



NEIGHBORHOOD **ALLIES**

January - June
2020

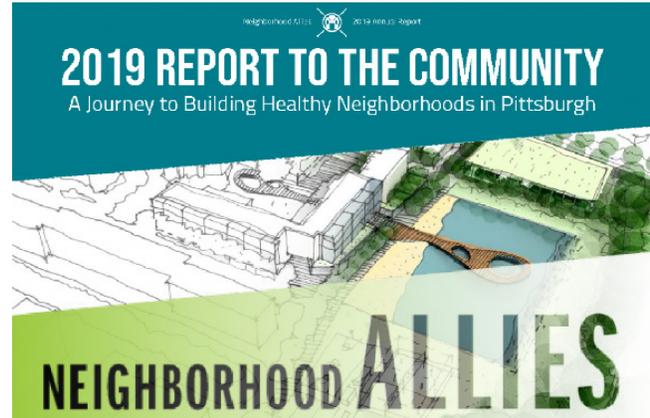
Report
to
Funders

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Community Spotlight

It is our privilege to share our 2019 Report to the Community: A Journey to Building Healthy Neighborhoods in Pittsburgh! We are so immensely grateful for all of your support, commitment, and dedication to making our communities stronger, safer and healthier. We look forward to increasing the scale of our impact in 2020! [Read more.](#)



Grantee Spotlight

In the Spring of 2019, we awarded a \$50,000 grant to the Hilltop Alliance for their program, Unlocking the Home. The Tangled Title Assistance Program provided technical and legal support to Hilltop families who required assistance transferring the title of their family homes to their own name, so that they could receive additional resources for repairs and remain in their homes, therefore building equity and inter-generational wealth. When adding together the total assessed value of the 6 properties transferred into the names of heirs with the estimated value of the code violations and property maintenance issues, this program has leveraged an additional \$556,050! [Read more.](#)



Funder Spotlight

We would like to thank The Hillman Foundation for contributing a \$300,000 grant in support of our ongoing Economic Opportunity Work in 2020 and 2021! The grant will provide extensive support to our unique portfolio of economic opportunity programming, including the Financial Opportunity Centers, Financial Empowerment Center, the Accredited Financial Counseling Cohort, and the Asset Building Network. In addition, it has given us the opportunity to address immediate and forthcoming financial needs related to COVID-19. Thank you to the Hillman Foundation for helping us to provide financial health resources to our communities and for believing in our goal of economic opportunity for all! We could not do this without your support. [Read more.](#)





Market Confidence | Shared Real Estate Talent At Work on the Ground | Affordable Housing in Perry Hilltop and Fineview

The Perry Hilltop and Fineview Citizens Councils had a successful and exciting 2019, with significant strides made in their education initiatives, organizational capacity building, as well as their beautification, transportation, and community engagement work. Additionally, with the help of our shared real estate talent program, they have also made progress in affordable housing projects in the Perry Hilltop and Fineview neighborhoods. With added expertise from consultant Tom Hardy, the organizations were able to access \$525k in funding to develop 5 affordable rental units and one commercial unit. Our Shared Real Estate Talent Program supplies critical technical assistance to CDCs, CBOs, and emerging community-driven developers to successfully complete real estate projects and find appropriate roles and partnerships in the development of projects in their communities, thus allowing them to access critical early stage expertise in evaluating a project.



Quality of Life | Neighborhood Allies CARE Fund Grant Recipients Will Address Food, Health, and Safety Needs During COVID-19 Crisis

The CARE Fund was created in response to the rising need for support among our partners and allies working to get food, protective equipment, and other vital materials to residents in our neighborhoods. As part of our overall COVID Accelerated Relief Effort (CARE) Package, the fund aims to address the food, health, and safety priorities of our communities as well as help to stabilize the organizations carrying out this important work. From delivering items from food pantries to those who need it most, to providing monthly care packages to isolated seniors, to giving out free meals to students and their families in our neighborhoods, to increasing production and access to local gardens, to purchasing necessary IT equipment so that they can continue coordinating all of this important work from home, the CARE Fund supported the organizations truly on the frontlines of the pandemic in Pittsburgh.

3 HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

Q1 and Q2 2020 Healthy Neighborhoods Highlights



Neighborhood Image | The Homewood Experience | A New Image Campaign to Highlight Homewood's Rich History and Community Pride

The Homewood Community Image Campaign aims to showcase what those in the neighborhood already know – that Homewood is a vibrant space filled with valuable community assets, rich history, and an unwavering sense of pride and togetherness. The campaign includes many activities to activate the neighborhood, including the creation of a community art walk, in-depth interviews with residents, an audio soundtrack, grant writing workshops, videos and documentaries, street banners, and more. In addition, in the absence of face to face community engagement amid COVID-19, the campaign was able to engage local students from Homewood virtually through an essay contest to highlight what community means to them, why the Homewood community is important to them, their dreams for Homewood, and the important people and places they love in the neighborhood. [Learn more.](#)



Community Ownership | Larimer Seniors Group and Artist John Peña Find Creative Ways to Connect During the Pandemic

A recent \$15,000 Grant to the Office of Public Art for Art and Senior Citizen Engagement in Larimer aimed to connect and engage the Larimer Seniors Group through John Peña's continued artist residency by holding monthly luncheons, planning field trips to cultural institutions around the city, and designing new public artworks together. However, the onset of COVID-19 and physical distancing requirements called for a new way to continue the project and keep the group connected during the pandemic. So, John created a newsletter called, "The Larimer Times." It focuses on how their lives are being affected by the pandemic. Additionally, in order to simulate their regular luncheons, John even delivered boxed lunches to the seniors twice a month!



Equitable Development | Greenwood Week Pittsburgh 2019

Last year, we awarded a \$15,000 grant to Cocopreneur PGH, LLC. and SYLA PGH in support of Greenwood Week Pittsburgh, a minority business conference seeking to lift up, support and provide resources to MWDBE entrepreneurs in Pittsburgh, with the goal of rebuilding black economics.

The week featured an effective schedule of classes for current and aspiring entrepreneurs on mental health, finances, funding, business structure, marketing, and other essentials for small businesses. With expert local MWDBE entrepreneurs leading each class, attendees were given the opportunity to hear real-life examples of running a business in Pittsburgh, as well as obtain important resources and engage in invaluable networking opportunities.

One of the organizers' major goals for Greenwood Week was to "connect the vast array of black businesses and entrepreneurs, separated and confined by geographic, social, and financial silos within the region."

Greenwood Week Pittsburgh By the Numbers:

- 100% of attendees met one or more of these categories: minority, ALAANA (African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and Native American), Woman, or Veteran.
- 83% of attendees were women, 18% were veterans, and 98% were African American.
- 72% of attendees were current small business owners or entrepreneurs.
- 40.9% of attendees claim making 4-6 supportive connections as a result of attending Greenwood Week.

Greenwood Week is named in honor of the Greenwood District in Tulsa Oklahoma, which once represented the largest concentration of African American Businesses in the U.S. Aptly nicknamed "The Black Wallstreet", it was destroyed in 1921 by a massacre known as "The Tulsa Race Riot" in which white residents murdered over 300 African Americans and razed every business and building in sight.

Although Greenwood was the most infamous and violent instance of the plight of African Americans in business, it is not a standalone incident. Within the American Economy, and even within our local economy, Black Businesses tackle systemic, socioeconomic, and even personal barriers that hinder their progress and effectively lower the success and sustainability rates of black businesses.

Q1 2020 President's Special Initiative Award Winners

This quarterly award is given in recognition of a Neighborhood Allies staff member going **significantly above and beyond the responsibilities of his or her position.**

Chelsea has truly stepped up and amazed her team. She has taken the lead on managing all of our organization's day-to-day social media operations and has become our in-house social media expert. She has significantly improved our engagement and connectivity with our followers and partners, maintaining a consistent brand voice across posts. Additionally, she provided exceptional and intense program support including our Love My Neighbor! program, All-in Pittsburgh, Economic Opportunity, and most recently managed extremely important COVID - 19 external messaging and programming content.

Finally, Chelsea has done an excellent job and has gone above and beyond what was required of her - all with a positive and enthusiastic attitude. She is excelling in every area and knocking down every challenge thrown at her.



Chelsea Contino

Vanessa only started as a full-time employee in January and significantly raised our profile in the digital inclusion space; managing all aspects of our Digital Innovation Center deployment. Under extremely tight deadlines and pressure, and enlisting the support of our team members, Vanessa co-developed and launched a well-crafted RFP, and received almost 20 proposals across our neighborhoods. Vanessa also meticulously coordinated the site visits with our corporate partners, including out of town technical and design teams and multiple local organizations. At the same time, she continued to support the Economic Opportunity work, recently crafting a new solution to providing remote financial counseling. Additionally, Vanessa drafted a high-quality White Paper on transportation barriers for our All-In Pittsburgh Equitable Development Coalition.



Vanessa Buffry

Lastly, Vanessa recently created an initiative to secure 1000 laptops in partnership with Computer Reach to tackle the digital divide, which has exploded into a multi-institutional partnership, with the potential distribution of 8,000 laptops. Vanessa has rapidly brought herself up to speed on tech and educational lingo and leadership, found the power brokers in both fields, and leveraged her knowledge and connections to make Neighborhood Allies the recognized expert in digital inclusion, paving the way for partners to raise almost \$300,000 (and growing), all within the matter of a few weeks.

Neighborhood Allies and First Commonwealth Bank Partnership Provides \$1.5 Million Through Paycheck Protection Program To Vulnerable and Minority-led Businesses

Our neighborhood small businesses are the lifeblood, fabric, and soul of our neighborhood economies. They are also extremely vulnerable to economic hardships and deeply in need of substantial, targeted support. When we lose them, it has an extraordinary ripple effect on the people and communities we serve.



When the \$349 billion Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) was announced as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, we teamed up with First Commonwealth Bank and stepped up to provide critically needed technical assistance to small businesses and nonprofits and a dedicated banking partner that would process applications, provide approved loans, and work to help our most vulnerable community businesses to access resources offered through the PPP. The true partnership we forged was unprecedented. Without their promise to serve as a trusted banking partner and create an environment where vulnerable businesses could succeed, we could not have achieved what we did.

Serving as a skilled community broker between applicants and First Commonwealth Bank, Neighborhood Allies worked closely with both the businesses and First Commonwealth to ensure that applications were complete, accurate, and in the best position to be approved. Without our technical assistance providers' dedication, timeliness, and non-stop hard work, these businesses may not have received a forgivable loan under the Paycheck Protection Program. With already high barriers to access vital resources for many of our beloved community businesses, we wanted to help as many as possible before the funds from the Small Business Administration were exhausted.

In addition to our partnership with First Commonwealth Bank, we also referred several businesses to Huntington Bank during the second round of funding to accommodate the additional applicants.

Paycheck Protection Program Partnership By The Numbers:

- Helped 26 small businesses and nonprofits secure a forgivable loan under the PPP
- Reached over \$1.5 million in approved forgivable loans, with an average approximate loan amount of \$63,748 per business
- Helped to retain or rehire over 150 employees, with an average of 6 employees per business

In addition:

- 61.5% of approved applicants were nonprofits
- 58% of approved applicants were minority or woman-led

In less than a month, we were able to impact the lives of over 100 individuals by helping their employers secure funding to continue paying them during the COVID-19 crisis. With approved loan amounts averaging just \$63,748 and number of employees per business averaging less than 10, we helped those that needed it most.

Neighborhood Allies Works to Close Digital Divide with Beyond The Laptops Digital Inclusion Initiatives

In the city of Pittsburgh, 13% of households do not have computers. Nearly one in five households in Allegheny County lack at-home internet. This varies dramatically between neighborhoods— in some areas, up to 70% of the households are without broadband.

With the onset of COVID-19 and the lockdown of Allegheny County in spring 2020, this divide was thrown into sharp relief. Families and workers were expected to complete school and jobs remotely. Yet tens of thousands of students in our community didn't have access to the devices or the connectivity required to successfully participate in the education of the 21st century.

That's where we came in, going far beyond our first efforts to activate 1000 laptops for Pittsburgh's most vulnerable communities. To tackle Pittsburgh's divide at breakneck speed, Neighborhood Allies joined with a coalition of nonprofits, universities, government, foundations, and companies across the entire fabric of the City of Pittsburgh to refurbish and distribute 1,200 laptops, raise nearly \$400,000 and provide connectivity to every disconnected Pittsburgh Public School family.



In the coming months we continue our commitment to digital equity through advocacy, access to devices and connectivity solutions, and perhaps most critically — activating these as tools of empowerment and economic transformation through education.

We couldn't have accomplished all that we have in this short period of time without the support of numerous funders, supporters, and partners. With their continued help and dedication, we can begin to implement the three-pronged approach needed to bridge the digital divide - devices, connectivity, and wrap-around education support.

See our list of partners [here](#).

Neighborhood Allies Quarter 1 and 2, 2020 Grant Awards



Hillman Foundation \$300,000

To support our unique portfolio of economic opportunity programming.

National Science Foundation \$200,000

Through a partnership with the University of Pittsburgh, a grant from the National Science Foundation will support our digital literacy interventions in Homewood and the Hill District. Ultimately, this work will activate community members to handle common IT Support issues and model tech lifestyle integration.

Staunton Farms Foundation \$140,000

To support the Nonprofit Resiliency Pilot project with New Sun Rising and The Partnership Network. The pilot aims to be a resource that addresses the mental health and burnout of leaders in the nonprofit space.

Richard King Mellon Foundation \$125,000

To support the work we have done and continue to do in response to the crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

LISC \$110,000

To support the hiring of a Director of Real Estate Services and allow us to create a comprehensive community-based real estate model.

Dollar Bank \$50,000

To support our ongoing operations to build healthy, equitable neighborhoods.

Richard King Mellon Foundation \$40,000

To support financial education and resources for the Pittsburgh Latinx Immigrant community.

First National Bank \$25,000

To support the Pittsburgh Financial Empowerment Center in 2020.

First Commonwealth Bank \$10,000

To support our ongoing economic opportunity work in 2020.

Heinz Endowments \$10,000

To support and educate our financial professionals on the opportunities and barriers around disability inclusion in order to enhance the financial-well being of all residents.

Q1 and Q2 Media Coverage

- Equitable development, economic growth is vital | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
- Six development plans in the works for Centre Avenue in the Hill District | NEXT Pittsburgh
- URA Approves First Cohort Of Businesses For Centre Avenue Redevelopment | 90.5 WESA
- Image campaign for Homewood aims to position a distressed neighborhood for fresh investment | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
- How Pittsburgh-area companies are helping out during the pandemic | Pittsburgh Business Times
- Neighborhood Allies, Computer Reach, University of Pittsburgh Work to deploy laptops to families in need | South Pittsburgh Reporter
- Pittsburgh's tech and nonprofit communities come together to get laptops to students in need | NEXT Pittsburgh
- 'Not a handout ... a hand up': Coalition launches challenge to raise money for 3,000 laptops | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
- Pittsburgh Tech companies help pay for laptops for 7,000 city students | Pittsburgh Tribune-Review
- Beyond the Laptops challenge benefiting Pittsburgh Public Schools students | WPXI
- How the pandemic is exacerbating the digital divide in Allegheny County | Public Source
- Gerardo Interiano and Presley Gillespie: Coming together to bridge the digital divide | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



- Pittsburgh Tech Community Gets Laptops to Students | Newsradio KDKA
- GOGO program aims to help small businesses build websites to boost online sales | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
- Smaller Pittsburgh-area foundations target minorities, mental health issues with COVID-19 relief funds | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
- Neighborhood Allies secures internet access, devices for PPS families | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
- Beyond the Laptops initiative connects more Pittsburgh Public Schools students to the internet | Pittsburgh Business Times
- Mellon Foundation donates \$5.25 million to local groups | Pittsburgh Business Times
- How Pittsburgh is closing the digital divide | NEXT Pittsburgh
- Presley Gillespie: Neighbors work together to aid Black community during covid-19 | Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

Team Members

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Core Funders

Anonymous Donor
The Heinz Endowments
The Pittsburgh Foundation

Program Funders

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The Benter Foundation
The Birmingham Foundation
The Buhl Foundation
Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund
City of Pittsburgh, Community Development Block Grant
Computer Reach
Dollar Bank
First Commonwealth Bank
First National Bank of PA
Google
Grable Foundation
Hillman Family Foundation
JP Morgan Chase
KeyBank
KeyBank Foundation
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
McAuley Ministries
National Equity Fund (NEF)
National League of Cities
Opportunity Fund
The Pittsburgh Technology Council
Phillips
PNC Foundation
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