

THE PITTSBURGH
FOUNDATION
Summer 2020

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I RECENTLY RAN ACROSS A NOTE I sent to the Foundation staff back in April, after many of us spent the weekend trying to recognize spring and celebrate Easter and Passover amid a pandemic. We were trying to adapt to a public health lockdown as we were rushing emergency aid to nonprofits helping hundreds of thousands of residents stranded in the economic shutdown.

If your body clock is set to Pandemic Standard Time, as mine is, that will seem like a year ago instead of five months.

Food lines were growing longer, businesses and schools were closing, personal protection equipment and testing kits were scarce. I wrote about the stress and exhaustion that I knew was taking a toll on all of us and those we were trying to serve.

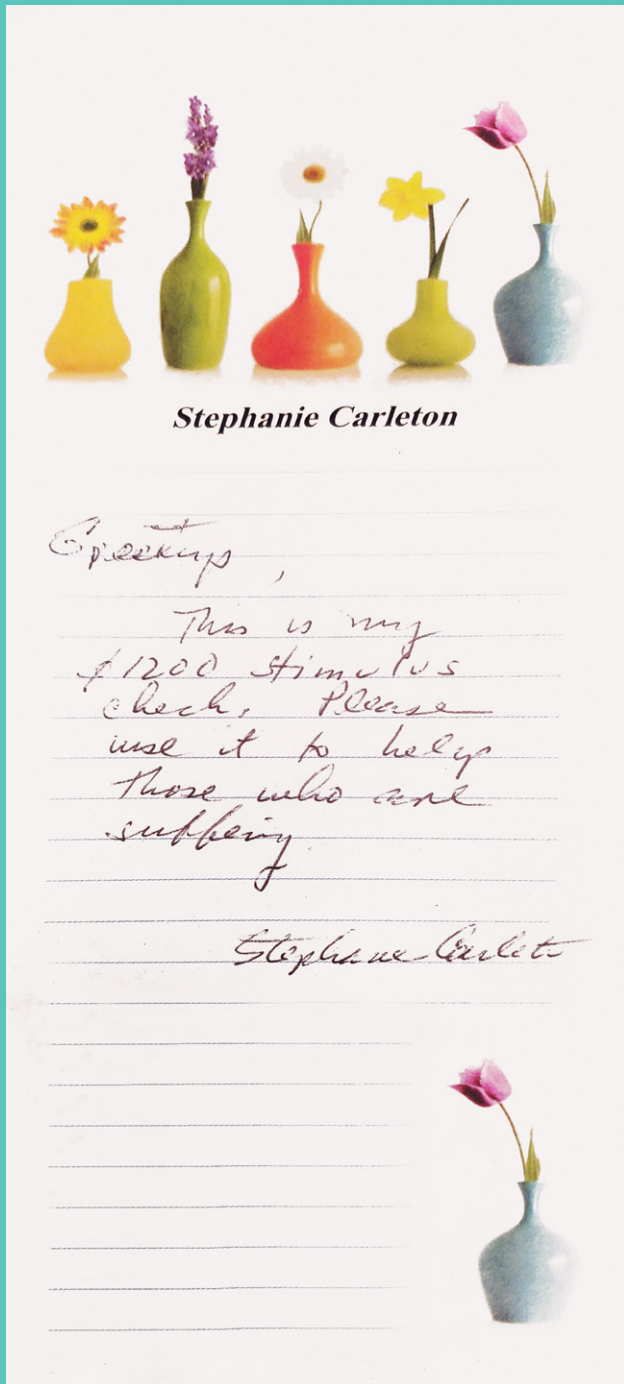
I wrote about the importance of taking respites, personally and professionally. Even at that early point in the pandemic, it was clear the recovery effort would be a marathon, not a sprint.

And now, five months later, here we are, with grave evidence that we do indeed face a historic marathon to fight the spread and survive the sweeping impacts of the COVID-19 virus.

Added to the course we are running in the Pittsburgh region — and in the nation — is our reckoning over continued racial injustice, evidenced by the horrific killing of Minneapolis resident George Floyd at the hands of police, and the disproportionate harm suffered by Black and Brown residents from the virus.

That is powerfully demonstrated in this issue by way of a searing statement issued by nine Black women from our staff who pay homage to Black lives lost through violent arrests, and voice the agony and exhaustion experienced by living generations of people of color. Their words provide a fitting manifesto that we must bring every resource and every sector to bear to fight racial injustice and secure racial equity.

Our beginning steps to address that are reported in this issue's cover story — the building of our Emergency Action Fund. A total of \$9 million was raised and then



Stephanie Carleton

rushed out to nonprofits, most of them providing essential goods and services to the most vulnerable.

Donors have ranged from corporations such as Duquesne Light Co., which contributed \$500,000, to our Foundation's family of donors, which contributed more than \$800,000. Betsy and John Baun of Bradford Woods are among a special group supporting applicants who didn't meet the Emergency Action Fund criteria.

Among the \$820,000 in public donations was a floral note from Stephanie Carleton of Wilkinsburg: "This is my \$1,200 Stimulus check. Please use it to help those who are suffering."

On the grantee side in this issue is Lateresa Blackwell, founder and executive director of Kitchen of Grace, an organization providing food service and skills training to

← Every donation tells a story, including this handwritten note, accompanying a \$1,200 donation, which caught the eye of Foundation staff.

scores of young people in the city. An Emergency Action Fund grant supported stipends for four staff members: two recent Kitchen of Grace graduates who had lost their jobs, as well as a single mother and a single father.

More than 300 grants like this one have bolstered organizations in their efforts to innovate and sustain services in the face of rising need. Between the lines of their stories, the Pittsburgh character traits of uncommon generosity and resilience in the face of adversity shine through.

Every metro region in the country is facing these unprecedented challenges, but experience tells me only those that demonstrate honest action, careful listening and perseverance of spirit will reach a future that is better than where we are now.

Determination was very much on my mind as I celebrated Easter Sunday with my family: 20 households encompassing four generations and spread out across six cities came together for a service on Zoom. The outfits ranged from T-shirts to Sunday best, but the person who shone brightest was the Episcopal minister known to us as "Grandpa," a family member by marriage who led the service.

Just three days before our gathering, his beloved wife, Mimi, died of COVID-19 in a hospital ICU. His homily was a testament to love and the power of spirituality as the way forward. His mere presence as he worked to manage the camera technology for the first time, was a lesson in the extraordinary power of resilience. He framed it as "practicing resurrection" to help us accept what we've lost and move forward stronger than before. How? "Live in the now," he said. "Look forward to the future rather than living in the past. Bring hope into hopeless situations. Bring joy to shatter despair. Forgive others — give them back dignity. Speak the truth in public. Confront injustice."

At The Pittsburgh Foundation, we stand ready to help, to encourage and to empower. Thank you for joining us.


Lisa Schroeder
president & CEO

Eric Garner	Matthew Ajibede	Victor Emanuel	Felix Kumi
John Crawford III	Frank Smart	LaRosa	Keith Harrison
Michael Brown	Natasha McKenna	Jonathan Sanders	McLeod
Ezell Ford	Tony Robinson	Freddie Blue	Junior Prosper
Dante Parker	Anthony Hill	Joseph Mann	Lamontez Jones
Michelle Cusseaux	Mya Hall	Salvado Ellswood	Paterson Brown
Laquan McDonald	Phillip White	Sandra Bland	Dominic Hutchinson
George Mann	Eric Harris	Albert Joseph Davis	Anthony Ashford
Tanisha Anderson	Walter Scott	Freddie Gray	Alonzo Smith
Akai Gurley	William Chapman II	Darrius Stewart	Tyree Crawford
Tamir Rice	Alexia Christian	Billy Ray Davis	India Kager
Rumain Brisbon	Brendon Glenn	Samuel DuBose	La’Vante Biggs
Jerame Reid		Asshams Pharoah	Michael Lee Marshall
		Manley	

Following the May 25 killing of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis, nine Black women on our staff collaborated on a statement: “We will not be silent.” It was posted on our website, pittsburghfoundation.org, on **June 8**, along with the Foundation’s official statement against racism and violence by police, and a personal essay by President and CEO Lisa Schroeder.

OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS many of us have been checking in with one another about how we’re doing. The consensus is that we are NOT O.K. We are:

Sad. Angry. Enraged. Anxious. Afraid.

Afraid for ourselves. Afraid for our children, our partners, our families and our friends. And we are TIRED — utterly exhausted.

Too many Black lives have been taken from us by racist violence — police brutality being just one form of it. Literally thousands of Black people have been killed. Many of their deaths were never filmed, nor were they considered sensational enough to be reported by national news outlets or social media. Many never got a “#Justicefor...” hashtag. Many of these murders were never prosecuted. Of those that were, most did not result in guilty verdicts.

There have been so many of these that it is hard to imagine our loved ones ever being safe in this country. It doesn’t matter how many times we give our children “the talk,” or how carefully we plan our routes to and from home. As we have learned over and over again, there is very little we can do while being Black that will keep us safe from racism:

You can’t drive while Black.

You can’t jog while Black.

You can’t shop in a store while Black.

You can’t chill in your grandma’s backyard while Black.

You can’t walk home wearing a hoodie while Black.

You can’t stand in front of a window in your own home while Black.

You can’t go to church while Black.

You can’t even catch COVID-19 while Black. (The virus has killed Black people at astonishingly high disproportionality in cities across the country.)

WE ARE TIRED. We are tired of all the tragic, untimely deaths of Black people and all the days between each one when we have to navigate the unwelcome reminders of the utter devaluing of Black life — report-after-gender-equity-report, racist-policy-after-racist-policy, inaction-after-inaction.

We recognize the desire for conversation about what has transpired over the past two weeks. However, some of us are not ready to talk, especially at work. Some of us are too fatigued to have yet another discussion about the loss of Black life without the realization of real change.

At the same time, we can’t be silent. There is too much silence already about racism. We cannot be a part of that. Too many people have died because of racism — so many, in fact, that it is easy to forget their names. But we must never forget; we must remember. Since 2014, thousands have been the victims of police violence. Here, we pause to remember the names of those who are known.* The list above represents just a fraction of those killed by police.

Jamar Clark	Antronie Scott	Mary Truxillo	Botham Jean
Richard Perkins	Wendell Celestine	Demarcus Semer	Pamela Turner
Nathaniel Harris	David Joseph	Willie Tillman	Dominique Clayton
Pickett Jr.	Calin Roquemore	Alton Sterling	Atatiana Jefferson
Bennie Lee Tignor	Dyzhawn Perkins	Philando Castile	Christopher
Miguel Espinal	Christopher Davis	Terence Crutcher	Whitfield
Michael Noel	Marco Loud	Paul O'Neal	Christopher
Kevin Matthews	Peter Gaines	Alteria Woods	McCorvey
Bettie Jones	Torrey Robinson	Jordan Edwards	Eric Reason
Quintonio LeGrier	Darius Robinson	Aaron Bailey	Michael Lorenzo Dean
Keith Childress Jr.	Terrill Thomas	Ronell Foster	Breonna Taylor
Janet Wilson	Sylville Smith	Stephon Clark	George Floyd
Randy Nelson	Kevin Hicks	Antwon Rose II	David McAtee

These tragic losses are made even more devastating by the reality that there have been too many Black lives taken by racist citizens.

From the murder of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Fla. in 2012 to the nine worshippers killed at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, S.C., in 2015, we remember their names: Rev. Clementa Pickney, Cynthia Hurd, Rev. Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, Tywanza Sanders, Ethel Lee Lance, Susie Jackson, Depayne Middleton-Doctor, Rev. Daniel Simmons and Myra Thompson.

More recently, we watched the video of Ahmaud Arbery who was jogging on Feb. 23 when he was confronted by three white men who were eventually charged with his murder.

The killings are compounded by the fact that Black lives have been repeatedly put in danger by white citizens who describe themselves as “not racist,” but nonetheless have called police on Black people for doing any number of regular, everyday things just because they were Black — babysitting, swimming, selling water, working as a delivery driver, daring to ask a woman to leash her dog as required in a public park, and sometimes for literally doing nothing at all.

These centuries old, unending attacks on Black life and Black freedom are the source of all of the hurt and anger and pain that has been on such powerful display over the past week, and in recent years. We thank the countless

organizers and activists on the front lines who are amplifying messages against racism and police brutality and demanding systemic change. We stand with you.

These seemingly never-ending injustices are why we continue to scream “BLACK LIVES MATTER.” This is why we refuse to be silent. We know that despite the continuous refusal of our neighbors, community leaders and politicians to hear our cries and act with urgency, Black lives actually do matter. Our lives matter. We matter.

We believe that the time for talking is over. It is long past time that we collectively and unapologetically DO the work of racial justice in our homes, in our communities, in our workplaces and in our philanthropy. That begins with increasing funding for Black- and Brown-led organizations and supporting grassroots movements with our dollars and our voices. Anything less is a willful act of forgetting the lives that have been taken from us, and of neglecting our responsibility to protect those who, without our action, will be added to this list in the days ahead.

by Pittsburgh Foundation staff members:

Tika Good, Charmelle Jackson, Taleesha Johnson, Jamillia Kamara, Danitra Mason, Michelle McMurray, Cheryl Poston, Celeste Smith, Mahogany Thaxton

*List as of June 8, 2020. The names of victims are published on various platforms, including the Washington Post, which maintains this database to track police shootings and reports that 1,252 Black people have died in police shootings since Jan. 1, 2015. The Washington Post’s database does not include those killed by other methods or who died in police custody. NPR’s Code Switch also maintains a list of those who have been killed.

All Of Us— Together

The Foundation's
Emergency Action Fund
raises, grants \$9 million
in COVID-19 relief in
three months.





The Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank holds its third food distribution event on April 10. Volunteers place one box of dry goods and one box of frozen food into each of the waiting cars that have lined up for blocks outside PPG Paints Arena.



↑ Tamera Carter, RN, and Carrie Smidl, LPN, working at the Allegheny County Department of Human Services' Safe Haven Hotel. The hotel is open to house vulnerable people, including the homeless, who have tested positive for COVID-19 or are at increased risk. Nurses and volunteers deliver meals, help with telehealth appointments and ensure that guests' needs are being met.

IN A CRISIS, community foundations stand ready to serve as a hub of collaboration and vital support. But never before has a crisis as overwhelming as the coronavirus pandemic permeated our region, our country and the world. The mandated lockdown by Gov. Tom Wolf and public health officials has slowed its spread, but it also has caused dramatic upticks in demand for life essentials as record numbers of residents have filed for unemployment.

After the first coronavirus diagnosis in Pennsylvania was announced in early March and public health officials began developing a plan to minimize the virus' spread in the region, Pittsburgh Foundation staff scrambled into philanthropic first responder mode. Within a week, an Emergency Action Fund had been developed. And by its March 17 launch, it had seed funding of \$1 million from each of these donors: The Pittsburgh Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, the Henry L. Hillman Foundation and the Richard King Mellon Foundation.

Donations began to pour in, including \$308,000 from the public and more than \$824,000 from the Foundation's own donors. By the end of July, the Emergency Action Fund had raised \$9 million, and every dollar raised was rushed out to meet a range of emergency needs.



We knew COVID-19 would pose monumental challenges, and we set up the Emergency Action Fund to strengthen systems that ensure public health."

LISA SCHROEDER
President and CEO

“We knew COVID-19 would pose monumental challenges, and we set up the Emergency Action Fund to strengthen as quickly as possible systems that ensure public health,” says Pittsburgh Foundation President and CEO Lisa Schroeder. “We also knew we had to provide unrestricted operating dollars to community-based nonprofits serving low-income communities—often communities of color—that have been hardest hit by the virus.”

The grants came in phases, first with \$3.3 million for public health and human services support, including temporary housing and food distribution, and to shore up staffing, deep cleaning and protective equipment for the Allegheny County Health Department. The Fund also covered the hiring of more workers to staff the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania’s 2-1-1 call-in system, which connects individuals and families to essential services. It also supported that agency’s food distribution programs in Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette and Westmoreland counties.

Six community-based health centers across Westmoreland and Allegheny counties were awarded emergency operating dollars to help them transition to telemedicine, which, while safer, is reimbursed at a much lower rate than in-person visits. These same health centers also received funds to purchase personal protective equipment for frontline workers, many of whom suddenly found themselves without child care.

A major grant to the child care advocacy organization Trying Together established an emergency fund for child care providers. “Most people with children cannot work without child care, and this grant provides critical support to help the owners of these small businesses, most of whom are women,” says Executive Director Cara Ciminillo. “This funding will help them to recover their own livelihoods and ensure that child care will be available when families are able to return to work.”

In mid-March, the Foundation’s Program staff began reaching out to nonprofit leaders from all sectors, asking them what supports they needed to be COVID-ready. The feedback from these 100 conversations informed the grant-making criteria for the second phase: operating grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000. About \$5 million was awarded to nonprofits in Allegheny, Beaver and Westmoreland counties.

Many of these organizations found it necessary to add services, such as providing food, emergency cash assistance and other essentials. Small arts organizations, faced with revenue losses from canceled performances, exhibitions



Water buffaloes, toilets and hand-washing stations are set up near common homeless camps. Hand-washing is critical for prevention of the spread of COVID-19.

and fundraising events, also received operating grants, a move the Foundation hopes will preserve the region’s rich cultural fabric.

By the time applications to the Fund were paused on May 8, about 270 organizations had received operating support. As of August 4, a total of 297 nonprofits received operating support, while 16 more received systems support funding. Some of their stories are shared in this edition of Forum, and all grants are listed on the Emergency Action Fund website.

“We are already seeing signs that the infusion of Emergency Action Fund grants combined with related support from other regional philanthropies has kept essential services flowing as state and federal aid begins to make its way into the region,” says Schroeder. “It’s our expectation that philanthropic grants and government relief will provide a stronger foundation than we would have had otherwise for the long-term economic recovery work that lies ahead.”

A list of donors to the Emergency Action Fund can be found on the Foundation’s website at pittsburghfoundation.org/emergency-action-gifts

by **Kitty Julian** | director of communications



Navigating Resources

Emergency Action Fund
helps the helpers with
major systems support.

Senior Manager and Resource Navigator Cinda Watkins fields calls to the United Way's 211 hotline and connects people to food, shelter and other vital services. The few workers required to be in the call center must adapt to social distancing guidelines, but the majority work from home.

NOT LONG AFTER Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf ordered residents to shelter in place to avoid contracting COVID-19, an elderly woman who was out of food called the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania's 211 resource helpline.

As a senior citizen, she is in a group identified as being at high risk for succumbing to the virus. Could the hotline devoted to connecting people in dire need of vital services help her?

She was able to get through quickly, thanks in part to a first-round grant from the Emergency Action Fund that went to increase staff at the hotline, which serves residents of 13 southwestern Pennsylvania counties.

Those staff members, called 211 resource navigators, began answering questions about COVID-19, relieving the Poison Control Center, which was overwhelmed with inquiries about the virus. Concerned callers asked how to avoid getting the deadly disease, what the symptoms were and whether they should be tested.

"Most of the time, people contact 211 while in some sort of crisis. That is on steroids right now," says Bobbi Watt Geer, the United Way's president and CEO. "We had to move very quickly to ensure there was no interruption to 211 service, and that all of our resource navigators were up to speed on community resources for those in need."

That initial \$152,000 in funding, along with other grants, enabled United Way to add 10 resource navigators to respond to calls, which doubled almost immediately after Gov. Wolf's shutdown order. The other two grants from the Emergency Action Fund went to the Allegheny County Department of Human Services to quickly establish quarantine housing for at-risk populations and to the county Health Department for additional staffing and supplies to deal with COVID-19. The three grants, made in late March, total \$1.86 million.

Among the top priorities of the philanthropies backing the Emergency Action Fund was ensuring that people in need had a place

to turn for help. The United Way's 211 helpline is such a place. It is a 24/7 lifeline.

The organization quickly trained its 10 new navigators, as well as 35 of its employees from other departments who offered to serve. They learned to connect people who called, texted or entered a web chat to the center's vast database of services.

"People at risk before the pandemic are now more at risk," says Geer. "Forty percent of Americans can't handle a \$400 emergency without facing financial ruin, so now, with people being laid off or furloughed, they are scared about feeding their families, paying their bills and losing their homes. Even though many evictions were on hold during the pandemic, what happens for those who fell behind on rent and months' worth is due at one time?"

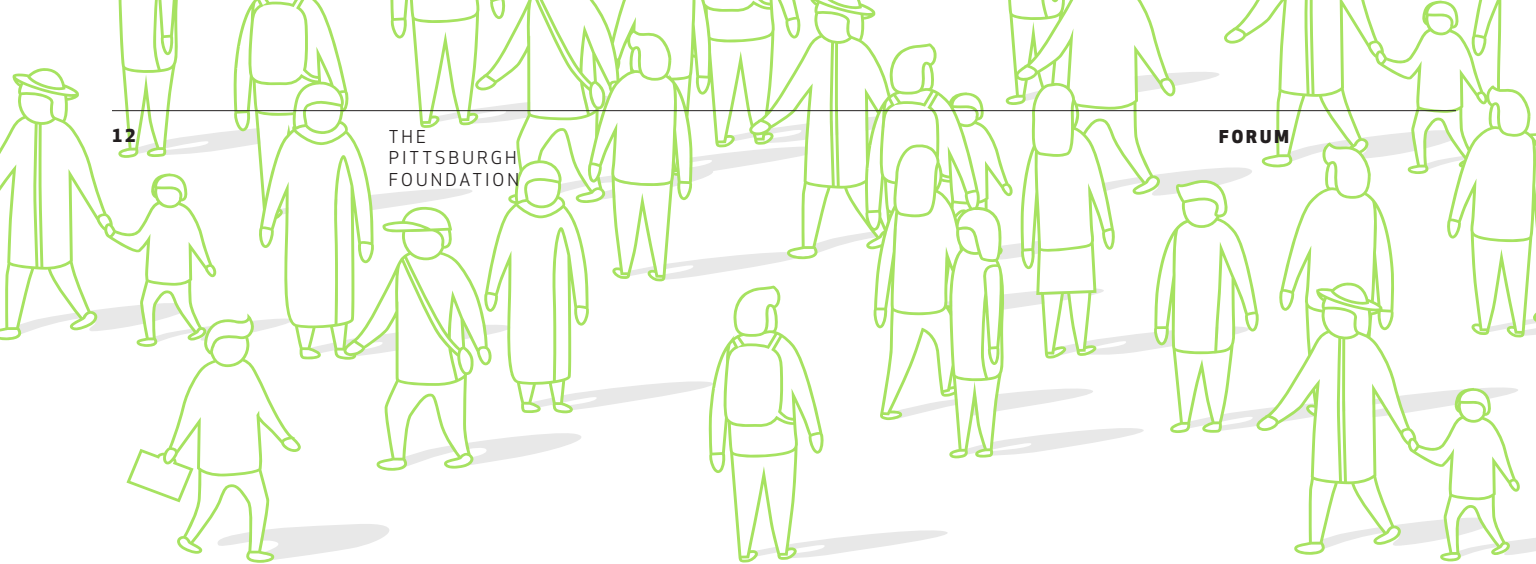
Also, there has been an increase in first-time callers. Cinda Watkins, a senior manager at the 211 center and who lives in Westmoreland County, says community needs will likely shift the longer the pandemic goes on. United Way is working proactively to ensure that all resources are accurate and up to date.

While overwhelmed and exhausted, Watkins says she and the other navigators find it deeply rewarding to help members of their communities through this unprecedented health and financial crisis.

"This [pandemic] is something we are all dealing with in different ways, and we, as resource navigators, just want to help as best we can," she says. "There's power and hope in being able to connect with people and steer them toward what they need. Working together is how we are all going to make it through this."

The 211 navigators came through for that elderly woman who needed food. They tracked down a nonprofit service providing delivery, and two weeks' worth of food arrived on the woman's doorstep within hours of her call.

by **Deanna Garcia** | communications officer



Making Everyone Count

2020 Census outreach efforts shift dramatically amid COVID-19 pandemic.

CAMPAIGNS TO SPUR SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIANS to complete the decennial census were in high gear. Nonprofit workers and volunteers fanned out into communities, urging residents to file online and showed them how. Census hubs in libraries and other public places were attracting those without computers or an internet connection to fill out the survey. Public events were staged to reach others. March was rolling along, and then COVID-19 forced the campaigners to slam on the brakes.

In the blink of an eye, face-to-face contact was gone, robbing complete-count campaigns of their most effective means of reaching, teaching and encouraging residents to fill out the census. And connecting to seniors, immigrants, people of color and other hard-to-count populations became even harder.

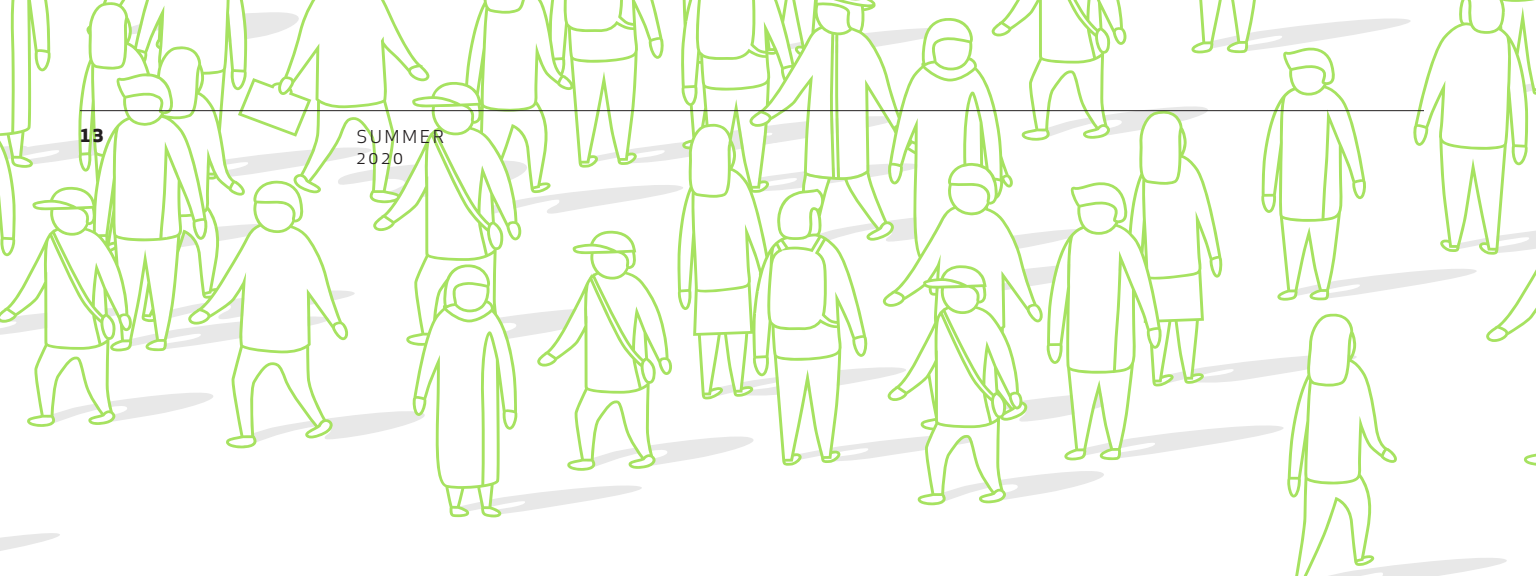
Some community service nonprofits that had added census campaigns to their workload this year were staggered. Not only did they have to shift to new strategies on the fly, they had to do so while strained to capacity trying to meet the soaring demand for food, housing and other basic needs in their service areas.

“With so many folks struggling with the pandemic, we’ve lost momentum on the census,” says Phil Koch, executive director of The Community Foundation of Westmoreland County, which is supporting mini-grants in seven counties beyond Allegheny.

The stakes are high. Pennsylvania Census officials estimate that every family of five that does not complete the census will translate to a loss of \$100,000 in federal funding over the next decade to spend on everything from transportation to safety net essentials, such as food, housing, education and health care.

Now complete-count campaigns are facing a second blow from a U.S. Census Bureau decision to cut its operations by one precious month — from end of October to end of September. Citing the risk of COVID-19 for those doing home visits, Bureau officials made the decision to cut the time frame in several areas. That decision has been met with a firestorm of criticism, including protest statements from 500 funding institutions across the country (The Pittsburgh Foundation is a signer) — and another from more than 900 community stakeholder organizations.





Despite charges that the cutbacks are designed to benefit the Republican Party, organizers say there is evidence that the process can be successful if allowed to continue.

One bright spot is that, considering the coronavirus turmoil, the percentages of residents who've already completed the census isn't as low as officials had feared.

By the third week of August, five counties had better completion rates than the 66.9% statewide average, according to 2020census.gov. Nearly 75% of Butler County residents had filled out the census. In Westmoreland, it reached 71.5%, as the county closed in on its final 2010 self-response rate of 71.6%. Nationwide, 64% of Americans had completed the census online or over the phone.

To educate and activate seven counties outside of Allegheny, The Community Foundation of Westmoreland County implemented a mini-grants program. Nonprofit organizations, schools and municipalities applied for grants of up to \$1,000 to cover the expenses of census activities. For example, libraries or community centers might set up an iPad station where families can register for the census when they visit the facility. The pandemic presented an opportunity for organizations to re-think how they might use their mini-grants, since social distancing made original outreach plans nearly impossible.

"Our nonprofit organizations are putting in double time to connect with vulnerable populations that are also the most difficult to count," says Koch. "That's an opportunity. When they connect with people to make sure they're okay, they can talk to them about the importance of the census and how to complete it."

Teachers with Westmoreland Community Action's Head Start program are talking up the census when speaking with students' parents. The nonprofit includes census information with the groceries that residents flooding its food pantry

receive. Before the outbreak, it had done most of its census work in the public schools, which included age-appropriate classroom lessons.

"The idea is that if you help sell the census to kids, they'll go home and talk about it with their parents," says Mandy Zurlich, the nonprofit's chief executive officer. "We knew we had to engage our hard-to-count individuals in multiple ways."

In Allegheny County, 69.4% of residents had completed the census by mid-August, the result of dozens of nonprofits and other community stakeholders organizing to raise the count.

The diverse communities the foundation serves in the Monongahela River valley and elsewhere have a significant number of hard-to-count residents, including the county's largest population of immigrants and refugees. With a collaborative of stakeholders, foundation staff developed a census strategy ranging from mini grants to expert training in promoting a complete count.

Like others, the outbreak forced Jefferson Counts, a campaign led by Jefferson Regional Foundation, the Jefferson Community Collaborative, and other Jefferson area partners, to adopt non-contact tactics, such as adding census messages to the agenda of a well-attended virtual town meeting in Duquesne about crisis resources for families. But the pandemic also offers a real-time lesson about the importance of the census that the campaign can exploit, says Mary Phan-Gruber, CEO of the Jefferson Regional Foundation. "COVID-19 only points out how decisions about emergency or disaster assistance are based on census allocation. When a vaccine is available, someone will be looking at census numbers to determine how and when the vaccine is distributed."

by **Jeffery Fraser** | freelance writer



Safe Haven Saves Lives

The largest grant from the Emergency Action Fund is a literal life saver.





A \$1.1 MILLION AWARD from the Emergency Action Fund to the Allegheny County Department of Human Services funded a pandemic refuge for the highly vulnerable.

That is, for example, people living in street encampments, staff at homeless shelters, first responders exposed to the virus, older people with health challenges living in group homes and released inmates who don't have housing.

The Department's staff dubbed it the Safe Haven Hotel. It prevented some people sick with COVID-19 from spreading the virus and provided a retreat for exposed front-line workers who couldn't safely quarantine at home. It isolated medically fragile people, preventing them from contracting the virus. Accommodating all these groups saved lives.

Department Director Marc Cherna says the grant, awarded quickly after Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf issued shelter-in-place orders, was vital. "We never could have gotten the hotel without that money," he says.

Cherna wanted a hotel so the Department could scale up to serve more people as necessary. "We had to plan ahead in case we became another New York. You can't tell whether that will happen at the outset." As the pandemic halted travel, Department staff found a hotel manager willing to rent large blocks of his empty facility at a reasonable rate for several months.

Department staff and those working for Community Human Services, a nonprofit contracted to run the hotel, refer to the residents as guests and treat them that way. Within Safe Haven, guests are isolated from each other depending on their health. COVID-19-positive guests live on one floor, while those exposed to the virus and awaiting test results stay on another. And a third floor is reserved for guests whose age or chronic conditions heighten their risk of death if they contract the disease. The three groups use separate entrances.

The first guest arrived April 6. At the height of occupancy in April, there were 55 guests. The average now is 30. At any given time, 12% are positive or suspected positive for COVID-19. Half are there because they are highly vulnerable; 37% to quarantine, and 13% arrived after discharge from a hospital. The hotel is for individuals and couples without children. The Department established other shelters for youth and for households with children.

↑ Carrie Smidl, LPN, delivers meals to guests at Safe Haven Hotel. Those staying receive three meals a day, provided by the nonprofit Community Kitchen.



I have been thinking about how I am spending my time during all of this. When it is all said and done, what can I say I did during this time? I will be proud to say I was part of this program.”

STEVE FARRELL

*Event and donations coordinator,
Allegheny County Department of Human Services*

↑ Staff and volunteers at Safe Haven Hotel are provided with PPE. Mattie Johnson dons a face shield as she prepares to tend to guests.

As an event and donations coordinator for the Department, Steve Farrell has time to volunteer at the hotel two days a week. “It is hard to be an event planner when events are banned,” he says jokingly.

Much of his service at the hotel is done at a distance. On a typical volunteer day, he makes wellness checks to guests by phone. Early in May, he set up email accounts for residents who did not have them so they could use electronic tablets provided by Allegheny Health Network for telehealth appointments. The devices also allow residents to have video communication with nurses.

Community Kitchen, another nonprofit, provides three meals a day, which staff deliver to the rooms. All staff receive personal protective equipment and training in its use.

Overseeing the operation since mid-April, just after Safe Haven opened, has been Luray Fladd, a program director with Community Human Services.

Fladd says she and the staff and a troop of volunteers try to make the situation as comfortable as possible. “Hotels are great when it is a vacation,” she says, “but when it stops being a vacation, the room is just a bed and a TV. After six weeks, you feel how small the spaces are.”

She tries to provide as many creature comforts as safely as possible. “For some, that is beer and cigarettes. For others it is being able to order a pizza,” she says. Fladd asked one of the volunteer applicants if he would be willing to make a beer run. “I could tell he’d never been asked that question before.” Just like guests in regular hotels, Safe Haven residents pay for amenities.

In enjoying some of those amenities, they also must abide by rules to prevent spread of the virus. Security officers are on staff to ensure compliance. For example, only one smoker at a time is allowed outside to the designated area to prevent congregating in groups.

When guests are in a position to leave permanently but don’t have stable housing, Community Human Services staff help with that, too. The goal is to make sure residents avoid returning to large shelters or encampments, which present a higher risk of infection.

Farrell says his experience at the hotel has been deeply meaningful. “I have been thinking about how I am spending my time during all of this. When it is all said and done, what can I say I did during this time? I will be proud to say I was part of this program.”

by **Barbara White Stack** | freelance writer

↓ Carrie Smidl, LPN; Tamera Carter, RN; and Katherine Anne Bakrania prepare meals before delivering them to each room.





Personal Philanthropy

Many are helping coronavirus relief efforts by giving through donor-advised funds.

EVEN IN THE BEST OF TIMES, the needs of the most vulnerable far outpace philanthropy's ability to fill them. But the coronavirus pandemic has turned that long-standing gap into a chasm. Though The Pittsburgh Foundation's Emergency Action Fund made grants totaling nearly \$9 million, more than 150 applications did not meet the criteria for funding. The Foundation's Development and Donor Services staff began matching donors to nonprofits in need of assistance.

Donors John and Betsy Baun were wintering in Florida when the first news of COVID-19 hit. They immediately wondered who would need help. "The first thing that popped into our minds was to call the Foundation. We knew they would know what the needs were," says Betsy.

The Bauns' enthusiasm and close bond shines through an early morning Facetime call. Betsy, large coffee mug in hand, apologizes jokingly for her lack of a haircut. John chimes in that his bald head saves him that worry during quarantine. The harmony in their 43-year marriage is evident not only when they finish each other's sentences, but in their unified approach to giving. "We like to focus on having the biggest impact. Instead of giving to multiple organizations,"



← Donors John and Betsy Baun engage their daughter and grandchildren in giving through the Foundation's Wish Book program and, this year, added to their giving to help nonprofits that did not receive grants from the Emergency Action Fund.

to two nonprofits — The Alignment Chapter, which provides same-day emergency services to single mothers in need, and Nazareth Prep, a career and college preparatory school, which serves at-risk students.

Requests for basic necessities grew from 25 to 180 a day, says Ray Nell Jones, founder of the Alignment Chapter. For struggling single moms, the pandemic presents issues that can seem overwhelming, says Jones, and potentially lead to mental health crises, including suicide. “The Bauns’ grant is saving lives, and we are so thankful to them.”

The Bauns stay closely connected to the community they support through the Foundation’s twice-a-year site tours. “Eye-opening,” says Betsy, adding that it’s important to both of them that they meet people and talk about their lives.

“When we get out to the places where the organizations are working, it makes me more passionate,” John says. He and Betsy welcome the educational opportunity. “These tours expose us to things we didn’t know,” she says, “and often we end up becoming more interested in an issue than we would have thought going in.”

The Bauns say they have been as rewarded by turning Emergency Action Fund applicants into grantees as those who have received support. Many others in the region must also feel fulfilled. Giving from donor-advised funds from March to May for COVID-19 relief, including \$824,000 in gifts to the Emergency Action Fund, was \$1.74 million (see related story, *All of Us — Together*, on page 6).

“Across the country, community foundations are working around the clock to fill the needs of our communities,” says Aroesty. “Pittsburghers are always so generous and willing to help one another, but our donors go way beyond that. Their extraordinary generosity has enabled us to stay on pace.”

The dramatic uptick in giving during the lockdown period extends nationwide and includes the charitable arms of for-profit financial advising firms as much as community foundations. In April, the National Philanthropic Trust reported a 62% increase in giving from DAFs, compared to the same month a year ago. Eileen Heisman, CEO of NPT, an independent public charity providing philanthropic expertise to donors, foundations and financial institutions, said in a Chronicle of Philanthropy podcast that giving by donors in April doubled from the previous year, much of it going to organizations providing basic needs.

Behind those gigantic numbers are donors like the Bauns. John says he is grateful to play a small part in helping organizations improve life prospects for those who need it most.

By **Jennifer Rignani** | freelance writer

says Betsy, and then John finishes her point: “we decided two would be best.”

The Bauns always want to contribute to where help is needed most. They have a close connection with Lindsay Aroesty, director of donor services and a planned giving specialist at the Foundation. “She knows our hearts,” says John.

Aroesty suggested the couple join donors who were giving to applicants unable to meet the Emergency Action Fund criteria. She worked with the Program staff to help identify nonprofits with missions similar to what the Bauns have supported in their personal philanthropy. The couple has been drawn to programs that help single mothers and survivors of domestic abuse, two populations that have been especially vulnerable to the worst effects of the pandemic. Under quarantine, for example, essentials such as diapers and formula were difficult to buy.

“It can be as simple as that — just one aspect of the work — and something gels with us,” says John. “Our hearts get aligned with a certain need.” The couple decided to give



that will lead to post-secondary education, or leadership roles within the food service and hospitality industries.”

About 65% of households in Marshall-Shadeland, where the restaurant is located, have incomes of less than \$45,000 a year, according to an analysis by the University of Pittsburgh’s Center for Social and Urban Research. The Blackwells grew up in low-income neighborhoods — Lateresa in Northview Heights; Michael in The Hill District — and that shared experience has led to a strong conviction to help people transform their lives.

“We give our young people a chance by holding them accountable and teaching them basic skills that some of us take for granted,” says Lateresa. “We help participants build life skills so they can succeed.”

Coronavirus-related closures forced the Blackwells to rethink how the Café and Kitchen of Grace could survive. With a \$15,000 grant from the Emergency Action Fund, they pivoted from workforce training in the restaurant industry to cooking for the community. The grant covered stipends for four staff members — two recent Kitchen of Grace graduates who had lost their jobs, and a single mother and a single father.

Kitchen of Grace is now delivering meals to residents of the Ebenezer Senior Towers twice a week, providing food for households headed by single mothers and delivering basic school supplies to families with young children at home. It’s an approach that Lateresa hopes will help people realize that they’re not alone.

“John Maxwell [the nationally known author and speaker on leadership] has a quote that I live my life by: ‘People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care,’” Lateresa says. “As community leaders and homeowners, we have earned that level of respect and have proven that we care, not just with our words, but our deeds.”

by **Kitty Julian**

Food as Life

Kitchen of Grace feeds a community.

THE GRACIOUS AND LIFE-AFFIRMING ACT of preparing and sharing a meal has taken on new significance during the coronavirus pandemic.

With record numbers of people suddenly unemployed, many have been forced to delay paying bills so they can buy groceries. Food insecurity is compounded by mandatory closures of schools and senior centers that typically provide meals each weekday. Meanwhile, restaurants and workplace cafes that previously bustled with activity have gone dark, forcing laid-off staff to seek food assistance for themselves.

That the restaurant industry has been hard-hit pains Lateresa Blackwell. In 2014, she and husband, Michael, an accomplished chef, transformed a former nuisance bar on Pittsburgh’s North Side into a restaurant of their own: Café on the Corner. Two years later, they formed a nonprofit, Kitchen of Grace, in that same space to train young people in the catering and restaurant business as a pathway to successful careers in the hospitality industry. They’ve trained about 100 young people, many of whom have lost their food service jobs due to mandated closures.

“When people live paycheck to paycheck, they don’t have the education required for promotions, so they are in subservient positions that keep them in poverty,” says Lateresa. “Our approach is to build a pathway

↑ Staff at Kitchen of Grace, the nonprofit arm of Pittsburgh’s Café on the Corner, pivoted from job training to food distribution during COVID-19. Thanks to the Emergency Action Fund, Café owners Michael (far right) and Lateresa Blackwell (not pictured) rehired all staff.

Shaping a Legacy

Pandemic pushes many to estate planning.

MARCUS J. RANUM'S PLANS ARE NOW SET. The retired software company executive from Morrisdale, Clearfield County, is 59, single and has no children. After watching three friends succumb to cancer last year, he decided to complete his beneficiary designations in his estate plan. “My money needs to go somewhere when I die,” he says, “so I might as well have some say in it.”

He started the process in November, not knowing how far ahead of the curve he would be.

Financial advisors across southwestern Pennsylvania who work with The Pittsburgh Foundation’s Development and Donor Services team are reporting significant increases



My parents’ approach in their estate planning has been to make sure that everything will be neatly taken care of with a minimum amount of hassle, and I think that is an excellent idea.”

MARCUS RANUM

in numbers of clients doing estate planning—wills, living wills (advance directives), power of attorney, revocable trusts—because of COVID-19.

Since public health experts have determined that Americans will be living with the virus for one to two years before a vaccine is produced, many financial advisors’ clients are making estate planning a priority, especially older Americans who are at increased risk. A Caring.com survey conducted this year found that only 48% of adults 55 years of age or older possess estate planning documents, a 12% drop from last year. This can leave burdensome decisions to heirs or the court system. Ranum’s experience with his friends convinced him to take on the responsibility.

“My parents’ approach in their estate planning has been to make sure that everything will be neatly taken care of with a minimum amount of hassle, and I think

that is an excellent idea,” says Ranum. “I’ve had friends who, on top of the devastation of losing a parent, have had to deal with the headaches related to estates and burials and selling property.”

Ranum’s financial advisor, David DelFiandra, an attorney and partner at Leech Tishman, reports a 30%–35% increase in clients, both new and existing, who want to complete estate plans. The wave began in January with the passage of the Secure Act, which made sweeping changes to the laws governing qualified retirement plans. It intensified in March when the coronavirus spread to the United States.

Financial advisors and attorneys are working diligently to incorporate COVID-19-related government benefits into estate planning. And clients need to be prepared to sort through a range of issues that the pandemic has highlighted. “Some clients have a fear of addressing end-of-life decisions,” DelFiandra says. “Others don’t want to incur legal fees.” But he has a standard response: The emotional and monetary costs of ignoring estate planning are always much higher.

“An effective estate plan will ensure that a client’s assets go to chosen beneficiaries for the least amount of tax,” he says.

Ranum says that completing his plan has given him peace of mind that comes from being intentional in his personal philanthropy.

He and DelFiandra established a charitable remainder trust that will establish a fund to provide technology training for students from low-income families. “Current policy is punitive toward the most vulnerable,” Ranum says. “I think that is horrible and would like to see if I can foster some future attorneys because sorting out the current mess is going to take many good attorneys.”

Ranum says he draws comfort from the certainty of a solid, legally certified plan that covers the full range of obligations and wishes after death—from funeral arrangements to asset distribution.

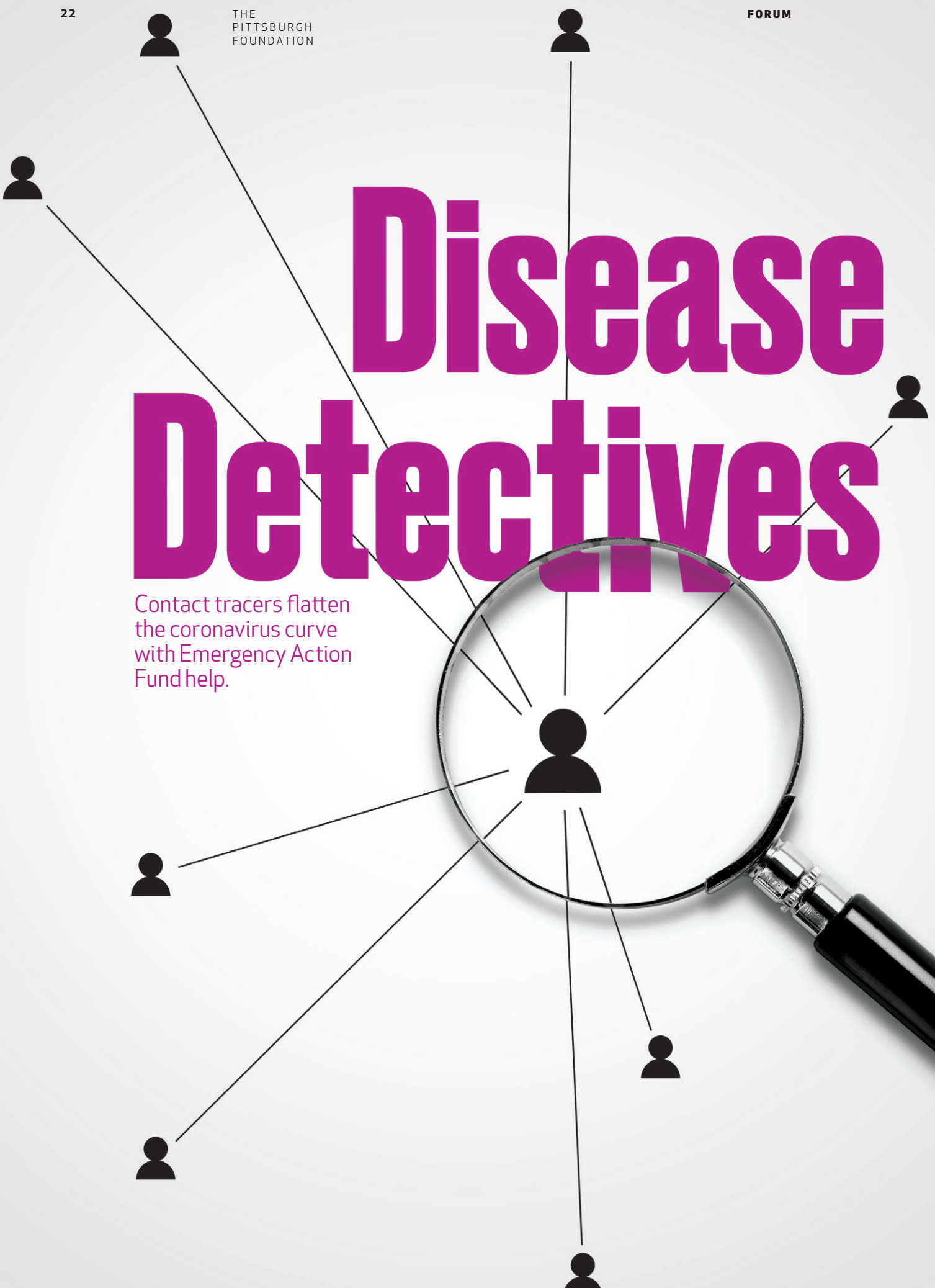
“My CPA is the executor of my estate and will be arranging a small going-away party when it happens, which I will, unfortunately, not be able to attend,” jokes Ranum.

DelFiandra is happy to have played a part in turning Ranum’s wishes into reality and says Ranum’s “party” plan “is a testament to the good that can come from working through diverse viewpoints and outlooks to get to a plan that represents clients’ best intentions in life.”

By **Christian Pelusi** | senior communications officer

Disease Detectives

Contact tracers flatten the coronavirus curve with Emergency Action Fund help.



Long before COVID-19 struck, Allegheny County's Health Department leaders deployed disease detectives to track down people exposed to measles and sexually transmitted diseases. After the pandemic arrived, support from the Emergency Action Fund enabled the Department to quickly reinforce that unit to locate the large numbers of people exposed to the deadly new virus.

The \$600,000 grant, as well as other foundation funding, meant the department could expand its squad of disease detectives — or “contact tracers” in the vernacular of public health — and provide them with the technology necessary to sleuth safely from home.

The Health Department's director, Dr. Debra Bogen, describes the grant as critical to the agency's COVID-19 response. “It's safeguarding the health and safety of people across Allegheny County and will continue to in the future,” she says.

The Department's contact tracers interview people who test positive to determine who exposed them and who they may have exposed. They find as many people as possible who had close contact with the sick person, then provide those people with information about exposure and urge self-quarantining to avoid further spread. Contact tracing is a vital step in slowing down the contagion.

Some technology companies, including Apple and Google, are developing cellphone apps that could alert people if they have close contact with someone who reported testing positive for COVID-19. In theory, this technology would be a vital public health tool, but in practice, it has yet to prove its worth. The biggest drawback is that at least 60% of cellphone users would have to participate. North

Dakota, South Dakota and Utah have set up free tracking apps, but only a tiny percentage of state residents have downloaded them.

That leaves the job to human contact tracers. With the help of the Emergency Action Fund grant, a team of two tracers managed by two supervisors with expertise in the field were investigating cases and contacts. Also on reserve in the event of a surge are about 40 volunteers from the Department's Medical Reserve Corps, part of a federal program that identifies residents with expertise to assist in disaster recovery. As of August, the disease detectives had reached more than 3,000 people — representing 85% of those they have attempted to contact.

The grant also has enabled Department officials to set up their own laboratory to conduct COVID-19 tests, to establish a safe testing site at the Clack Health Center in Lawrenceville and to update its phone system to deal with the avalanche of inquiries about the disease.

In addition, Dr. Bogen cited pre-coronavirus modernization of the Department through the Public Health Improvement Fund, a resource pool managed by The Pittsburgh Foundation that awards an average of \$340,000 each year based on contributions by a group of foundations and health care systems.

The Improvement Fund positioned the agency to react swiftly and appropriately to the once-in-a-century crisis. For example, one of the first supported projects was a technology assessment that identified equipment deficits. As a result, the department secured state-of-the-art devices that enabled employees, including contact tracers, to work from home immediately after the shelter-in-place order was issued.

That support combined with the Emergency Action Fund grant enabled the Department “to bolster its response to COVID-19,” says Dr. Bogen, “adding staff in critical roles and equipping staff with the tools they need to help stop the spread of the virus.”

by **Barbara White Stack**



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NEW FUNDS March 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020

Pittsburgh Foundation Emergency Action Fund
Monessen Community Charitable Fund
Amar Family Charitable Fund
Quatrini Rafferty Community Fund
Marilyn and Wayne Croushore Scholarship Fund
CONNECT Endowment Fund
GTSF — The Nicholas/Konesni Endowment for the BASD Art Department

Troy Hill residents cheer for essential workers during the Illumination Ovation on April 7. The event was modeled after similar demonstrations of thanks taking place in China, Italy and New York City. There were several illumination ovation nights in Pittsburgh, where people cheer, honk horns, put up lights or wave signs in support of first responders, doctors, nurses, sanitation workers, delivery drivers and other essential workers showing up to their jobs amid a statewide lockdown.