mann

Point Park University's Academic Village features the George Rowland White Performance Center, a Gold LEED-certified building with state-of-the-art dance studios and performance space. An old surface parking lot was transformed into a lively urban park enjoyed by students and Downtown residents alike. Still in the works is the university's new Pittsburgh Playhouse, relocating from Oakland, and a convocation center, pictured in the drawing above.



Point Park University

in Downtown Pittsburgh's revitalization and another example of the public-private partnership driving it. The transformation involved the city, the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership and local foundations, including support from the Endowments.

After Market Square's physical appeal was restored, the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership filled it with music, art, a weekly farmer's market

and other events. People returned. Its popularity as a public space grew. Boarded-up storefronts were converted into a diverse assortment of restaurants — more than two dozen in a 1.5-mile radius. And two years after it opened anew, Market Square is attracting the largest volume of walking traffic among nine locations examined in a recent Downtown pedestrian study.

"People want to be in that space," says Jeremy Waldrup, president and CEO of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, a nonprofit organization that aims to foster economic vitality and improve Downtown life. "You would be hard-pressed to find anyone today who doesn't think that was a fantastic investment. It had been, in the view of many people, a place that couldn't be turned around. We'd kind of given up on it."

Large swaths of nearby Downtown property also have been re-born. An overhaul of the historic 36-acre Point State Park, which sits at the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers as they form the Ohio River, was completed last year. The \$35 million facelift included reconstruction of its lawns, riverfront promenades and woodland areas; the addition of a permanent café; and restoration of the iconic park fountain. The fountain is the focal point of a network of riverside walking and biking trails built over the course of more than a decade. The American Planning Association recently named the park one of the country's top 10 public places in recognition of its unique historic, natural and recreational features.

A few blocks south of Market Square, Point Park University's \$244 million "academic village" is taking shape. It will bring the school's new convocation center, an urban park, restaurants, several street renovations and the university's new Pittsburgh Playhouse to a section of Downtown once defined by struggling or shuttered retail businesses. The playhouse will house three theaters and production and teaching space, all within a block of The Gardens at Market Square and PNC Tower and an easy walk from the Cultural District.

"The university is one of the things that helps Downtown become a 24-hour event," Stephany says. "Having Point Park put feet on the street during off-hours and weekends — taking negatives and turning them into positives — is repurposing property. It's a home run."

More modest Downtown projects are rejuvenating the street-level experience and addressing missing pieces in the streetscapes taking form around major developments. The URA, for example, worked with the city to loosen zoning restrictions and allow restaurant seating on Downtown sidewalks. The policy shift led the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, with support from the Colcom Foundation, to join the URA in offering restaurateurs grants to remodel their storefronts to accommodate outdoor dining. Now, on a summer evening, it's common to see restaurant patrons dining at sidewalk tables that only a few years earlier had been prohibited.

With foundation support, the Downtown Partnership and URA also launched Pop-Up Pittsburgh to fill some of the vacant storefronts remaining within recently developed Downtown corridors. Most of the 11 storefronts involved in the program are home to art installations. Three are occupied by retailers — a bookstore, a boutique and an ice cream parlor — lured by the promise of a year's worth of rent-free space and \$10,000 in seed money.

Because of the range of initiatives, it's no longer surprising that a suburban resident like Aland frequents Downtown more now than when he was growing up in the city. In addition to bringing his children to Market Square to see an art installation on a March evening — something he wouldn't have considered doing 10 years ago — Aland regularly attends Pittsburgh Musical Theater and sometimes a performance of the Civic Light Opera, to which his mother-in-law, Annetta Lochiatto, subscribes. "It's changed," he says, simply, of Downtown. "It's a lot different now."

If Aland and his family are any indication, investments in the transformation have been worth it. *h*

Creative Assets

A woman with long, light brown hair is shown in profile, looking towards the right. She is wearing a dark blue, short-sleeved top. The background is a solid, medium blue color. The lighting is soft, highlighting her features.

A two-year-old partnership between The Heinz Endowments and The Pittsburgh Foundation is expanding creative opportunities for solo artists, while filling in funding gaps to support their work. By Christine O'Toole. Photography by Noah Purdy

Just as scientists look for genetic patterns using the flowering weed *Arabidopsis thaliana*, Natalie Settles turns to this plant for inspiration for visual motifs.

Natalie Settles

VISUAL ARTIST

As her own practice in drawing evolved, Natalie Settles jumped into projects that satisfied her keen curiosity about the natural world. She looked for a partnership that would expand her work and found an opportunity in the lab of Stephen Tonsor, a University of Pittsburgh evolutionary biologist. The National Science Foundation supports Tonsor's work and encouraged extensions that would broaden its impact. Settles' artist residency was designed to assist both of them in achieving their goals. The collaboration even played a role in Settles' selection as assistant curator for The Andy Warhol Museum's acclaimed Factory Direct show in 2011.

"Steve examines change within plant populations [in response] to the particularities of a site over time," Settles explains. "My wall drawings respond to site architecture and viewer traffic—essentially the particular conditions of a space over time, and how viewers respond to the work."

"The collaboration itself is a social sculpture, inspired by the work of artist Joseph Beuys, and based on evolutionary theory: When two practices are put into contact, they alter the mental space of each practitioner and the trajectory of the fields."

The \$35,000 grant Settles received through the Investing in Professional Artists initiative supported the second year of her residency, during which she produced the prototype for interactive, wallpaper projections. Motifs touched most by viewers contribute their genetic "offspring" to the wallpaper, driving the evolution of the design. The project is planned for several different site-specific installations later this year.



Here's a 21st-century portrait of a young artist.

In an earlier era, Natalie Settles, slim and nervy, might be lugging a sketchbook as she unlocks the basement door to her latest residency. Instead, she's armed with a digital drawing tablet, just one piece of the high-tech, high-touch work she's doing with The Tonsor Lab Plant Evolution and Ecology at the University of Pittsburgh. Amid a cluster of greenhouses, grow lights and microscopes, she's getting inspiration from plant biologists to create "evolving wallpaper," a visionary art project that already has received coverage in *Science* magazine.

Settles, a 36-year-old visual artist, set her drawing practice aside for the opportunity to explore and define space in a new way: in the context of time. She has created a set of large-scale, digital wallpaper projections with motifs that behave like a population of organisms, changing their patterns over time in response to viewers' interaction with them through touch.

Working with Steve Tonsor and his research staff has pushed Settles to broaden her artistic boundaries. “Biology and art speak truly different languages,” she says. The evolving wallpaper project cuts across these two worlds, intending to elicit both intellectual and intuitive responses.

Settles’ project might not have been completed without the support of a \$35,000 grant through an innovative program that helps Pittsburgh artists bridge the gap between dreaming and doing. The Investing in Professional Artists: The Pittsburgh Region Artists Program was launched two years ago by The Heinz Endowments and The Pittsburgh Foundation. The limber funding resource has led artists, organizations and the participating foundations in unexpected aesthetic directions.

Other local programs that receive philanthropic support hone artists’ marketing and business skills. Together, these initiatives serve an artistic population in the Pittsburgh area that is large for the region’s size and, according to analyses by the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council, one of the nation’s fastest-growing arts communities.

For several generations in southwestern Pennsylvania, both the Endowments and The Pittsburgh Foundation have been the modern-day equivalent of the Medici family in Renaissance Italy—stalwart arts patrons whose millions helped theaters, symphonies and museums flourish. But until recently, the Endowments avoided making grants to solo artists.

“The problem was the issue of judging quality and managing demand,” says Janet Sarbaugh, senior director of the Endowments’ Arts & Culture Program. “Moving to funding individuals is a major step, and, previously, we had not identified the right mechanisms to evaluate hundreds of applicants fairly and appropriately.”

The National Endowment for the Arts stopped awarding grants to individuals in 1995 after some members of Congress criticized decisions to fund controversial artists and questioned the value or quality of certain works. That left American artists, particularly those at the beginning of their careers, with reduced support.

Nationally, cultural leaders such as Grantmakers in the Arts recognized that philanthropies needed to devise ways to fill the gap. New foundations, such as Creative Capital and Fractured Atlas, emerged and focused on individual artists. Regional donors, such as Minnesota’s McKnight Foundation, upped their giving to state arts councils, asking the established organizations to make decisions on worthy individual artists.

The Endowments experimented with other options. It joined the Laurel Foundation in supporting the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust’s annual creative achievement awards, which were established in 1991 for outstanding new and established artists. The recognition program is now under the direction of the Investing in Professional Artists initiative as the Carol R. Brown Awards, named for an Endowments board member and the Trust’s founding president. In 2002, the Endowments launched the Creative Heights program, encouraging arts

Mark Clayton Southers

PLAYWRIGHT

Mark Clayton Southers has written 15 plays in the past 15 years. But the one he finished this year, a racially conscious adaptation of August Strindberg’s “Miss Julie,” was only the second he has completed with the support of a grant. Southers, who heads Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company, is working with British actor Lenny Henry to further develop the adaptation of the 1888 play through workshop performances in London for possible broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

“When you run an organization, your individual art can suffer,” Southers says. His 2013 Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh grant of \$15,000 allowed him to tackle a project he had pondered since a 2008 trip to Dublin, during which he saw a production of “Miss Julie” set in rural Ireland.

Southers adds that the grant funding also was timely because he was laid off in March 2013 from his position as theater initiatives director at the August Wilson Center for African American Culture, and his unemployment compensation ran out in December.

“I invested in my art,” he says. “Not being distracted allowed me to tap into these characters and unearth really great dialogue. Now that it’s finished, I’m really proud of the work.”

Southers considers Pittsburgh native August Wilson as both an inspiration and a mentor. He first met the late Pulitzer-winning playwright in 1998 at South Africa’s Grahamstown National Arts Festival. “[Wilson] was completely focused on writing, honing his craft,” Southers says. “That’s why his plays stand the test of time.”

Strindberg’s production of “Miss Julie” examined power dynamics surrounding the relationship between a count’s daughter and a valet who was a senior servant in the household. Southers calls his version “a remix” of the classic. Set on a Virginia tobacco plantation, the adaptation reinterprets the original play’s theme of class struggle as one reflecting racial strife, which Southers expects will resonate with contemporary audiences.





As a personal muse, Mark Southers often wears an ancient Greek theater mask pin — he owns dozens — on his lapel. The pins symbolize tragedy and comedy. “I’m always looking for them in different places, and I also give them away,” he says.



Julie Sokolow

FILMMAKER/COMPOSER

As an independent artist, 27-year-old Julie Sokolow is naturally drawn to examine the artistic and personal struggles of other solo practitioners. In her current documentary, “Aspie Seeks Love,” the filmmaker found a compelling subject—David V. Matthews, a Pittsburgh artist in his 40s who has doggedly pursued love through a 20-year performance art project. Sokolow chronicles Matthews’ recent diagnosis with Asperger syndrome and his poignant search for companionship.

“I was always passionate about intimate character studies, particularly of artists on the outskirts of mainstream society, but I had never tried to do a feature before,” Sokolow says. The \$10,000 grant that she received in 2012 to begin the project was one of the first Investing in Professional Artists grants awarded. She previously had benefited from a Flight School fellowship, a professional development program for independent artists, so she knew that applying for a grant would be a key step to beginning filming.

“Grant funding was essential in helping me break into an industry that’s not particularly welcoming to women directors,” she notes.

With filming complete, Sokolow is now seeking an additional \$36,000 for post-production and distribution for “Aspie.” The price tag on the project has risen because of a stroke of good fortune: Danny Yourd, who produced the 2013 Sundance Film Festival documentary prize winner “Blood Brother,” signed on as executive producer for her film. His Pittsburgh-based company, Animal Media Group, will market the film through other international festivals and venues.

“Connecting with Animal Media Group made the project much more serious, with more ambitious goals, so there are increases in costs,” Sokolow explains. “But it’s a real vote of confidence that can help us get through the next stages of editing and distribution, so there’s a long-term effect.”



organizations to partner with solo artists on projects. The foundation also outsourced grants for longer residencies through the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts.

During this period, The Pittsburgh Foundation funded fiscal sponsors—existing nonprofits that accepted legal responsibility for administering grants to individual artists. But during conversations with artists, both foundations heard that the bureaucratic processes involved in obtaining support through third-party organizations didn't fit many artists' professional agendas.

Endowments staff worked with Germaine Williams, senior program officer for arts and education at The Pittsburgh Foundation, to create a funding collaboration that would allow the two foundations to pool resources to directly support individual artists. A program was designed to take advantage of The Pittsburgh Foundation's role as a community foundation that engages in different types of grantmaking to benefit the community. The Pittsburgh Foundation established the objective process for disbursing funds to artists, and the Endowments achieved the same goal by making grants to its philanthropic partner.

Julie Sokolow does a lot of walking in the city in search of inspiration beyond the confines of her office—and always with a black Moleskine notebook in hand. “Having a notebook you are really attached to helps you value what you write in it,” she says. “You can hold onto your ideas and revisit them and notice common threads between them.”

“The thing about Pittsburgh is that people see the need collectively, and they fill the need.”

Jen Saffron, spokeswoman, Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council

The Investing in Professional Artists program that debuted in 2012 now awards more than \$220,000 a year. It enlists previous grantees as resources and asks other grant recipients to serve on a regional funding panel. Each year, a group of local artists begins the two-stage process that culminates in a group of national arts leaders selecting finalists.

“It brings a high level of credibility to a very subjective decision-making process,” Williams says.

Investing in Professional Artists also complements other professional and creative development opportunities. They include grants made jointly by the Endowments and The Pittsburgh Foundation that support artists individually or in groups through the Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh program and the Small Arts Initiative. All three programs employ peer review.

Among the efforts funded by the Endowments and other foundations, but administered elsewhere, is the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council's Artist Opportunity Grants program. The small-scale funding for travel and study assists dozens of artists each year, with a maximum award of \$2,500. GPAC also has built a menu of professional development programs for individual artists.

As part of another initiative, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts immerses promising artists in an eight-week program that further develops their ability to direct and expand their careers. Dubbed Flight School, the program has graduated three 15-member classes since 2012. In addition, the Brew House Association, an artists' collective housed in a former brewery, pairs experienced artists and newbies in its Distillery mentoring program.

The synergy of the different programs is evident in the proposals reviewed by Investing in Professional Artists. “To date, 63 percent of Flight School fellows applied to the IPA program, and 12 percent of them have received grants—they were very competitive proposals,” Williams says. “So, there's an awareness of funding opportunities.”

Looking back, the Endowments' Sarbaugh believes that the evolution of programs at disparate institutions was beneficial.

“Pittsburgh's programs for individual artists have evolved organically,” she explains. “Flight School and the Artist Opportunity Grants emerged because of specific interest of the sponsoring organization. I like the idea that there are a lot of voices and perspectives. That's good for artists. The next step, hopefully,

“Welcoming artists is a bellwether of community well-being.”

Janet Sarbaugh, senior program director, The Heinz Endowments

will be that all these programs will start to coordinate their efforts.”

To Ruby Lerner, founding president and executive director of Creative Capital, an all-fronts approach to sustaining artists is the future of arts philanthropy. “Maximally flexible and tailored to each artist—that’s where we need to be going,” she says. “It is not enough in a competitive environment to offer a travel grant or distribute funds. These things need to follow the individual with counseling and conversation with artists.”

GPAC spokeswoman Jen Saffron agrees. “The thing about Pittsburgh is that people see the need collectively, and they fill the need,” she says. “That’s very common here, but uncommon elsewhere. Artists will gravitate toward resources because we need them to produce our work.” Just as important, she adds, the increasing amount of support for artists in Pittsburgh helps the region retain many creative individuals who might leave otherwise.

In fact, Pittsburgh’s creative community is growing. The number of people ages 20 to 24 living in the city jumped more than 22 percent during the past decade, including a new generation of artists looking for inspiration and support. According to annual surveys conducted by GPAC, Pittsburgh now has 249 artists per 100,000 in the population, compared to an average of 148 among peer cities across the country.

Young artists are more likely to try crowd-sourcing their fundraising, and some locals have had success with Kickstarter and Indiegogo campaigns. GPAC also sees demand growing for its opportunity grants; last spring’s application round—one of three each year— attracted a record 68 applicants.

GPAC’s data for 2012–13 showed that Pittsburgh’s growth in artist employment led most of the nation, ranking sixth among American cities. And artists hope to stay: 78 percent of artists in Pittsburgh are optimistic about their futures here, a higher rate than in the organization’s previous surveys.

To Sarbaugh, that’s a trend that the city must encourage. “The solo practitioners can seem largely invisible, but they add to the fabric of the arts community,” she says. “We want to be more of a mecca for creative people. Welcoming artists is a bellwether of community vitality.”

This type of supportive environment also gives artists the freedom to explore new ways to develop their craft. The Investing in Professional Artists grant that funded the second year of Settles’ residency in the Tonsor Laboratory allowed her to embark on a self-taught crash course in software coding. That additional knowledge is helping to bring the evolving wallpaper project to fruition.

“When the science and the art come together and harmonize,” she says, “the work feels alive.” *h*



A close-up portrait of Miguel Sague III, a man with long, dark, curly hair pulled back into a ponytail. He has a mustache and is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a thoughtful expression. He is wearing a white shirt with an embroidered collar and a dark jacket. The background is a dark, solid color.

Miguel Sague III

AFRO-LATIN MUSICIAN

Miguel Sague III's professional career began at age 8, when he started performing with his father's salsa band, Guaracha. After graduating from the Pittsburgh High School for the Creative and Performing Arts, the city's arts magnet school, he expanded his repertoire to other forms of Afro-Latin music. A \$15,000 grant from Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh allowed him to create the Afro-Latin Time-Cruiser, a musical production that serves as a primer on the African roots of Caribbean music.

"Lots of African melodies and words are well known to Cubans, so they came down to me like nursery rhymes," he says.

Sague's production includes singing in Yoruba and other African languages and introduces the cross-cultural roots of rumba, conga and other Caribbean cultural expressions. He designed his show to appeal to both students and public audiences.

The Oconcolo is one of the three Bata drums of the Yoruba people in Nigeria. Each drum denotes a family member: the mother, the big brother or the little brother. As the little brother drum, the Oconcolo is inspirational to and within Miguel Sague's work because it represents the children in his audience and pays homage to 500 years of Afro-Cuban music preserved by Cuban people.

here & there

Good at Play!

For the fourth time, Pittsburgh has been selected by the playground-building nonprofit organization KaBOOM! and the Louisville, Ky.-based Humana Foundation to receive a Playful City USA Award. The city is being recognized for its pledge to consider play in every educational and community decision made by local officials. Also contributing to Pittsburgh's recent achievement was the construction of the Lozziwurm, a colorful, tubular play structure installed outside the Carnegie Museum of Art as part of the 2013 Carnegie International contemporary art exhibition. KaBOOM! staff highlighted the Lozziwurm as helping to foster the city's spirit of play. The Heinz Endowments has given \$800,000 to KaBOOM! to support the construction of more playgrounds in the Pittsburgh region.



Joshua Franzos

STAFF NEWS

John Ellis joined The Heinz Endowments in June as senior director of communications. He previously served for 10 years as vice president of communications for The Pittsburgh Foundation, the region's major community foundation. Before his work in Pittsburgh's philanthropic sector, Ellis' career spanned more than 20 years in corporate communications and public affairs, primarily with the international airline industry. He also worked as a newspaper journalist and editor in the United Kingdom.

Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto has appointed Endowments Children, Youth & Families Senior Program Director **Marge Petruska** as a co-chair of the 20-member "Mayor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Early Childhood Education." The panel will try to help the city secure federal funding for preschool education available through a national grant competition. Petruska will head the panel's partnerships sub-committee.

Senior Children, Youth & Families Program Officer **Carmen Anderson** has been honored twice recently for her work supporting communities and families. She was recognized by the Community Empowerment Association during its 20th anniversary celebration and by Small Seeds Development Inc. at its fifth annual "Families In Motion" celebration. ACH Clear Pathways, a nonprofit focusing on youth arts and community service, selected Senior Arts & Culture Program Officer **Justin Laing** as one of three individuals to honor for their work in promoting involvement in the arts by local youth. Awards were distributed during the organization's fifth anniversary celebration.



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Student Rights

Pittsburgh school officials are using a student bill of rights proposed by a group of local teens as a guide for revising the district's Code of Student Conduct. Members of

TeenBloc—a youth organizing group established by the education advocacy organization A+ Schools—presented their bill of rights to the city school board last October. Among the 10 rights listed were to learn in a socially, emotionally and physically safe and positive school climate; to receive equitable academic resources; and to be taught by effective teachers. School board members unanimously agreed to incorporate the issues raised by the youth into the Code of Student Conduct and noted in the board resolution that the student bill of rights is "consistent with the board and district goals." TeenBloc is one of several youth organizing groups supported through the Endowments' Education Program as part of an effort to include young voices in discussions about education reform and social justice.

Affordable Legal Help

Fair Shake Environmental Legal Services opened this spring to provide assistance to low- and moderate-income clients. With offices in Pittsburgh and Akron, Ohio, the nonprofit firm also serves as a residency program for lawyers practicing environmental law. Fair Shake bills itself as an "environmental justice incubator." Attorneys will address a variety of issues arising from oil and natural gas development, as well as other environment-related legal matters. Startup funding came from The Heinz Endowments and the Colcom and George Gund foundations.



SAFE KEEPING

Officials representing 40 municipalities and 11 school districts in southwestern Pennsylvania's Mon Valley have unveiled a plan for a regional land bank that is expected to open next year. The Endowments awarded a \$45,000 grant to the Steel Valley, Turtle Creek Valley and Twin Rivers councils of governments to support their work in developing the land bank plan. The foundation provided additional funding to the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, a statewide coalition of organizations advocating for safe and affordable housing, as part of the project. The land bank is designed to promote revitalization by having the ability to acquire blighted property without having to pay delinquent taxes to a municipality, school district or county. The bank will manage the property while looking for a buyer, thus preventing a drain on municipal services or a reduction in property values.

Veteran Leaders

With support from The Heinz Endowments, the nonprofit Leadership Pittsburgh provided a training series for post-9/11 veterans that usually is reserved for business executives and other professionals. The Community Leadership Course for Veterans accepted vets who had shown community involvement and leadership potential. Participants in the pilot program committed to attending one training session each week for six months. The initiative included partnerships with the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania, 90.5 WESA and WQED-TV.

CLEARING CONGESTION

The City of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University are expanding a network of high-tech traffic signals that adapt to vehicle travel in real time, reducing congestion and air pollution. In 2012, 18 signals were installed in the city's East Liberty neighborhood, resulting in a 42 percent drop in vehicle wait time, a 24 percent reduction in travel time and a 21 percent drop in vehicle emissions. Plans call for extending the network through several other communities, equipping up to 49 intersections with the smarter signals. In addition to federal, state and city funding for the project, philanthropic support has been provided by The Heinz Endowments, the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, and the Richard King Mellon and Hillman foundations.



Annie O'Neill

HAZELWOOD UPDATES

The new "green" home of the Hazelwood branch of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, above, is just one recent good-news story in that community. Others include the rebirth of a neighborhood elementary school and plans for a needed cosmetic cleanup.

The welcoming Hazelwood Center opened in June in the heart of the community's struggling business district. It contains the library, an early learning program and family support services. The center was constructed according to rigorous Passive House energy-efficiency guidelines. ACTION-Housing, a housing assistance nonprofit, purchased and renovated the building for about \$2.4 million with the support of The PNC Financial Services Group, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh and The Heinz Endowments. The foundation has been working with Hazelwood leaders and residents in its first community-foundation revitalization partnership, which is part of a place-based initiative launched four years ago.

In August, Propel Hazelwood, a charter elementary school with grades one through four, opened its

doors to local children. Hazelwood has lacked a neighborhood school since Burgwin Elementary closed in 2006. The Endowments-supported Hazelwood Initiative purchased the school building from Pittsburgh Public Schools earlier this year, enabling Propel Schools to use the facility for the 10th school in its decade-old charter system.

Over the next year, the Clean Pittsburgh Commission will bring its coalition of city agencies and nonprofit organizations into Hazelwood to address building code violations, litter, graffiti, dump sites and other forms of blight. Formed in 2005, the commission's recent strategic plan calls for selecting one neighborhood each year for improvements. Hazelwood will be the first community to receive a makeover under this new approach.

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