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FORUM



FEATURE
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CRITICAL CONDITION

*A signature fundraising program
generates a record-breaking \$1.27 million
to nonprofits providing basic needs,
like affordable transportation.*

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**ON THE COVER**

Braddock's Heritage Community Initiatives provides transportation assistance for low-income residents like North Versailles' James Alexander, left, for 25 cents per ride.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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New donor services officer matches funders with vital programs.

ON MAY 23, The Pittsburgh Foundation raised a record \$1.27 million for regional nonprofits in a marathon online giving event—the Critical Needs Alert. The sobering name and the format—a frenzied 16 hours in which contributions are boosted through a funding pool supplied by the Foundation and its donors—underscore the emergency nature of the effort.

It's all about helping organizations that rescue people facing life crises. I'm referring to people we all know—the older neighbor at the end of the street, the car mechanic, the assistant at the doctor's office, the coffee bar person whipping up lattes. It could be loss of housing, lack of food, disrupted transportation jeopardizing job or school attendance, or a health issue that upends fragile finances.

My takeaway from this year's campaign is that there is a remarkable community service happening beyond the fundraising. While record contributions to support essential nonprofit work are wonderful, all the philanthropic dollars in the country can't match what state and federal governments provide for human services.

The Critical Needs event and others like it across the country serve as public referenda on support for essential human services. And Pittsburgh's experience from many years of online giving events is hard evidence that committed individuals can contribute together across ideological lines to accomplish amazing community development.

Compare that to the paralysis and divisiveness in state and federal governments right now. Critical Needs donors are pushing back against budget proposals now in play in Harrisburg and Washington that would cut funding for many essential human services.

Critical Needs also pushes against the current "Me-And-Mine-First" political philosophy that assumes one group gets a win only if others lose. In my recent post to the Foundation's Community Matters blog, I link respect for the rule of law to the ability of philanthropy and other democratic institutions to thrive in our society. Critical Needs is one of many ways that community philanthropy coaxes people out of their tribal camps to work together to build a society in which all members have opportunities to participate and benefit.

Critical Needs also reflects the Foundation's 100 Percent Pittsburgh organizing principle, which directly addresses the one-third of the region's residents—the jobless and the working poor—pushed aside in our revitalized economy.

Susan Friedberg Kalson, CEO of the Squirrel Hill Health Center and a Critical Needs grantee, puts it this way: "Pittsburgh cannot be a shining star in terms of livability unless all of its residents have access to basic services. At the end of the day, everyone needs food, shelter and health care. We must all look out for each other."

Maxwell King | president & CEO

Erie County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper, who serves on a heroin and opioid task force established by the National League of Cities and the National Association of Counties, spoke in May to Pennsylvania foundation leaders about policy efforts regionally and nationally to battle opioid addiction.



SPEAKING UP FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

This May, community foundations from across Pennsylvania convened for two days in Harrisburg to address one big question: How might philanthropies across the state work together more effectively around public policy? The Pittsburgh Foundation was a major organizer of the conference, which focused on four key topics identified at the 2016 Council on Foundations Philanthropy and Public Policy conference. The issues were combating the opioid crisis, preserving funding for human services, implementing fair funding for school districts, and helping municipalities in crisis manage Act 47 financial oversight.

Rather than a traditional conference, where speakers present from behind podiums, attendees from 31 foundations and philanthropic collaboratives broke into four interdisciplinary groups. With facilitation by MAYA Design, the working groups developed preliminary "big ideas" for each of the policy areas. Preliminary action steps included working on a statewide public policy network and a fall funders meeting to generate greater awareness and buy-in for implementing fair education funding. A report on conference findings was distributed to attendees and Pennsylvania members of the Council on Foundations in June.

Organizers hope that the report will galvanize foundations large and small as federal programs such as Medicare and Meals on Wheels face deep cuts that could imperil nonprofits and the people they serve.

"It's critically important for community foundations to recognize their potential and responsibility to lead in their own communities," said Maxwell King, president and CEO of The Pittsburgh Foundation. "Our hope is that conferences like this will contribute to a statewide culture that keeps nonprofit boards, grantees and donors empowered and engaged."

Year-end giving fuels 22 percent increase in grantmaking

A burst of year-end giving to The Pittsburgh Foundation in the final two months of 2016 bolstered dollars raised to \$44.6 million for the year. The Foundation received cash donations of \$18 million in the last four weeks of the year, as compared to \$10 million in 2015. While some of the uptick in the final period could be attributed to pending changes in tax breaks for charitable giving, Foundation President and CEO Maxwell King said community needs were a significant factor.

"Our new and longtime donors were acting generously in reaction to the daily news we've all been exposed to—they're highly aware of the great human needs in our community, especially given threatened cuts in state and federal support for essential services," King said.

The number of donor-advised funds established at the Foundation increased for the third consecutive year, with 49 established last year. Grantmaking also increased last year. The Foundation made 7,371 grants totaling \$43.1 million, of which 3,547 grants totaling \$20.5 million were through donor-advised funds. This is a 22 percent increase in grantmaking overall and a 25 percent increase in grants through donor-advised funds from 2015.

"Our grants management staff reported unusually high grantmaking activity by donors leading up to and after the election, which demonstrates the trust that donors place in community foundations to act responsively and quickly to community needs in times of uncertainty," said King.

**A SIGNATURE FUNDRAISING
PROGRAM GENERATES A
RECORD-BREAKING
\$1.27 MILLION TO NONPROFITS
PROVIDING BASIC NEEDS**

CRITICAL CONDITION

ON MAY 23, IN A BOLD PUSHBACK AGAINST THE threat of state and federal government cutbacks to support for essential human services, The Pittsburgh Foundation embarked on an ambitious test of community generosity: a 16-hour, online Critical Needs Alert—a fundraising juggernaut meant to generate significant contributions for nonprofits struggling to provide the most basic goods and services: food, shelter, transportation, child care and health care, including mental health services, for people desperately in need.

→ Children socialize and snack while their parents take part in support groups at Anchorpoint Counseling Ministries, one of 97 nonprofits to benefit from the Critical Needs Alert fundraising event.

\$616,000
public donations
+
\$657,000
matching
funds

\$1,273,000
total*

The result was remarkable for a regionwide, one-day giving event; the Critical Needs Alert, which replaced this year's Day of Giving, yielded \$1.27 million in contributions to 97 nonprofits.

Coincidentally, Critical Needs was on the same day that the federal government released a

proposed budget that would make massive cuts in safety net programs. And it came just six weeks before the deadline for passing Pennsylvania's new state budget, one in which essential services funding to counties is in jeopardy.

The Critical Needs Alert nonprofits were chosen because they depend on government funding to help the people who face myriad emergencies every day, says Kelly Uranker, director of the Foundation's Center for Philanthropy and overseer of the Foundation's online fundraising.

"We asked each organization to explain how its mission is connected to meeting the basic needs of those who are referred or show up on the doorstep needing help right away for a health issue, or to get housing, or to feed themselves and their children, or for transportation to get to school or work," she says.

Critical Needs is also aligned with the Foundation's 100 Percent Pittsburgh organizing principle, which focuses on the one-third of the region's residents—the jobless and the working poor—who haven't benefited from the recent economic boom.

Philanthropy can never replace government investment in human services. And yet, the political "sea change" in government policies toward the poor and vulnerable makes it incumbent upon people from all sectors of the community—including philanthropy—to reinforce this fragile safety net, says Foundation President and CEO Maxwell King.

"We believe Pittsburgh's community foundation must lead now on the moral imperative. The Critical Needs event is key to jump-starting the legendary generosity that residents are known for in assisting the most vulnerable," he says.

The May Critical Needs event wasn't the first for the Foundation, although it was the most successful. In 2013, a similar event raised \$618,000 for nonprofits addressing food insecurity. Critical Needs Alerts raised \$900,000 in 2014 and \$1 million in 2015 for housing insecurity, for a total of \$3.1 million since the event began.

The previous years' successes factored into the decision to withdraw this year's annual Day of Giving, which involved a broader spectrum of nonprofits. That allowed "first responder" nonprofits to receive maximum funding under a new format designed to promote giving over a longer period.

In each of recent years' Day of Giving events, online public donations under the wildly popular dollar-for-dollar match format declined once donors saw that the Foundation's pool of money was drained—sometimes in as little as four hours.

This time, over 16 hours, nonprofits used their own websites and other social media platforms to direct donors to the Foundation's online giving portal.

Afterward, payouts from the Foundation were prorated: If an organization raised 5 percent of the total amount collected by way of Critical Needs, that nonprofit would receive 5 percent of the match, or \$30,000.

"The prorated method encouraged people to keep giving, leading to more donations and more opportunities for nonprofits to increase their individual donor bases," says Uranker.

It was easy to see the difference throughout the day, as contributions flowed steadily. That night, even during a widely-viewed Pittsburgh Penguins Stanley Cup playoff game, the online giving continued, she says, spiking during commercials, straight through to midnight.

The money from Critical Needs will support the daily operations of nonprofits where the human stakes are the highest. Here are four that mobilized their own online fundraising resources so they could continue to help the people they serve reach a basic quality-of-life standard:

JUST HARVEST EDUCATION FUND

\$2,018
public donations

+

\$2,159
matching
funds

\$4,177
total*

TWO DAYS BEFORE he was released from a long hospital stay, Mark Scanlan realized he was going home to an empty refrigerator, with no food stamps or money to buy food. A 60-year-old resident of the South Side, he left a secure job in food services to care for his mother in New Jersey, who was undergoing chemotherapy. A year later, when he returned to Pittsburgh after her death, he was unable to find work and qualified for food stamps.

Then, as Scanlan was helping a friend move furniture, he fell and fractured his spine. After a

months-long stay in UPMC Mercy Hospital and then a rehabilitation center, he tried to reapply for food stamps two days before being discharged.

"I was told that, because I was still in rehab, I couldn't even begin the application process until I was off the premises," he says.

With no money and no food, he panicked. "It was like standing on the edge of a cliff," he says.

Then a staffer urged him to call Just Harvest, the South Side-based hunger prevention and social justice advocacy organization.

After one phone call, "they took care of the red tape immediately. I had money in my account two days later," said Scanlan.

But if Congress cuts the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, "it's game over for tens of thousands of people" says Just Harvest Executive Director Ken Regal, whose organization helps about 1,200 families each year apply for food stamps, while also providing a tax preparation service to help the working poor get benefits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit so they can buy food.

"Food insecurity" has replaced the word hunger among advocates, says Regal, because "it's not just about whether people are eating today, but how they feel about their ongoing ability to put food on the table."

And solving emergencies like Scanlan's may only get harder.

Says Regal: "The current public policy environment is as bad for hungry people as it has been in a generation."

← Thanks to advocacy by Just Harvest, Mark Scanlan has the food assistance he needs while he recovers from an injury. Just Harvest benefited from the Critical Needs Alert.



\$4,090
public donations
+

\$4,376
matching
funds

\$8,466
total*

THEY STREAM INTO the brick office building on Browns Hill Road, week after week: growing numbers of immigrants and refugees, along with minimum-wage workers and people juggling multiple low-paying jobs.

Inadequate health insurance is a chronic problem for many, but since its founding in 2006, the Squirrel Hill Health Center's mission has been to provide affordable health care to all. Indeed, after Pennsylvania expanded Medicaid under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the center was flooded with newly-insured patients who had postponed seeking care in the past.

"One doctor told me that in that first week alone, she saw two patients who were in the advanced stages of cancer that could have been curable if they'd seen someone sooner," says Susan Friedberg Kalson, the health center's CEO.

Mazen Al Qatia, 59, of Greentree, is a former refugee who worked for a contractor for the

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq. He credits doctors at the Health Center with saving his life shortly after he arrived in Pittsburgh in 2013. On his first visit, they discovered a heart problem and arranged immediate surgery. Fully recovered, "I am so grateful for what they did. I can walk, I can work, I can live," says Al Qatia, who now has a job as an engineer.

After opening a second site in Brentwood in 2016, the organization is on pace, when comparing 2013 numbers, to double patient volume by the end of next year. But given the uncertainty in Congress about the budget, health care and tax cuts, "we're facing a possible 70 percent cut in funding," Kalson says. "That would be a catastrophic scenario."

And not just for the Health Center.

Says Kalson: "Pittsburgh cannot be a shining star in terms of livability unless all of its residents have access to basic services. At the end of the day, everyone needs food, shelter and health care. We must all look out for each other."

↑ Mazen Al Qatia and his wife, Mnael Al Hajjaj, arrived in the United States in 2013 as refugees from Iraq. They are among the thousands of people who receive affordable care at the Squirrel Hill Health Center.



HERITAGE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

\$2,515
public donations
+
\$2,691
matching
funds

\$5,206
total*

MOST OF THE TIME, a person's ability to make it in the world comes down to one thing: the ability to show up. James Alexander learned that lesson after the Port Authority of Allegheny County eliminated his bus route to McKeesport, where he worked as a customer service representative.

"I've had a car in the past, but I just couldn't afford one at that time," says Alexander, who lives on Route 30 in North Versailles. "I really depended on the 60M to get to the office."

After making some phone calls, he was led to Heritage Community Initiatives in Braddock, which provides crucial transportation at minimal cost to residents of eastern communities whose bus lines have been cut and who must get to jobs and medical appointments.

Alexander was immediately directed to the Heritage Community Transportation vans, based

James Alexander is one of 6,000 people per month who rely on transportation assistance from Heritage Community Initiatives to run errands and get to work and medical appointments.

at a Rite Aid parking lot. "It was five minutes from my house," he says. "It was such a relief."

For 41 communities in the eastern reaches of the Pittsburgh region, "when steel went away, so did access to a great deal of public transit," says Paula McWilliams, president and CEO of Heritage, which is the only nonprofit in the state providing what is considered public transportation — three fixed routes that charge 25 cents a ride, serving about 6,000 people a month.

More than 60 percent of its riders have an average household income of less than \$10,000, and many have more than one job, which is where Heritage's new call center comes in. As of June, the call center, which is funded by The Pittsburgh Foundation, will design transportation plans that help people get from point A to point B in areas not covered by Heritage's vans.

"Whether it's a senior needing dialysis in the South Hills, a worker with a job interview in Robinson, or a mother whose child has an asthma referral in Cranberry, very often the callers have no idea how to get there," McWilliams says. "And not everyone has access to the internet or a smartphone. That's where we come in. The key to social mobility is to get people where they need to go."

*Critical Needs Alert totals may change pending final reconciliation of credit and fees.

SARAH, A SINGLE MOTHER from the North Hills who asked that her last name not be used, struggled with depression after her husband left, but couldn't afford mental health counseling for herself or her two children.

With no money to pay the mortgage and barely enough to keep food on the table, she tried to remain stoic, but one day, when a friend at her church reached out to give her a hug, Sarah started weeping uncontrollably. That public acknowledgment of helplessness led her to be referred to Anchorpoint Counseling Ministries. She was able to see a therapist there, and her children were enrolled in its after-school tutoring program.

A non-denominational Christian nonprofit, Anchorpoint gets financial support from a community network that includes local churches,

businesses, organizations and individuals. "But we see anyone, regardless of their belief system," says Executive Director Ron Barnes. Anchorpoint currently provides counseling to more than 175 families — and nearly 250 children — with charges based on each client's ability to pay.

In addition to its regular caseload, the organization has been especially pressed in dealing with the collateral damage from the opioid crisis ravaging the suburbs, as well as a particularly vulnerable subgroup: single parents. According to a 2014 Urban Institute study commissioned by the Foundation, single women raising children are at the greatest risk of experiencing poverty in the region and account for 77 percent of the households living in poverty in Allegheny County.

"If we're talking about a population in need, it's single moms," says Cassy Wimmer, a licensed social worker and staffer who helps run Anchorpoint's new Single Parent Information Network, or SPIN. It provides weekly nights out — with child care — and support groups that teach parenting and coping skills. Currently there are two SPIN groups with about 24 women participating, along with children ranging from age 3 to teens.

"I wish we could do more," Wimmer says. "We know this is just the tip of the iceberg."

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

ANCHORPOINT COUNSELING MINISTRIES

\$12,689
public donations
+
\$13,577
matching
funds

\$26,266
total*

Critical Needs Alert beneficiary Anchorpoint Counseling Ministries provides after-school care and support to children and single parents.





← Karen Morrison, left, and Andrew "Drew" Morrison, right, volunteer with the Woodlands Foundation, where their son, Patrick, center, has taken part in recreation programs and camps for children, youth and adults with disabilities.

ADVISOR
PROFILE

INCLUSION AS A MINDSET

A financial advisor's lifetime of compassion begins at home

IN 2013, ADVISOR ANDREW "DREW" MORRISON was among the first advisors locally to receive Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy® (CAP®) designation from The American College of Financial Services through The Pittsburgh Foundation, but his experiences with charitable giving date back to the 1970s. Drew, now a senior vice president for Wealth Management at The Kish Morrison Group of Merrill Lynch, was one of six children.

"For as long as I can remember, my parents gave their time and talent," says Drew, whose family welcomed Fresh Air Fund children from New York City every summer, as well as a young woman from Vietnam recovering from injuries sustained when she stepped on a landmine. His father, a career Westinghouse executive, and his mother, a longtime volunteer with the Children's Home and a docent at the Frick and Carnegie Museums, also mentored a young African American man from the Hill District who was working his way through college.

"Growing up, I was fortunate to have loving parents and a great family. So much was provided to me that I thought it might be a good idea to demonstrate a little thanks for that," Drew says.

Drew and his wife, Karen, are parents to Patrick, 24; Jack, 20; and Kathryn, 16. Patrick, who was born 15 weeks premature, weighed 1.5 pounds. Later, he was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, which presents myriad neurological deficits and mobility challenges. When people get to know him beyond his limitations, Drew says, "they quickly see that he has a great personality and really loves being with other people."

When Patrick was 10, Drew and Karen learned about the Woodlands Foundation, which, since 1998, has provided recreation programs in the North Hills for children,

“**So much was provided to me that I thought it might be a good idea to demonstrate a little thanks for that.**”

ANDREW MORRISON
The Kish Morrison Group
of Merrill Lynch

youth and adults with disabilities and chronic illnesses.

The family's relationship to Woodlands started out small. Drew and Karen dropped Patrick off there for a few hours on weekends, giving them time with Jack and Kathryn for sports and other activities. Over time, the couple's volunteer commitment to the organization advanced to the point that it could be labeled a vocation. Karen served on the auxiliary board, and Drew, with a talent for fundraising, is one of three vice chairs on the board.

Patrick, too, has changed. At age 21, he moved out of his parents' home and into a two-bedroom unit in a supervised living community in Allison Park, where he lives with his cousin, Christopher Wolfendale, 34. Pittsburghers recognize him as a boy in the Children's Institute's Amazing Kids commercials who proclaims "I will be amazing."

These life experiences led Drew to pursue the Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy designation, which provides advisors with knowledge and tools to help clients define and pursue charitable goals for themselves, their family and society. In its fourth year of being offered at the Foundation, the CAP program certifies select advisors as vital resources for the highest-capacity clients and donors in our community.

As important as the certification course was to his understanding of the technical and tax applications of giving, Drew says that learning ways to guide his clients to give strategically, such as making fewer larger gifts, or including the entire family in a process, was eye opening. With charitable giving, as with parenting, Drew says, patience, listening carefully and including others in the process are key.

"Inclusion is a mindset when you have a child with disabilities," says Drew. "For all the issues Patrick has, we made sure to bring him along, so that people would see that a kid with disabilities really isn't so different after all."

By **Kitty Julian** | senior communications officer

DONOR
PROFILE

RIPPLES OF HOPE IN THE WAKE OF ADDICTION

An accidental overdose activates an Allison Park family in the battle against opioids

Left to right: Chris Flowers and his wife, Tina, established two funds at The Pittsburgh Foundation along with their son, Sam, to memorialize Spenser Flowers, who died on New Year's Day of an accidental overdose.

SPENSER FLOWERS, a witty 20-year-old with a loving heart, died of an accidental heroin overdose at his parents' home on New Year's Day. While his addiction was not a secret from his family, who had helped him find the rehabilitation he sought, the timing was excruciating: hours before his death, he had spent time researching a treatment center he could enter to try again.

"We ran out of time," says his mother, Tina Flowers of Allison Park.

Spenser was the victim of a rising epidemic afflicting the nation and, disproportionately, the Pittsburgh region. The Centers for Disease Control reports that in 2015, 52,000 Americans died from accidental overdose, mostly from opioids — a 20 percent increase from 2014. By contrast, the 613 deaths reported in Allegheny County in 2016 represented a 62 percent spike over the previous year's numbers.

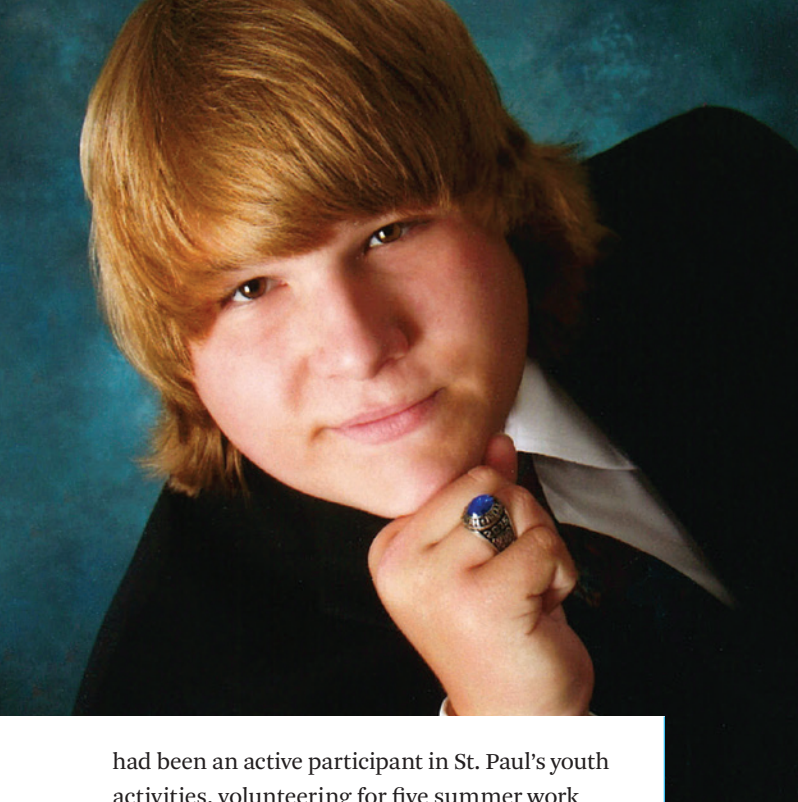
Flowers shared similarities with the majority of other recent local opioid victims: he was white and he was male. And like 58 percent of

fatalities in Allegheny County, he overdosed before reaching his 35th birthday. Drug overdose deaths have skyrocketed among teens and young adults in the United States, with rates tripling or quadrupling in one out of every three states, according to a report from the Trust for America's Health.

A generation is at risk.

Tina, her husband, Chris, and their older son, Sam, have created a positive way to remember Spenser and save others. In March, they established two funds at The Pittsburgh Foundation: a scholarship, with assistance from financial advisor Lou D'Angelo at Raymond James, for members of Spenser's youth group at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Allison Park, and Spenser's Voice, which funds organizations working to curb the drug epidemic in young adults. Friends and relatives have contributed to both efforts.

"I knew the day he died that we would want to establish the scholarship fund," Tina says. While attending Hampton High School, Spenser



had been an active participant in St. Paul's youth activities, volunteering for five summer work camps. "He always said he was at his best at church and around those friends," his mother recalls. She remembers her son as "a normal, suburban young man," one who was crowned 2015 homecoming king his senior year, loved Harry Potter novels and silly hats, and was "always mischievous." After briefly attending Temple University, he returned home, struggling with anxiety and depression. Sixteen months later, he was dead.

As an attorney and community volunteer, Tina realized that the city desperately needed strategies to prevent other young people from meeting Spenser's fate. That's the purpose of Spenser's Voice, which provides funding to implement three community strategies.

The first addresses Narcan (naloxone), now widely used by individuals and emergency responders to revive overdose victims. But, as the Flowers family learned, many suburban police officers don't carry the drug and have yet to be trained to administer it. When Spenser overdosed on Dec. 26, six days before his death, the family had the antidote on hand and revived him, but the officers who arrived to answer their 911 call had not received formal instruction in using it. A comprehensive regional training plan is needed.

The Flowers also see a need for treatment facilities with special programs for 18- to 25-year-olds. Many detox centers are treating alcohol abuse or other drug disorders in settings that overlook the emotional needs of younger patients. The family also supports ways for families to seek emergency treatment for a loved one when the individual refuses treatment for substance abuse. Unlike other states, Pennsylvania currently allows for involuntary commitment of those diagnosed with a mental illness, but there is not a parallel law to provide

↑ Spenser Flowers, pictured here in his Class of 2015 Hampton High School graduation photo, was 20 years old when he died of an opioid overdose.

involuntary treatment for substance abuse. Legislation introduced in February by State Sen. Jay Costa (D-Pittsburgh) addresses the issue.

Finally, the family is working to combat the stigma of addiction among families struggling to help their loved ones.

"I see a strong parallel with the AIDS epidemic," Tina says. "We've gotten over that—we now know it is a disease that can be treated. Individuals and families should not have to feel so alone" in combating public perceptions about substance abuse. She has addressed church, community and school groups about her family's experience and will continue to be involved in advocacy efforts.

"We are not going to criminalize this away," she says of the efforts. "We'll never give up. We must keep trying."

By **Christine O'Toole** | freelance journalist based in Pittsburgh

WQED Film Documents a Crisis

The local heroin epidemic galvanized filmmakers at WQED-TV in Pittsburgh to produce a documentary around the ripped-from-the-headlines topic. When "Hope After Heroin" debuted as the introduction to a town hall forum at WQED studios, the event attracted the largest live audience ever recorded by the station. First aired in November 2016, the multimedia project received support from the station's regular funders, the Regional Asset District and The Pittsburgh Foundation. It also attracted funding from The Community Foundation of Westmoreland County, which had supported the work of Sage's Army, a grass-roots anti-drug network founded in honor of a local resident who lost his life to addiction five years ago.

Phil Koch, executive director of The Community Foundation of Westmoreland County, says it will continue the community conversation about opioids this year. In addition to donor conversations with experts in the field, the Foundation will also host giving circles on drug abuse prevention and education later this year. The public is invited. Contact the Foundation at cfwestmoreland.org to learn more.

STAFF
PROFILE

FROM BENEFICIARY TO BOOSTER

New donor services officer matches funders with vital programs

MAHOGANY THAXTON spent many Saturday mornings as a teenager volunteering at Senior Care Plaza, a small, residential community in her hometown of McKeesport. She treasured the stories shared and the wisdom imparted by her older friends, and decided that caring for others could become a rewarding career. She could also draw upon experiences that shaped her childhood.

"From early on, I had a slew of caring adults: a single working mother, the best grandfather a little girl could ask for, relatives, teachers and neighbors," says Thaxton, the Foundation's new donor services officer. "All opened doors and helped me to shine. In my adult years, co-workers, bosses and community leaders invested in my personal and professional growth. And it isn't lost on me that I wouldn't be here if programs like Head Start, support for public housing, food stamps, need-based scholarships and the Carnegie libraries weren't available to me."

Thaxton hopes that by working directly with donors and sharing her perspective, she can help them understand the potential

their funds hold for helping individuals and strengthening the region.

"I know firsthand how investments in community organizations help others achieve a better quality of life," says Thaxton, "and through my position, I'm able to advocate for the same types of programs and organizations that helped make me who I am today. Community organizations can give voice to the voiceless, turn anecdotes and stories into action, and offer that helping hand to a neighbor in need."

Thaxton believes that the expertise, connections and personalized engagement offered by the Foundation are the keys to providing donors with a lasting sense of fulfillment.

"Each staff member truly wants to get to know donors—who they are as a person, what impact they want to make in the world, what values they hold. We want them to feel good about giving and their role in something larger than themselves. We want them to feel part of The Pittsburgh Foundation family."

By **Christian Pelusi** | senior communications officer

→ Donor services officer Mahogany Thaxton joined the Foundation's staff in late February.





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FOUNDATION**

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Iraqis Mazen Al Qatia, left, and his wife, Mnadel Al Hajjaj, arrived in America in 2013 and are beneficiaries of the care Squirrel Hill Health Center provides to anyone in need.

NEW FUNDS March 1, 2017 – June 1, 2017

- Betty Lou Sundermann Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Figurative Realism Initiative Fund
- Hempfield Township Volunteer Fire Service Support Fund
- James E. Cornelius Fund
- Josh Miller Family Trust
- Lillian and Bernyce Neugebauer Fund
- Paul and Karen Ricker Charitable Fund

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