

THE PITTSBURGH  
FOUNDATION  
QUARTERLY  
Spring 2016

**10** SOUNDS OF HOME IN  
THE STEEL CITY  
*Nonprofits foster community  
for immigrants and refugees*

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# FORUM

FEATURE  
STORY

## ANGELS, HEROES AND HELPING HANDS

*The Pittsburgh Foundation's donors fund  
innovative ways to support local veterans*

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#### ON THE COVER

Donor Scott Noxon with a flag that belonged to his uncle, a veteran of World War II. Noxon uses his donor-advised fund to provide assistance to area veterans.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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**B**EFORE MY CAREER IN PHILANTHROPY, I spent decades in print journalism, including serving as editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer for most of the 1990s.

A key guide for our reporting back then was "Follow the money." Coming out of the Washington Post's coverage of the Watergate scandal of the early 1970s, the adage has endured to remind reporters that complex stories often can be simplified by following the trail of financial transactions and dollars changing hands. The money trail can lead to hidden facts, intentions and motivations that fill out the broader story. Time and again, "following the money" has guided production of some of the country's best journalism.

After nearly a decade as a leader in Pittsburgh-based philanthropy, I've discovered a corollary that serves just as well in guiding some of the country's best philanthropy: "Follow the donor."

Often, we who manage philanthropies get tangled in complex strategy development as we try to solve daunting problems. Or, we get mired in analytics and benchmarking in attempts to measure progress toward goals.

That is why I appreciate the counterbalance built into community foundations such as ours — an advantage we have over private and family-run foundations — where scores of individual donors blaze trails that lead efficiently and simply to societal good.

This issue of FORUM is spilling over with examples of thoughtful donors who encountered a seemingly intractable problem and, through emotional connections or personal expertise, funded a solution.

Last fall, 18 of our Foundation's donors were the chief collaborators in figuring out the most effective life-improving investments to be made in economically hard-hit Braddock. Banding together as members of the Braddock Voices Impact Giving Circle, a program of our Center for Philanthropy, they met with members of the Braddock community and brought their individual life experiences and perspectives to a series of meetings and site visits in which our Program staff served primarily as guides and conveners.

Also last fall, two of our donors were working on separate pieces of the heart-wrenching regional problem of military veterans transitioning successfully back to civilian life. Scott Noxon has relied on his personal experience with a longtime friend and U.S. Army veteran who committed suicide, and Joe Fairbanks has drawn on his transition from Naval service to a successful business career.

These few are among the hundreds of our donors who regularly mark their own pathways to meaningful giving, and we as organizational leaders would do well to study more closely where they go and what they do when they arrive.

Maxwell King | president & CEO

The Foundation's staff gathers for a creative development session in the Center for Philanthropy's newly opened space.



## THE CENTER FOR PHILANTHROPY OPENS IN STYLE

**S**ince its inception in 2013, The Pittsburgh Foundation's Center for Philanthropy has provided a suite of cutting-edge services to help donors boost their giving and maximize results. Now those services have a physical space to make it easier for donors to collaborate and reach their personal charitable goals.

After nearly two years of planning and renovation, the Center's new home is officially open in the Foundation's offices. Featuring bright, comfortable meeting rooms, a round "kiva" for 360-degree planning sessions, cozy booths and even a coffee bar, the Center fosters engaged, immersive philanthropy.

Whether it's a Family Meeting that reaches multiple generations, a customized site visit that puts donors in the field, or an Impact Giving Circle that addresses today's most pressing problems, the Center helps donors learn, collaborate and grow as effective philanthropists.

Visit [pittsburghfoundation.org/philanthropy](http://pittsburghfoundation.org/philanthropy) to learn more about the Center's services, or contact your donor services representative to schedule a tour.

## Day of Giving 2016 Announced

Since 2009, The Pittsburgh Foundation's Day of Giving events have raised more than \$40 million for the region's nonprofits, engaging thousands of people each year in what has quickly become a philanthropic tradition. To coincide with the national Give Local America event, in which more than 180 community foundations participate in 24-hour public crowdfunding campaigns, the Foundation will host its seventh Day of Giving to support Allegheny, Butler and Westmoreland county nonprofits May 3. From 8 a.m. to midnight, donors will be able to support their favorite nonprofits through the Foundation's online portal at [pittsburghgives.org](http://pittsburghgives.org).

For this year's Day of Giving, each nonprofit will raise its own match pool. There is no limit to how much a nonprofit may raise, and each gift an organization raises through [pittsburghgives.org](http://pittsburghgives.org) will be matched dollar for dollar until the organization's match pool is depleted. The Foundation will offer prizes and incentives throughout the day, including bonus grants totaling \$100,000 based on superlatives from "most Twitter mentions" to "most small gifts under \$100." Butler and Westmoreland counties will offer separate match pools, to be announced closer to the date of the event. To learn more, visit [pittsburghgives.org](http://pittsburghgives.org).

Donor Dwight Mathis (left) listens as Braddock resident Shiane Prunty shares her ideas about programs that are most needed for her community.



### Braddock Voices Impact Giving Circle Grantees Announced

The Pittsburgh Foundation's Braddock Voices Impact Giving Circle will grant \$100,000 to six nonprofits that provide food, educational programming and workforce development to Braddock-area residents, the group decided during its allocation meeting Feb. 2. The Braddock Youth Project, 412 Food Rescue, Heritage Community Initiatives, Grow Pittsburgh, Braddock Carnegie Library and The Mon Valley Initiative will each receive grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000. The grants will cover operating costs and support projects such as app development, urban farming, work-skills training and arts programs.

"Something powerful happens when donors — each of whom bring unique perspectives and points of view — come together for a community they care about," says Jeanne Pearlman, the Foundation's senior vice president for Program and Policy. "It's been exciting to work alongside them, listening to Braddock residents and thinking through difficult issues."

Facilitated by the Foundation's Center for Philanthropy, Impact Giving Circles connect donors to subject-area experts from the Foundation and regional nonprofits. Donors then co-invest with the Foundation in catalytic projects designed to create healthy, self-sufficient communities. To learn more about upcoming Impact Giving Circles, contact your donor services representative or visit [pittsburghfoundation.org/giving\\_circles](http://pittsburghfoundation.org/giving_circles).

## DONOR INVOLVEMENT TRENDS UPWARD

The Pittsburgh Foundation raised a record-setting \$24.5 million from individual donors last year, up from the previous \$21.4 million record set in 2014 and signaling donors' continued interest in active charitable giving during their lifetimes.

The Foundation also received its single largest gift from living donors in the philanthropy's 70-year history: \$15 million from Dr. Richard and Priscilla Hunt. It was the third consecutive year that gifts from individuals increased and the sixth consecutive year that the Foundation raised more than \$50 million for new and existing funds. In total, 68 new funds were opened — the vast majority of which were donor-advised funds — and the Foundation raised \$50.6 million, bringing total assets to \$1.14 billion.\*

While historically, the Foundation's largest donations have come from planned gifts, bequests were down last year — a factor contributing to the overall 5.6 percent decrease in the Foundation's gifts revenue from the \$53.5 million brought in during 2014. However, Foundation President and CEO Maxwell King describes last year's influx of donor-advised funds and gifts from individuals as a "strong vote of confidence in the value of the community foundation model," citing growth in the living donor category as an indicator that residents want to be personally involved in improving quality of life in Pittsburgh.

"Community foundations, more than any other public charity, are able to offer donors expertise in a broad range of community issues. We are proud to partner with our donors in supporting the continued transformation of the Pittsburgh region that we all love," says King.

Yvonne Maher, the Foundation's senior vice president for Development and Donor Services, believes that the connection donors make with grantees and the Foundation's subject matter experts has influenced the upward trend in gifts from individuals.

"This signals an opportunity for us, through the Foundation's Center for Philanthropy, to continue involving our donors more deeply in the philanthropic process," says Maher.

For the Hunt family, pressing community problems drove their decision to donate to the Foundation last year. "The needs in the community now are so great that we decided we just didn't want to wait any longer," says Priscilla Hunt. "We hope that news of this gift might inspire other charitably minded people to use community foundations in their lifetimes to support causes of personal importance."

Increased giving results in more grant-making resources for the community. Last year, 5,516 grants totaling \$35.3 million were made by the Foundation and its donors in areas such as education, human services, community improvement, the arts and culture. More than half of those grants — 3,326 awards totaling \$16.4 million — were directed by donors through their donor-advised funds.

"The subject-matter expertise of our staff and the menu of opportunities we offer our donors to collaborate with them is incomparable," says Maher. "Increasing donor involvement is a trend we expect will continue."

\*Unaudited numbers. Approved financials will be reported in August.



STAFF  
PROFILE

## POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Khalif Ali

**A**S THE PITTSBURGH FOUNDATION'S NEW director of public policy and advocacy, Khalif Ali may be more familiar to civic and nonprofit leaders than to some of his co-workers in the office, given his many meetings with community stakeholders.

Since his start in November, the 44-year-old Wilkensburg resident's goal has been to get a wide range of perspectives on issues including poverty, housing and political engagement, and to use that information to help establish the Foundation's policy priorities. Among the most important issues to emerge from his meetings so far are voter registration and engagement in underserved and historically low-income neighborhoods. Through Foundation actions, Ali hopes to see a significant increase in voter participation.

"When voter turnout is low, communities risk giving their power away. The Foundation will be working directly with advocates and individuals in the neighborhoods, particularly in African American communities, to listen to people and hear what it would take for them to become involved and reclaim that power," Ali says.

Ali will rely on his two decades of community-organizing experience with The Sprout Fund, the CORO Center for Civic Leadership and Homewood's Operation Better Block to make inroads on the voter-engagement front,

especially with young adults, communities of color, seniors and veterans. His first effort will focus on the city, though he plans to eventually expand to inner-ring suburbs, which have become a new settling ground for people priced out of their city neighborhoods. Ali will also focus on identifying the public policies that contribute to racial inequality and allow economic hardships to foment.

"People working full time, or well beyond that with several jobs, are unable to support themselves," says Ali. "Single women with children are especially at risk if they can't afford housing, child care, health care and transportation. The more hours they work, the fewer hours they can spend nurturing and parenting their kids. It's a cycle we have to address."

Ali sees his most important duty as building bridges with city officials and community leaders so that the Foundation is best positioned to advocate for nonprofits and the people they serve.

"We are championing the needs of those in Pittsburgh who don't yet have direct connections to government and legislative officials. Everyone deserves to be heard in the political process. The Foundation can help make that happen," Ali says.

By **Kitty Julian** | senior communications officer



Donor Joe Fairbanks, a U.S. Navy veteran pictured here at Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall and Museum, credits his career in high-tech sales to his time in the military. Now he works to help other veterans successfully transition to civilian life.

# ANGELS, HEROES AND HELPING HANDS

THE PITTSBURGH  
FOUNDATION'S  
DONORS FUND  
INNOVATIVE WAYS  
TO SUPPORT  
LOCAL VETERANS

WHEN AIR FORCE COMBAT VETERAN BRANDON JONES RETURNED TO CIVILIAN LIFE after multiple tours in Afghanistan, his post-traumatic stress disorder was so severe that he barely left the house. Plagued by night terrors, Jones was exhausted and anti-social. He barely spoke to his wife and two children. Medications — more than a dozen of them — and therapy were having no effect, and his mental health had worsened to the point that he was having thoughts of suicide.

It was in the midst of that escalating mental health crisis that a German shepherd named Apache bounded into his life and, by all accounts, saved it.

It was during Jones' stay in an inpatient program that he learned about the Guardian Angel Medical Service Dog program in Williston, Florida. Since 2009, the organization has trained more than 100 service dogs and carefully matched them with disabled combat veterans. Jones, 33, of Apollo Beach, Florida, applied, and in 2013 was paired with Apache.

"Apache is not just a service dog. He is my wingman. I cannot imagine where I would be without him," says Jones, who, with Apache at his side, continues to make strides in recovery.

Jones' story of depression and disconnection is too common among combat veterans whose transitions back to civilian life are often upended by physical injury and emotional trauma. According to a 2013 Department of Veterans Affairs report, a veteran commits suicide every 65 minutes. Thanks to grants from The Pittsburgh Foundation and its donors, local veterans will soon benefit from two programs that provide medical assistance and access to meaningful employment.



Donor Scott Noxon lost Paul Myles, a longtime friend and U.S. Army veteran, to suicide in 2014.

In collaboration with the Guardian Angel dog program, Pittsburgh-based Veterans Leadership Program is pairing former military combat personnel with canine companions that have completed 14 months of intensive training to help their veteran owners manage challenges related to post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and mobility or sensory impairment. As important as the assistance that the dogs offer is the companionship and caretaking that each animal provides to its handler.

Donor Scott Noxon learned of the angel dog program through the Foundation's Center for Philanthropy. Through his fund at the Foundation, he had previously supported purchase of armored vests for Pittsburgh's K-9 officers and military-grade crates for safer transportation (*see sidebar*). Noxon was also seeking a way to honor the memory of his longtime friend, Paul Myles, a U.S. Army veteran who committed suicide amid family difficulties and a long illness. When Noxon learned of the angel dog program, he stepped forward with a \$22,000 donation to fund a dog that would protect, assist and provide companionship to a Pittsburgh-area veteran.

"Dogs are a member of the family. They know when people are physically or emotionally sick. There's no need to make conversation because they respond to the emotional cues," says Noxon.

Other donor families, including Troy and Theodora Polamalu, along with Joe Fairbanks and his wife, Marti-Ann, were moved to participate. The Foundation itself funded two dogs through the Henry C. and Belle Doyle McEldowney Fund. Seven dogs are now in training and will soon come to Pittsburgh.

"One of the most important things we can do for veterans is help them make a successful transition to civilian life," says Fairbanks. "Managing physical injuries, PTSD and emotional issues are the top priorities. That's where I saw angel dogs as an opportunity to help."

In July 2014, Fairbanks, a U.S. Navy veteran, retired from a successful career in high-tech sales. He attributes his career success to characteristics acquired and developed in the Navy — focus, commitment, responsibility, discipline and teamwork. These traits are as fundamental to success in civilian careers as they are in the military. In the Navy, he was also introduced to technology and sales, both of which shaped his career path.

That fall, Fairbanks and his family established a fund at the Foundation and began looking for ways to direct Fairbanks' expertise and financial resources toward helping other veterans transition to civilian life. After a few months of research assisted by the Foundation's donor services department, Fairbanks made a \$60,000 grant to fund the first full-time staff member for Hire Our Heroes. Staff at the Virginia-based nonprofit provide intensive coaching and job-placement services to veterans. They also network with employers to make sure they understand the problem-solving skills, teamwork and discipline that veterans bring to civilian jobs. Given that western Pennsylvania boasts the nation's fourth-largest concentration of veterans, the region will be a top priority for the organization's work.

"I see our grants to Hire Our Heroes and to the angel dogs program as integral parts of helping veterans transition from military to civilian life," says Fairbanks. To me, these programs are not mutually exclusive, but are part and parcel of helping veterans make the transition happily and well." More information on the program can be found at [hireourheroes.org](http://hireourheroes.org).

By **Kitty Julian**

## Protecting K-9 Officers

When K-9 Officer Rocco was killed in the line of duty in 2014, thousands of people donated to the Officer Rocco K-9 Memorial Fund at The Pittsburgh Foundation. Donor and animal-lover Scott Noxon was particularly struck by Officer Rocco's death and funded the purchase of 13 armored vests for Pittsburgh's K-9 officers.

Nearly a year later, Noxon contacted Lindsay Aroesty, the Foundation's director of donor services, to check on whether more vests were needed. Aroesty learned that the K-9 unit's human handlers wanted heavy-duty collapsible military dog crates to safely transport their K-9 partners. Noxon immediately granted \$12,000 to fund 23 custom-made metal crates.

Noxon and representatives of PetSmart Inc., which made a \$5,000 gift to the Officer Rocco Memorial Fund from its PetSmart Gives Back initiative, were there in October when the crates were demonstrated at the K-9 unit training center on Washington Boulevard.

K-9 officers live with their handlers, commuting to and from the station and the field daily. Before Noxon's grant, handlers transported K-9s in plastic kennels, which cracked during constant use and took up entire back seats. The new crates fold down flat when not in use, and their sturdier construction better protects dogs as they travel into the field.

Because the city of Pittsburgh is the Department of Homeland Security's home base for a 13-county region, its K-9 unit travels widely, offering training across the state, tracking and finding people, and locating illegal drugs, explosives and other weapons. It's dangerous, important work.

"Dogs add so much to our lives," Noxon says. "It's a privilege to donate equipment that protects police dogs and supports their handlers in the line of duty."

By **Kitty Julian**

Pittsburgh's K-9 officers are now transported in collapsible metal crates that offer increased protection and durability.



NONPROFITS FOSTER  
COMMUNITY FOR IMMIGRANTS  
AND REFUGEES

# SOUNDS OF HOME

## IN THE STEEL CITY

A Burmese refugee finds safety at a domestic abuse shelter. A Swahili-speaking couple takes a Lamaze class in their native tongue. These are just some of Pittsburgh's newest neighbors, many of whom have arrived at a tumultuous time. As the fate of Syrian refugees and debate over U.S. immigration policy roils Congress and this year's presidential campaign, The Pittsburgh Foundation has committed to help those fleeing war, poverty and persecution find a better life here.

Several new funding initiatives aim to ease the transition for newly arrived immigrants and refugees, who often arrive speaking little English and have difficulty accessing employment, transportation, education and medical care.

The Foundation decided to act after the Allegheny County Department of Human Services released a 2013 report showing an 18 percent increase in the number of foreign-born residents between 2000 and 2011. A closer look at the county's numbers is even more revealing: the number of refugees from Africa, Asia, Latin America and other parts of the world has jumped by at least 50 percent.

"The report was a wake-up call," says Michelle McMurray, senior program officer for Health and Human Services at the Foundation. "It was quite unexpected to see those numbers, and surprising to see the level of unmet needs in these communities."

While the region's resettlement agencies play a critical role in the early months of a refugee's life, more long-term supports are needed. The Foundation has zeroed in on a few critical areas, including alleviating the language barrier for newcomers and supporting arts and cultural

programs for the region's growing number of African immigrants and refugees.

While some immigrant communities are large and well-established, many from African nations find themselves isolated in Pittsburgh due to their smaller numbers, explains Germaine Williams, the Foundation's senior program officer for Arts and Culture.

To help remedy this, the Foundation provided a \$30,000 grant to Afrika Yetu, a nonprofit headed by Elie Kihonia, an artist and activist who has worked for years to connect diverse African immigrant communities with Pittsburgh residents. DrumTalk, the organization's annual event, brings master drummers from around the world to Pittsburgh, where they engage with nearly 800 people of all ages for workshops and performances.

"Afrika Yetu is important because the performing arts connect recent immigrants to one another and to community resources," says Williams, noting that the organization fosters networking through dance, drumming and other arts and educational programming, some of which is funded by the Foundation's Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh initiative.

French-speaking singer Nathan Kimbeni, originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, began connecting with other immigrants through Afrika Yetu after arriving in Pittsburgh in 2014.



Kihonia has also launched the African Resource Center, partnering with Pittsburgh Gospel Tabernacle Church in the West End to start an after-school program, provide transportation and help immigrants access employment opportunities.

“Since African immigrants come from so many different countries, there’s not always common ground,” says Kihonia. “But we try to help them find it, to help them feel better psychologically, to understand how life is here in America and to explain the differences in cultural norms. We help them learn where to go, who to talk to, how to become comfortable.”

But many refugees and immigrants struggle to access the resources they need for one simple reason: they can’t ask for them in English.

Last year, the Foundation provided a one-year, \$75,000 grant to the Center for Hearing and Deaf Services to create the Pittsburgh Language Access Network, designed to build a robust supply of interpretation

services for those whose languages include not just French or Spanish, but Burmese, Nepali and ethnic and tribal languages.

At first glance, choosing an organization whose main clients are people with hearing disabilities might seem counterintuitive when looking to translate Creole or Nepali, for a refugee. But the Center for Hearing and Deaf Services — founded in 1921 and based in Uptown — is a logical fit, says Doug Masiroff,

↓ Pastor Isaac C. Jere, originally from Zambia, oversees Pittsburgh Gospel Tabernacle Church. His church works with Afrika Yetu to provide a community for recent refugees and immigrants.

the program’s coordinator, because “[it’s] an organization committed to ensuring that individuals have the ability to communicate successfully when accessing services.”

Though civil rights laws guarantee an individual’s right to interpretation and translation services in federally funded programs, existing telephonic interpretation can cost \$250 an hour or more and is often limited in its range of languages. The Foundation’s grant allows the Center to deploy in-person interpreters, fluent in 20 languages, at one-fifth the cost of other programs. It also funds a web-based “train-the-trainer” interpreter-training program based on federal certification standards. Currently, a team of 30 local interpreters gets five or six calls a day, averaging 50 assignments a month. Masiroff cites the Center’s assisting a man from Mexico in physical therapy who’d fallen on the ice while working a construction job.

“Initially, his bone fractures didn’t set correctly, partly because a professionally trained interpreter wasn’t available at the rural facility where he first sought medical care,” says Masiroff.

Then there was the elderly woman in intensive care. Once she regained consciousness, the interpreter asked her if she would prefer Russian or Ukrainian, noticing that her family name was most likely ethnic Ukrainian. “She responded by saying that [the interpreter] was the first person to speak to her in her native language after 34 years of living in the United States. She was so pleased to be able to communicate and ask questions of the nurses in her first language that her mood brightened, which may well have improved her medical outcome,” says Masiroff.

The Center’s model has been effective in other communities across the country, says McMurray, another argument for the grant investment here. “After all, immigration is the Pittsburgh story. So many of us have grandmothers or great-grandmothers who didn’t speak English.”

By **Mackenzie Carpenter** | freelance journalist based in Pittsburgh



ADVISOR  
PROFILE

## FROM QUARTERS TO COATS

Pete Strobe and Drew Hanson

↑ Drew Hanson (left) and Pete Strobe stock the Strobe Financial Group’s vending machine. Proceeds from snack sales support students at Colliers Primary School (right).

**W**HEN PETE STROBE SAW the Angel Tree in Weirton, West Virginia, he knew he had to do something.

“It was just before the holidays, and there were still 50 or 60 angels up there,” Strobe remembers. “It was terrible.” Each angel represented a child, virtually all of whom were students at the nearby Colliers Primary School and in need of Christmas gifts. Strobe called his friend and business partner, Drew Hanson, and together they decided to act.

For two years, Strobe and Hanson — who together lead the Strobe Financial Group at UBS as managing director and senior vice president, respectively — bought gifts for every angel on the tree. As they learned more about the school, however, they realized what a consistent, year-round funding stream could do for the students.

Then they had an idea.

“We were in the process of moving to a new office,” says Strobe. “As we searched for a vending service, we thought, ‘Why don’t we do this ourselves? We could raise money every day of the year and donate the profits to Colliers.’”

The pair purchased a soda machine, a snack machine, and coffee and tea service, and the staff at Strobe Financial stepped in to volunteer. “Everybody on the team helps run this now,” says Strobe. “They handle the shopping, the stocking

and maintenance of the machines — everything.” The revenue that the office generates, along with personal donations from the staff, now funds Christmas gifts and new winter coats for Colliers students in need.

For two advisors who’d long guided their clients through the benefits and complexities of philanthropy, making giving a part of their everyday lives seemed like a natural next step. “We’d been talking with our clients about estate planning and charitable giving for a long time,” says Hanson, “and that led us to think more about what we could do as individuals. What legacy do we want to leave behind? How can we change the world for the better? What can we do that allows us to say that we left this place better than how we found it?”

As a graduate of The Pittsburgh Foundation’s Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy program, in which advisors earn the knowledge and skills to help clients achieve their philanthropic goals, Strobe considers these questions often. “I talk with clients not only about paying bills, or growing their capital, or considering the trends I see in the market, but also about their long-term hopes and needs,” Strobe says. “What do they value? What do they want for their families? Sometimes that involves charitable giving, and the Foundation is a great resource for introducing my clients to philanthropy.”

Of course, no one at the Strobe Financial Group has to look far to see philanthropy in action. All they have to do is walk down the hall and drop a quarter in the glowing, freshly stocked vending machine.

By **Ryan Rydzewski** | communications officer



# BEYOND A PLACE TO SLEEP

TEENS IN  
CRISIS FIND  
SHELTER AND  
SUPPORT



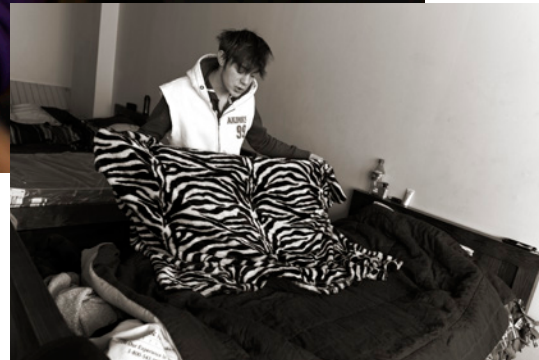
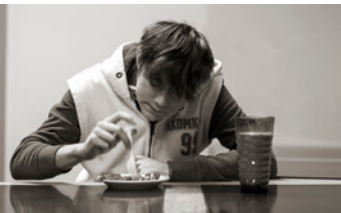
**E**ACH YEAR, young men and women ages 18 to 24 arrive at the former carpet store on Fifth Avenue seeking shelter for the night or longer. Lenny Prewitt has seen thousands pass through the Downtown Outreach Center and Shelter (DOCS) in his 22 years with the program. If he's learned anything, it's that they're in need of much more than a temporary place to stay.

More than a third are undereducated. Many are hungry and lack the security of knowing when they'll eat again. As they enter adulthood, most are poorly equipped for independent living and steady employment. They're often "stuck in survival mode," as Prewitt puts it—the situation they've been in for most of their lives.

"They're not coming in with the same background as people who've been nurtured, supported and taught. They've missed out on a lot," says Prewitt, senior program manager at the shelter operated by Familylinks, a western Pennsylvania-based human services nonprofit. "They're dealing with mental health issues, psychological and emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse. These are damaging traumas that they bring with them to our front door."

Helping these young men and women make a healthy transition to adulthood and improve their future prospects is one strategy that The Pittsburgh Foundation is pursuing as it directs grantmaking toward "100 Percent Pittsburgh," a new organizing principle for its work through the rest of this decade: the Foundation will embrace the city's economic and cultural renaissance while spotlighting the more than 30 percent of residents who have been left out of the "New Pittsburgh." The Foundation will work to ensure that all people benefit from the region's revitalization.





An internal examination of data—including a poverty-trends analysis conducted by the Urban Institute and discussions with experts on the front lines of poverty-related issues—led the Foundation to put a particular focus on youth ages 12 to 24 and single women with children. The Urban Institute's data make a compelling case for doing so, as youth and single mothers are facing the largest increases in poverty over the past 10 years in Allegheny County.

Some 17.5 percent of southwestern Pennsylvania's children under the age of 18 live in poverty, the U.S. Census Bureau suggests. In Allegheny County, as many as 30 percent of Pittsburgh Public School students have had contact with the child welfare system. Nearly 3,800 children 18 and under were referred to juvenile probation in 2014. The number of female-headed households in the region rose 15 percent from 2000 to 2010.

While quantitative data and research are critical, listening to those who work in the field—as well as to youth who've been left out of or let down by the systems designed to support

**Austin, 19**

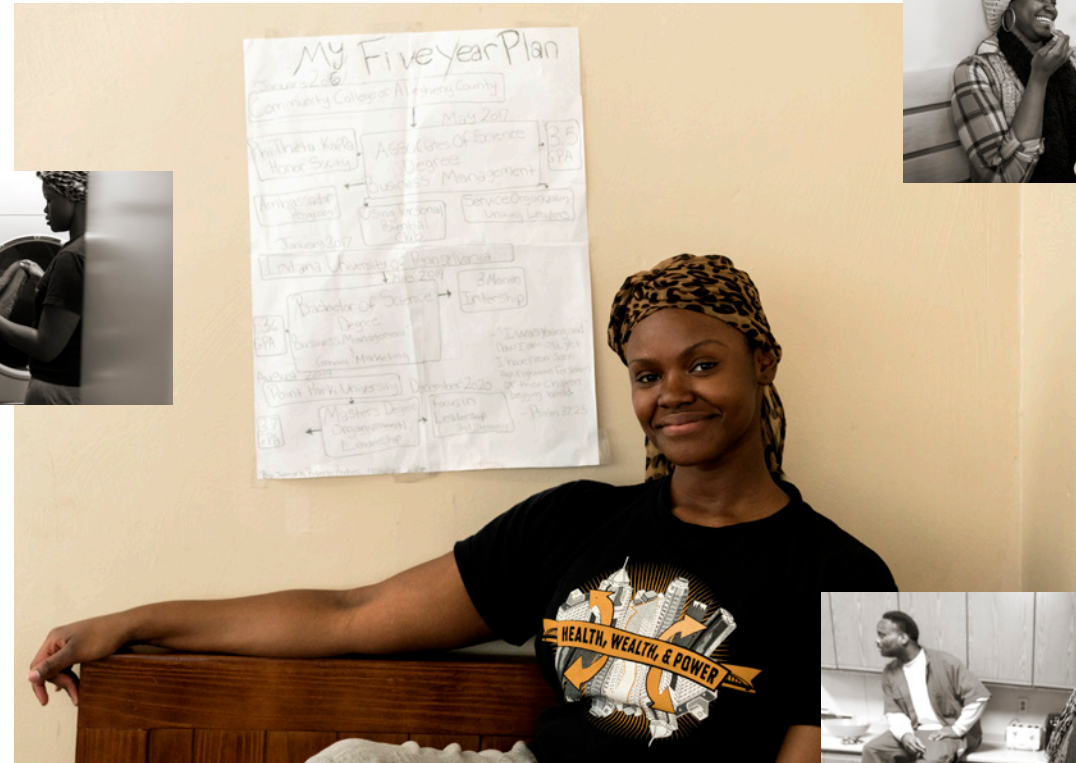
Austin Mulraney works with the center's staff to find steady employment. He has been in foster care for many years, and was homeless for about a week before coming to the shelter in November 2015. While homeless, he stayed with friends.

them—has helped refine the Foundation's approach to grantmaking, says Michael Yonas, senior program officer for Social Innovation, Research and Special Initiatives.

"We have lots of data, but we also want to assess the *how* and *why* behind each data point. We are working to engage with organizations and with youth themselves in order to better understand the context and factors affecting their lives. It's about being purposeful in engaging and working to amplify these voices in the work that we do," Yonas says.

The Foundation took this approach in awarding Familylinks a recent grant that enabled the nonprofit to add two case-management positions at DOCS, expanding the capacity of the city's only shelter for young adults. DOCS is now equipped to help teens and young adults with transformative services instead of assistance confined to emergency needs such as a temporary place to sleep.

An estimated 240 young men and women ages 18 to 24 live in shelters or on the street in Allegheny County at any given time, according



to officials in the county's Department of Human Services. A recent federal study suggests that 20 percent of the nation's youth experiencing a housing crisis have also been physically or sexually abused.

DOCS typically shelters 100 to 120 young men and women each year, and the average length of stay has steadily increased. Often, young people come to DOCS without a clear pathway to stability. In 2014, nearly 73 percent of those who sought shelter were unemployed when they arrived; 37 percent did not have a high school diploma. When Yonas met with young Familylinks clients to better understand their needs, two priorities emerged: young people need to be trained in how to land and keep a job, and they need support in navigating the systems necessary for gaining employment.

Today, these priorities are being addressed in the shelter's programming. As recently as January, for example, the nonprofit ACTION-Housing Inc. held workshops at the shelter on resume writing, job readiness and job retention, all of which were arranged by DOCS case

**Jionna, 21**

Above her bed, Jionna Roberts-Rogers keeps a self-made poster with clear goals and a path to success.

managers, who are officially known as "engagement specialists." Two of these positions are funded by the Foundation's grant.

The specialists now work with youth at the shelter to identify goals related to housing, education and behavioral health, and they guide them in developing work plans for accomplishing these goals. Specialists refer youth to services and track their progress along the way. Another hoped-for result of the interaction is that the shelter's youth will bond with the specialists and view them as trusted adults that they can turn to for guidance.

"Coming out of rough situations and trying to straighten up and live a clean, healthy lifestyle is not easy," says Prewitt. "Most of them are just beginning to understand what it's going to take to live in the adult world. But if we can say that young adults are leaving here in a better position to be self-sufficient than when they came in, then we're meeting our goals."

By **Jeffery Fraser** | Pittsburgh-based freelance writer and senior editor at Pittsburgh Today

DONOR  
PROFILE

# CLAIRE SENITA'S JOURNEY FORWARD

"I'm probably not going to be at school tomorrow," thought Claire Senita as she stared at the ceiling. A budding gymnast, she'd just come out of a dive roll — a maneuver she'd done "a thousand times before"— when she lost feeling in her arms and legs. It was May 9, 2006, the end of her eighth-grade year. Senita lay motionless on the mat.

"I remember feeling calm," she says. "I thought I'd just get some medicine or something."

It wasn't until later — until after the airlift, after emergency surgery, after eight days at Children's Hospital and a transfer to a Harmarville rehabilitation clinic — that Senita learned just how drastically her life had been changed. Paralyzed from the neck down by a spinal cord injury, she'd be hospitalized for the next several months, and would likely need a wheelchair for the rest of her life. Her unexpected journey would lead her several places: to hospitals around the country, to a small clinic in Boston, and eventually to The Pittsburgh Foundation, where she opened a fund to bring life-changing care to those with similar injuries.

"I was lucky that I had a family that kept encouraging me," she says of her first few weeks in the hospital, "because there were times when I just wanted to throw in the towel. When the staff would come in on a summer morning and

say, 'OK, today we're going to work on sitting up in bed again,' it was hard not to think about my friends and how they were headed to the beach or something. It was hard to stay positive. I never wanted anyone to feel like that again."

But instead of giving up, Senita resolved to keep going. "With this kind of injury, you either use your body or you lose it," she says. "You have to keep working despite everything. Change is scary, but there's also a lot of hope in it."

One such hope was the prospect of a new family member. "Our family had been expecting a granddaughter when Claire was injured," says Emily Senita, Claire's mother. "Claire didn't have much arm function then, but she was determined to hold her new niece."

Over four months of vigorous therapy, Senita slowly regained the use of her arms. She was able to rejoin her friends at Pine-Richland High School, using a wheelchair to navigate the halls. She began researching clinics across the

→ After a 2006 gymnastics accident, donor Claire Senita now works to bring life-changing care to Pittsburgh.



Left: Claire with her parents, Joe and Emily Senita.  
Right: Claire exercising with specialized gym equipment.



country, hoping to find one that could help her gain more independence. Eventually, she found a Boston nonprofit called Journey Forward.

“It looked like an able-bodied gym,” she says of her initial visit, “and it didn’t smell like a hospital. The staff had me up and out of the chair for two hours, moving my legs and asking me to concentrate on each movement.” The idea behind Journey Forward, says Senita, is that with enough repetition, the brain learns to bypass the scar tissue that accompanies a spinal cord injury and finds new ways to send signals to nerve endings. “After a week,” she says, “I knew I’d found the place for me.”

Upon graduating from Pine-Richland High School in 2010, Senita enrolled at Curry College, a liberal arts college just a few miles from Journey Forward. There she majored in business management and finance, crafting a business plan for opening a Journey Forward in Pittsburgh. In the meantime, she continued regular physical therapy sessions. Senita credits Journey Forward’s support system and commitment to exercise with improving her quality of life. “Paralysis is so much more than not being able to walk,” she says.



## “When someone tells me I can’t do something, I’m going to do it. I’ve always been that way.”

CLAIRE SENITA

“Getting up and moving reduces the secondary problems and issues that come with a spinal injury. You just feel better overall.”

Over the next four years, Senita learned to crawl by herself, to move her foot and even to pedal a spin bike. “She’d send me videos that would have me in tears,” says her mother. “It was absolutely amazing to see. And the first time she was able to stand on her own — well, I can’t even describe what that was like.”

But as graduation neared, Senita had to make a decision: stay in Boston and continue her therapy, or move back home and attempt to open a Journey Forward facility in Pittsburgh — knowing that in the interim, she’d likely lose the abilities she’d regained.

The choice was clear. Four years to the day after her accident, her cousin had broken his neck in an accident of his own. “Thinking of him and all the others I’d met in rehab centers back home, I knew there were so many people in Pittsburgh who could benefit from a place like Journey Forward,” she says. “It almost would’ve been selfish to stay in Boston.”

Upon moving home in 2014, Senita put her business plan to work. She met with doctors at UPMC, spoke with officials at Journey Forward, and sought help from experienced fundraisers, all while losing the leg function she’d worked

so hard to regain. As Senita and her family searched for donors and held events, both their attorney and their financial advisor recommended The Pittsburgh Foundation.

“We wanted to make sure that the funds we raised in the region stayed in the region,” says Joe Senita, Claire’s father. “Not only did The Pittsburgh Foundation lend name recognition and legitimacy to our cause, it was an easy vehicle for accessing the guidance and expertise we were looking for.”

After hosting a series of fundraisers, Senita and her family officially opened the Journey Forward-Pittsburgh Fund at the Foundation in December, putting them one step closer to opening a clinic that could help thousands. “Between the fund at the Foundation and funds at Journey Forward, we’ve raised about \$50,000 of the \$300,000 that we need to open a center here,” she says.

At 23 years old, putting others first and achieving what might have once seemed impossible comes naturally to Senita. “People say I’m positive, but I think mostly I’m just stubborn,” she says with a laugh. “When someone tells me I can’t do something, I’m going to do it. I’ve always been that way.”

By **Ryan Rydzewski**

FOCUS ON  
WESTMORELAND

# A PARK FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

A community effort transforms Greensburg's Twin Lakes Park.

**T**WIN LAKES PARK is considered the jewel of Westmoreland County's parks system, both for its natural beauty and its public amenities designed to be accessible by all residents. Centrally located in the county, the park's recently completed expansion is being hailed as a national model for community partnerships, planning and stewardship.

In 2000, Westmoreland County published a forward-looking plan for its park system that would drive development and management well into the future. Malcolm Sias, parks and recreation director for Westmoreland County, remembers the excitement—and also the realization that the county would need help managing such an ambitious undertaking.

"Twin Lakes Park was selected as our first priority for its location, beauty and opportunity for expanded amenities," he says. "We realized from the outset that it would take a community effort to accomplish our goals. We decided to form a Citizen's Advisory Board that would work with the park's staff."

Barbara Ferrier, a Community Foundation of Westmoreland County (CFWC) donor and board member, was an original member of the Citizen's Advisory Board. "I remember sitting in a meeting thinking that a water feature would be a nice addition," she recalls. "I never could have imagined all that we've accomplished together."

The park's expansion was completed in three phases. Amenities were added during each phase based on the priorities of the community and needed infrastructure, such as road access, parking and convenience facilities. The park now boasts a BMX track, a dog park, an accessible playground, a skate park, a paved "life trail" with accessible fitness stations, a dek hockey rink, and a lighted sledding and tubing area.

The CFWC and its donor funds have been active supporters of the park's expansion. The Ferrier Family Funds at the CFWC, advised by Ferrier, provided funding to build the life trail. "The Citizen's Advisory Board was considering a trail to go around the skate park," she says. "My mother was in a wheelchair at the time, and when they showed me that the activities there would include accessible activities at each fitness station, I knew I wanted to support it." The CFWC's Now and Forever Fund supported the building of the playground, which features accessible activities for children.

"Community involvement was integral to the park's success," says Phil Koch, the CFWC's executive director. "We're proud to partner with our donors and neighbors in this endeavor, supporting the project with grants and helping to establish an endowment that will fund the park in perpetuity."

Ferrier, who rotated off the Citizen's Advisory Board last year, knows that while the initial work may be complete, the project is far from finished. To that end, she has contributed to the endowment for the park's future maintenance. "It excites me to see that there are activities that engage every age and ability," she says, noting that Westmoreland County's residents can access the park "practically from birth."

And thanks to the community's efforts, residents will be able to enjoy it for a long time to come.

By **Christopher Whitlatch** | manager of marketing and communications



Barbara Ferrier, a Community Foundation of Westmoreland County donor and board member, enjoys the park she helped expand and maintain.



With the help of the Downtown Outreach Center and Shelter, Jionna Roberts-Rogers sets her sights on college. See page 15 for more.

## **NEW FUNDS** September 1, 2015 – March 1, 2016

### **The Pittsburgh Foundation**

Abbey Road Fund  
Bill and Sue Cutri Fund  
Catherine Baine Berg Scholarship Fund  
Celeste and Anthony Massaro Fund  
Cheryl Redilla Charitable Fund  
Cimino Family Charitable Fund  
Curtis R. and Helen B. Marquard Fund  
Dr. Herbert and Theresa Sperling Charitable Fund  
Dr. James W. McKay Scholarship Fund  
Dr. Jeanne A. Cooper / Ault Fund #2  
Dr. Jeanne A. Cooper / Ault Fund #3  
Frank B. Emmerling Charitable Fund  
G.A. Marsico Charitable Fund  
Gilbert and Valerie Gabriel Charitable Fund  
James Alan Auld Fund  
James and Tammer Gabriel Charitable Fund

Jill and Alan Boarts Fund  
John C. and Mary A. Reynolds Fund  
John J. and Martha A. Hucko Scholarship Fund  
Journey Forward — Pittsburgh Fund  
Judy and James E. Williams, Jr. Family Fund  
Kerry Group Fund  
Leslie and Richard A. Snow Charitable Fund  
Ligonier Valley Endowment / Marvin & Mary Louise Gantz Fund  
Lonnie T. Doman Memorial Charitable Fund  
Lonnie T. Doman Memorial Scholarship Fund  
M. Elise and Robert W. Hyland, Jr. Charitable Fund  
Milestone Fund  
Nilima Dash Charitable Fund  
Patricia Berg Scholarship Fund  
Rob Bell Fund  
Robert H. and Lucinda E. Bailey Fund  
Rose Marie Hanna Charitable Fund #1  
Rose Marie Hanna Charitable Fund #2  
Russell Standard Charitable Fund  
Sally J. Lanz Charitable Fund  
Samuel and Judith Spanos Charitable Fund  
Silva Family Fund  
SJ Glassworks Fund  
Starfish Charitable Fund  
Steve and Becky Myers Family Fund  
Team Cassie Fund  
Tetons Scholarship Fund  
Teva Scholarship Fund  
Unknown Donor Scholarship Fund

### **Community Foundation of Westmoreland County**

Dorothy and Douglas Brady Memorial Fund  
Greensburg College Club Scholarship Fund  
Healing Arts, Healing Animals Fund  
Mazero Family Fund

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