



**November & December 2019 | Jewish Healthcare Foundation news, events, milestones, & more**

## Contents

<b>Pittsburgh nonprofits to receive \$1 million grant to reduce maternal deaths and narrow disparities .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Salk Fellows pitch solutions to transform medical error.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Raising Resilient Teens: An expert panel provides perspective and insight.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Creating a safe space for teen mental health and empowering youth to combat stigma .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>JHF &amp; WHAMglobal head to Canada for women’s health study tour .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PA Health Funders look for opportunity to work with Wolf Administration .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Secretary Theresa Miller joins opioid use disorder Centers of Excellence sessions.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Cultivating a dementia friendly Pennsylvania .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>PA State Representative Anita Kulik hosts an open conversation with students at Montour High School .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Three JHF staff present at Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership Summit .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Natalie Stewart, communications and design professional, joins Liftoff PGH team .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Tribute in memory of Leon Zionts .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Death and Dying Fellowship applications open .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>End of year JHF Board Meeting.....</b>	<b>13</b>

## Pittsburgh nonprofits to receive \$1 million grant to reduce maternal deaths and narrow disparities

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) and its operating organization the Women's Health Activist Movement Global (WHAMglobal) are excited to announce the launch of *Pittsburgh: A Safer Childbirth City*, an initiative that aims to transform the city into a safer, more equitable and accessible place to give birth.

Bringing together community organizations and government partners, JHF will coordinate a \$1 million, multi-year grant to help address disparities in maternal health. The collaborative of local nonprofits will work to improve coordination and quality of care among Pittsburgh service providers, train midwives and other health professionals, and support the local maternal health movement. Through this grant, Pittsburgh joins nine other cities across the country as part of the inaugural cohort of the Safer Childbirth Cities Initiative created by *Merck for Mothers* to foster local solutions that help cities become safer – and more equitable – places to give birth.



The city of Pittsburgh has seen tremendous development over the past 20 years, but serious health inequities and disparities persist, especially in the field of maternal and child health. Fortunately, Pittsburgh's health and human services network is strong, with organizations well positioned to fill crucial gaps in services and address social determinants of health. There is community consensus that in order to improve maternal and child health, organizational efforts need to be coordinated.

The initiative's guiding principle is that women need to be informed and supported in making their own decisions based on values, beliefs, and preferences. There is a need to stop taking power away from women in childbirth. Women don't need to be empowered — they need to be present and listened to when it comes to transforming the maternity care system for quality, equitable, and unbiased care. *Pittsburgh: A Safer Childbirth City* recognizes the importance of collaborating and listening to mothers and their families to address Pittsburgh's disparities in maternal health outcomes build a better future for moms in Pittsburgh.

WHAMglobal has engaged a representative Regional Advisory in the development of the initiative that includes many community-based organizations. In addition to the Regional Advisory, initial partners for the initiative include Allegheny Health Department's Maternal and Child Health Programs, American College of Nurse-Midwives (Pennsylvania Affiliate), Heinz Endowments, Jewish Women's Foundation of Greater Pittsburgh, National Council of Jewish Women Pittsburgh, and Healthy Start, Inc.



Members of the *Pittsburgh: A Safer Childbirth City* advisory meet at the QIT Center.

Healthy Start, Inc. has served Allegheny County for 28 years, and faced many of the challenges confronting mothers across the region.

"We are enthusiastic about the initiative's goals to improve maternal health outcomes for all women across our city. Healthy Start's commitment is centered on the belief that when we focus on those who are most impacted—which in our region is black women and babies—everyone benefits," said Jada Shirriel, MS, CLC, Chief Executive Officer of Healthy Start, Inc. "As such, we are committed to reducing disparities and striving toward birth equity by elevating community voices and lived experience and by fostering effective collaboration between community and clinical stakeholders."

*Pittsburgh: A Safer Childbirth City* will focus on four distinct areas: care delivery model redesign and systems change; workforce innovation and training; community activation and local movement building; and community engagement and volunteerism. The program will build on lessons from its first two years, including best practices from other global systems and a strong focus on evaluation and rapid quality improvement.

In 2017, the Pittsburgh-based Jewish Healthcare Foundation launched a supporting non-profit organization, the Women's Health Activist Movement Global (WHAMglobal), to focus on improving maternal and child health outcomes in the Pittsburgh region. Since this time, WHAMglobal has built a network of maternal health advocates, helped launch and manage the Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative, the action arm of Pennsylvania's Maternal Mortality Review Committee, and convened a regional symposium on maternal health leadership. This new grant expands on WHAMglobal's work and strengthens the connections between clinical care and community-based initiatives.

"Expanding WHAMglobal's maternal health work through the Safer Childbirth Cities Initiative is the logical next step for all the work we've been doing over the past two and a half years," said Karen Wolk Feinstein, President and CEO of JHF. "The collaborative nature of the initiative, combined with its on-the-ground local community engagement, workforce development, and best practice sharing components advances all of our ongoing efforts."

"We're thrilled to add Pittsburgh as our tenth grantee. Through the Safer Childbirth Cities Initiative, including here in Pittsburgh, our intent is to support projects that are tailored to the needs of pregnant women in their respective city and can have a play a pivotal role in helping women have safe pregnancies and deliveries," said Dr. Mary-Ann Etiebet, Lead and Executive Director of *Merck for Mothers*.

The vision for the Safer Childbirth Cities Initiative is to foster local solutions that help cities become safer – and more equitable – places to give birth. It is supported by *Merck for Mothers*\*, Merck's \$500 million initiative to help create a world where no woman has to die giving life. For the inaugural class, Safer Childbirth Cities will also be co-funded with the Burke Foundation, The Nicholson Foundation, the Community Health Acceleration Partnership, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Rhia Ventures, and others.

The nine other grantees are located in Atlanta, Baltimore, Camden, Chicago, Columbus, Jackson, Newark, New Orleans, and Philadelphia. To learn more, visit [SaferChildbirthCities.com](http://SaferChildbirthCities.com).

\**Merck for Mothers* is known as *MSD for Mothers* outside the United States and Canada.

## Salk Fellows pitch solutions to transform medical error

On November 21, over 60 people gathered at the QIT Center to attend the 2019 Salk Health Activist Fellowship Finale to hear five fellows pitch their political platform to address medical error. The invite-only event featured a diverse cast of judges, ranging from clinicians and experts on medical error to political consultants and representatives from regional elected offices. They were tasked with voting on the pitch most likely to inspire action. In addition to 17 in-person expert judges, Leah Binder, MA, MGA, President and CEO of The Leapfrog Group, and Jayne O'Donnell, a USA Today reporter specializing in medical error, participated remotely.



Tamera Means, MD, MHS presents at the Salk Health Activist Fellowship Finale on November 21.

Every year, the Salk Health Activist Fellowship seeks to broaden professional networks and instill in young healthcare professionals the skills and knowledge to advocate for improvements in our healthcare system. With the upcoming 2020 elections, the Fellowship focused this year on building convincing political platforms. Though health care remains hotly contested, candidates have yet to mention critical issues in medical error. To spur action on reducing medical error, fellows were tasked with creating a campaign platform and a compelling pitch, learning campaigning, polling, and messaging skills which broadened their activism toolkit.

The five speakers were elected by their peers following earlier presentations from all 27 Fellows. Pitches covered a range of policy approaches to address the persistent issue of medical error.

- Tamara Means, MD, MHS, a clinical researcher at the University of Pittsburgh's Critical Care Medicine Department, focused on the interoperability of care, advocating for a unified electronic record system.
- Beatrix Hartmann, RN, an MSN candidate at the University of Pittsburgh, emphasized the need for federal regulation requiring patients to be informed when a medical error has occurred.
- Laura DeMers, a coordinator at the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, reinforced the idea that health care is a team sport, linking all of the clinical team's providers around patient care.
- Mira Patel, MBA, a project manager analyst at Highmark Health, pushed for AHRQ to become the leading agency to enforce quality and spur improvements in healthcare safety.
- Lastly, Alexandra Allen, a Masters student in Public Policy and Management at Carnegie Mellon University, revisited the idea of a public health insurance option to tackle the impact of social determinants of health on medical error.



*Fellows had the opportunity to share about their experience in the Fellowship with the guest judges at the Finale.*



*The evening's winner, Alexandra Allen pictured with Karen Feinstein.*

The judges selected Alexandra Allen's pitch as the most compelling and well-delivered of the evening.

Over the ten-week program, the fellows received education ranging from social marketing and behavioral economics to public opinion polling and political campaigning. The fellows also engaged with successful politicians such as County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, former Pittsburgh Mayor Tom Murphy Jr., MS, and State Representative Dan Miller. These interactions provided key insight into influencing the public will, as well as the importance of fostering partnerships and coalitions to make lasting change.

In reflecting on medical practitioners' training, Dr. Tamara Means shared, "This Fellowship has given me the ability to jump the distance from simply having an activist passion to becoming an effective activist capable of affecting real change."

Fellow Jameson Matunas, a doctorate candidate in Occupational Therapy, noted, "Each session gave insight into the current state of affairs, with guest speakers bringing a unique perspective and set of tools to the problems at hand." Armed with newfound knowledge and a network of activists, fellows have the skills and confidence to create a better health care system for all.



## Raising Resilient Teens: An expert panel provides perspective and insight

Four renowned teen mental health experts gathered in Squirrel Hill on Sunday, November 3 to share information about fostering resilience in youth, responding to trauma, and identifying mental health risks and warning signs.

According to a [report released in October](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide deaths for people ages 10 to 24 have increased 56% in the past decade. Homicides among that age group are also on the rise after a long period of decline. Additionally, [in Pennsylvania](#) 38.1% of high school students reported feeling depressed or sad most days in the past 12 months. On top of these national and state trends, the panel discussion also took place in the shadow of the one-year anniversary of the Tree of Life synagogue shooting, and the shared communal trauma beyond October 27, 2018.



*The four experts: David Brent, MD; Judith Cohen, MD; Liz Miller, MD, PhD; and Gil Zalsman, MD.*

The discussion was moderated by David Brent, MD, Psychiatry and Pediatrics Professor and Endowed Chair in Suicide Studies, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and STAR-Center Director at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic. Panelists included Judith Cohen, MD, Medicine Psychology Professor at Drexel University College of Medicine, and Medical Director at Allegheny Health Network's Center for Traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents; Liz Miller, MD, PhD, Chief of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and Pediatrics Professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine; and Gil Zalsman, MD, CEO of Geha Mental Health Center, Israel and chair of Israel's National Council of Suicide Prevention.

The panel discussed how to detect signs of trauma, depression, or suicidal thoughts in children. "The real message here is that there is no one sign to look for if you think something bad has happened to your child," said Dr. Cohen. "If there is a sudden change, you should think about traumatic experiences or stressors that may be impacting the child."



*Over 100 guests attended the event at the Jewish Community Center in Pittsburgh.*

The panel reiterated the importance of simply asking your child if you suspect a change, whether it be depression, suicidal thoughts, or another issue. As Dr. Cohen also reminded the audience, "If you have any questions, you should seek help from your pediatrician or a medical professional."

Dr. Zalsman emphasized that "a sudden change from former behavior is key." He clarified that asking children about suicidal thoughts will not prompt them to think about suicide, a common misconception. "Asking is not dangerous," Dr. Zalsman stressed. "Asking is a big relief."

Panelists and participants raised a variety of issues important to teen mental health, from internet safety and understanding consent to removing blame from victims and the importance of regular sleep and routine. They all agreed that resiliency skills can be learned and practiced, supported by activities like family rituals and sports. But, parental modeling can too. As Dr. Cohen noted, "Parents can help their children by teaching them to deal with challenging situations when they arise, helping them develop the skills to manage negative emotions or physical responses to stress."

As the event came to a close, conversation turned to community. "Resilience is much more than one person's capacity," concluded Dr. Zalsman. "Children are part of a family, and a family is part of a community. If the entire system is resilient, a child can recover from a terrible trauma."

Read more about *Raising Resilient Teens* in the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle or listen to the full discussion on the Jewish Healthcare Foundation Podcast.

*Raising Resilient Teens* was co-sponsored by Jewish Family & Community Services, 10.27 Healing Partnership, Community Day School, Hillel Academy, Yeshiva Schools, The Friendship Circle, and The Second Floor at the JCC.

## Creating a safe space for teen mental health and empowering youth to combat stigma

As a growing number of teens experience mental health problems, this February JHF and community partners launched a neighborhood-based initiative in Squirrel Hill to strengthen the youth mental health safety-net. A core component of the initiative is the establishment of a dedicated, stigma-free safe space for teens to gather and access mental health support from clinical staff employing the most innovative methods in engagement. Currently under development, the center looks to several models of integrated teen mental health services for best practice, including [headspace](#), a network of youth mental health centers in Australia, and [allcove](#), a similar model designed by the [Stanford Center for Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing](#).



*Hillel Academy Stand Together ambassadors during training.*

The center's staff will include licensed family and adolescent therapists from Jewish Family and Community Services (JFCS), offering programs to support mental wellbeing, in addition to both brief interventions and ongoing therapy. A potential space has been identified on Murray Avenue, within a block of JFCS and the JCC on the second and third floors of a building acquired by and adjacent to Friendship Circle.

In October 2019, [The Fine Foundation](#) – a long-time and valued partner of JHF in advancing quality healthcare through its support for the Fine Awards and the JHF Patient Safety Fellowship – awarded a grant of \$50,000 to support the new center. The grant builds on the Fine Foundation's previous support for JHF's 2018 Youth Mental Health Advocacy Summit, which brought together youth who voiced the need for safe, supportive communities and spaces to promote mental health and well-being.

In other efforts to improve teen mental health, JHF has been working to bring the school-based peer support program [Stand Together](#) to the Jewish community. Developed by Allegheny County's Office of Behavioral Health, *Stand Together* equips middle and high school students to take action against stigma associated with mental illness and substance use disorders. Students receive anti-stigma training, engage in service learning, and are encouraged to 'stand together' to advocate for education, awareness, and social inclusion.

Currently in 23 public schools (including Pittsburgh Allderdice High School), grant support from the [Jewish Women's Foundation](#) enabled *Stand Together* to train middle and high school students at Hillel Academy and Yeshiva Schools in November.

## JHF & WHAMglobal head to Canada for women's health study tour

The Women's Health Study Tour coincided with the International Women's Forum World Leadership Conference in Toronto, an invitation-only gathering of more than 7,000 women from 33 nations across six continents. In the two days leading up to the conference, JHF organized a women's health study tour, bringing together eight women leaders from across the country.

Canada has long been a country with health outcomes superior to the United States, particularly in rates of maternal and infant mortality and overall life expectancy. With its National Health Insurance policies, Canada also spends far less of its GDP on health care than the United States – 11.6% compared to nearly 18%.

To learn about the Canadian system's innovative care models, WHAMglobal Chair Debra Caplan, JHF's CEO Karen Wolk Feinstein, Women's Health Specialist Kate Dickerson, and Director of Innovation Mara Leff led a tour to examine successful models for women's care across the lifespan from pregnancy to seniority. Other study tour attendees included:



*Kate Dickerson, Beverly Morrow, Roberta Pike, Kelly Dobbins, Christine Hunter, Laurie Zephyrin, Fleur Sack, Sharon London Liss, and Mara Leff at the Toronto Birth Centre.*



*Simon Frank, Beverly Morrow, Fleur Sack, Christine Hunter, Susie Shipley, Mara Leff, Kate Dickerson, Rosanne Aleong, and Mel Barsky at Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation.*

Christine Hunter, MD, Rear Admiral in the US Navy Medical Corps (ret.); Beverly A. Morrow, Owner of TLM Management (ret.); Fleur Sack, MD, FACOG, Obstetrician and Gynecologist at Baptist Hospitals of Southeast Texas; Simon Frank, MD, Anesthesiologist (ret.); Susie Shipley, President of Huntington Bank's Pennsylvania & Ohio Valley Region; Laurie Zephyrin, MD, MPH, MBA, Vice President of Health Care Delivery System Reform at The Commonwealth Fund.

Expertly planned by CPO Nancy Zionts, the tour commenced with a group visit to the Toronto Birth Centre, a state-of-the-art, federally funded birthing facility as part of Canada's extensive midwifery maternal care system. Participants met the director of the Ontario Midwives Association to learn about credentialing and regulation of this well-integrated women's health specialty.

The group then met with national experts in issues that affect women, such as cardiovascular disease and menopause. First the group met globally recognized expert Dr. Wendy Wolfman, the Director of the Menopause Clinic and The Premature Ovarian Failure Clinic at Mount Sinai Hospital. The Premature Ovarian Failure Clinic is the first and only one of its kind in the world, and runs one of the most sought after training programs for physicians focused on mature women's health.

Following the meeting with Dr. Wolfman, the group met Dr. Susanna Mak, Mount Sinai's Department Division Director for Cardiology. Dr. Mak studies the gendered differences in cardiac physiology by implanting catheters in men and women over an unprecedented period of their lives.

The study tour concluded with a tour of Baycrest and the Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation (CABHI). Founded in 1918 as the Toronto Jewish Old Folks Home, Baycrest is now a global leader in geriatric residential living, healthcare research and education, with a special focus on brain health and aging. CABHI accelerates innovation in the aging and brain health sector and represents one of the largest investments of its kind in the world.

After the study tour, JHF staff hosted the third gathering of the IWF Women in Health Care Special Interest Group, breaking records with more than 140 women in attendance.



The first formal program of the IWF's Women in Health Care Special Interest Group — initiated by JHF President Karen Wolk Feinstein, PhD, and WHAMglobal Chair Debra Caplan, MPA, attracted a global potpourri of 130 women in Barcelona, Spain. The group brings together women leaders in the fields of health care and beyond to discuss innovative ways to improve women's health and health care in general.

The breakfast program featured keynote speaker Dr. Jennifer Pearlman, an internationally recognized medical expert in women's health, hormone therapy, and cosmetic medicine. "When I think about my goals for patients, I think about their health span, which speaks to quality, their life span, which speaks to longevity, and their brain span, which speaks to satisfaction," asserted Dr. Pearlman.

IWF Pittsburgh President Debra Caplan closed the breakfast with encouraging words about the group's potential impact and future plans to gather in London at the next global IWF conference.



*Debra Caplan, Karen Feinstein, Jennifer Pearlman, Aradhna Oliphant, and Susie Shipley at the IWF Conference.*

## PA Health Funders look for opportunity to work with Wolf Administration

Pennsylvania health and community foundations gathered in Harrisburg on November 6 and 7 for the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual PA Health Funders Collaborative Conference (PHFC). PHFC is a statewide network of 45 foundations in communities across the Commonwealth that works at the intersection of health philanthropy and policy. The conference focused on how to best to align and advance the foundations' shared priorities within the remaining three years of the Wolf Administration.

PHFC's co-chairs, Karen Feinstein and Russell Johnson, welcomed the members to the conference. PHFC members dove into policies that finance housing, strengthen nonprofit hospital community benefit opportunities, and enforce mental health parity laws. Conference speakers included health policy experts Mike Nardone, Former Director of the CMS Disabled and Elderly Health Programs Group, Amy Clary, Senior Policy Associate at NASHP, David Lloyd, National Senior Policy Advisor at The Kennedy Forum, and Ben Miller, Chief Strategy Officer at the Well Being Trust. PHFC members also explored public/private partnership opportunities with PA Attorney General Josh Shapiro, Deputy Chief of Staff Alison Beam, Insurance Commissioner Jessica Altman, and PA Health Insurance Exchange Director Zach Sherman. After dinner on the first day, Lauren Bierman, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs at Global Strategy Group, presented a playbook to build effective advocacy campaigns and influence public will. PHFC members successfully synthesized the conference to create PHFC's agenda for 2020, which includes a focus on: modernizing the WIC program and creating a network of comprehensive services; strengthening the adequacy of the mental health network and workforce through parity; and pursuing innovative ways to finance housing.



*Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro speaks with the Pennsylvania Health Funders Collaborative on November 6, 2019.*



## Secretary Theresa Miller joins opioid use disorder Centers of Excellence sessions

In October and November, PRHI and the Program Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Pharmacy facilitated regional Learning Network sessions in Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Scranton, and Philadelphia for the Opioid Use Disorder Centers of Excellence (COEs). Since 2017, Pennsylvania's 45 COEs have expanded access to and improved engagement in treatment to more than 20,500 Medicaid recipients around Pennsylvania. The regional Learning Network sessions focused on best practices for engaging and retaining COE clients in Medication-Assisted Treatment and comprehensive services. Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Theresa Miller joined the regional sessions in Western Pennsylvania and in the Lehigh/Capital region to hear directly from COE's and their teams about the successes and challenges of fighting the opioid epidemic. The [PA press release](#) provides additional information.



Secretary Theresa Miller (3<sup>rd</sup> from right) with members of JHF Staff and COE team administrators.

## Cultivating a dementia friendly Pennsylvania

On November 6, 2019, the Pennsylvania Department of Aging held the annual Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorder Forum in Harrisburg. Over 100 attendees joined from across the Commonwealth to cultivate a *Dementia Friendly Pennsylvania*. Governor Tom Wolf kicked off the day commending the important work happening in the state around dementia. Secretary of Aging Robert Torres created a sense of urgency—his statistics show that more than 400,000 Pennsylvanians living with dementia are supported by more than 900,000 care partners. He encouraged all to do their part and shared his own certificate of participation in a *Dementia Friends* training.



Secretary of Aging Robert Torres (far right) with Anneliese Perry, Nancy Becker, Gene Becker, Jennifer Holcomb, Sam Jarvis, and Stacie Bonenberger.

The keynote speaker for the Forum was the National Association of Area Agencies of Aging's (n4a) CEO, Sandy Markwood, who is also the Co-Chair of *Dementia Friendly America*. Sandy noted that approximately 80% of people living with dementia are living in the community and one in five are living alone, facts that underscored the importance of dementia friendly communities to support people who are living with or will be impacted by dementia. Markwood challenged everyone to help individuals living with dementia to live well in their communities.

Following the keynote, attendees were treated to a powerful panel featuring a person living with dementia and his care partner wife. Other panelists included a high school student who helps administer a Music and Memory program, the York/Adams County Dementia Friendly community leader, and Dementia Friends Pennsylvania statewide coordinators Anneliese Perry and Stacie Bonenberger, both Senior Quality Improvement Specialists at JHF.

In the afternoon session, Perry and Bonenberger joined Markwood to lead an interactive workshop focused on launching a dementia friendly effort in their own communities. Pennsylvania's Alzheimer's State Plan Task Force, of which Bonenberger is a member, plans to circulate lessons learned to bring dementia friendly efforts to regions across the state.

## PA State Representative Anita Kulik hosts an open conversation with students at Montour High School

The November 8 event was an outgrowth of JHF work led by Deborah Murdoch, JHF Program Manager and coordinator of a youth activist network that involves students in *Stand Together* – a peer-to-peer initiative of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services' Office of Behavior Health. *Stand Together* aims to prepare youth to take action against stigma associated with mental illness and substance use disorders. Representative Kulik's [enthusiastic meeting with students](#) in Harrisburg in May prompted a follow-up invitation to speak at Montour. Montour twelfth grade student Delaney Broad and eleventh grade student Jack Pockl, Co-Editors-in-Chief of Montour High School's Monitor Minutes, share a story about Kulik's visit.



*Representative Anita Kulik (far right) with students at Montour High School.*

### Kulik hosts open conversation with students

By Delaney Broad and Jack Pockl, Co-Editors-in-Chief, Monitor Minutes

On November 8, State Representative Anita Kulik visited Montour High School and spoke openly with students about issues that are relevant to their lives today. Some of the issues discussed during the meeting was LGBTQIA+ issues, mental health stigmas, school funding, and sex education.

Kulik was astounded at how comfortable and at ease the students felt talking with her. She also hoped the students felt she heard what they were saying.

The topics that were chosen for her to talk about were brought up by her hosts because they believe that they were relevant to students today.

Kulik wanted to specifically speak to the students because they are “ground zero, and they are the people who are going through the issues.”

Speaking with the students helps Kulik with her job as representative because it is her job to represent her district and ultimately Pennsylvania. The information given to her by the Montour students can then be taken to other school districts and possibly even to Harrisburg to advocate for issues that are pertinent to high school students.

One example of how Kulik is working with information from local communities and students would be her work with Alina's Law. They will be going to Harrisburg in January and she will be partnering with one of her fellow representatives who is a Republican.

Kulik does not just plan to visit Montour, she always visits other school districts and plans to continue doing so in the future. There were several other people in attendance of the event. They wanted to bring Kulik in to speak with the students.

Deborah Murdoch who is coordinating a youth activist network around mental health, involving students in *Stand Together*, was one of the hosts who wanted to bring Kulik in to speak. Murdoch had worked with other students from Montour who got to visit with Kulik in January. Murdoch saw how welcoming Kulik was to the students and wanted to give her another opportunity to interact with the students.

Also in attendance was Carol Frazer, with the Jewish Healthcare Foundation. She wanted to invite Kulik to the school to not only give the students an opportunity to speak with her, but an opportunity for her to hear from the students.

Mike Gruber, who works for an organization that works closely with and helps to fund Stand Together, believed that it is important that the legislatures need to hear from the youth on the concerns they have with mental health issues.

Sally Jo Snyder works with Consumer Health, an advocacy group that works with people that are marginalized. She was very excited to hear from the students and how passionate they were about the different topics of the day, especially students in Montour's GSA.

## Three JHF staff present at Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership Summit

The Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership (GPNP) Summit, organized and supported by the Forbes Funds, brings together nonprofit organizations to create strategic collaborations around pressing social issues in southwestern Pennsylvania. At this year's Summit on December 3, three members of the JHF staff participated in different breakout sessions.

Hanifa Nakiryowa, Global Health Associate, co-led the session *Improving Connections and Outcomes in Maternal and Child Health* together with Jada Shirriel, CEO of Healthy Start, Inc. and Brandy Gentry, Executive Director of Oli's Angels. Hanifa opened the session with an overview of WHAMglobal initiatives including the PA PQC and the *Merck for Mothers* Safer Childbirth Cities initiative. The session spotlighted the maternal health work done by Healthy Start in the black community and Oli's Angels work in Allegheny County jail, in addition to highlighting WHAMglobal's role in assisting such organizations to improve maternal health outcomes in the region. Hanifa also introduced the WHAMglobal Community Fund, addressing critical maternal health needs in the community.



Mara Leff presents at the Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership Summit on December 3.

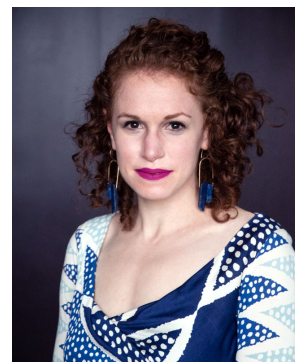
AIDS Free Pittsburgh Project Manager Julia Och, along with colleagues Jessica Burdick from Project Silk (Community Human Services) and Charlotte Mitchell from the Center for Inclusion Health (Allegheny Health Network), illustrated how AIDS Free Pittsburgh (AFP) serves as a model for collaboration and capacity building. Julia described AFP's collective impact model, which works to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Allegheny County through a collaborative focus on normalizing routine HIV screening, building capacity for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) services, and facilitating immediate linkage to care for persons with a new HIV diagnosis. Jessica shared an example of Project Silk's collaboration with UPMC on a PrEP telemedicine pilot, while Charlotte discussed routine HIV screening and RAPID linkage to care services that Center for Inclusion Health has integrated into several facilities within the AHN health system. From 2015 to 2018 in Allegheny County, new HIV cases decreased by 39%, while new AIDS cases decreased by 47%, coinciding with the 2015 launch of AIDS Free Pittsburgh.

JHF Director of Innovation Mara Leff, together with longtime partner Dave Sevvick, Executive Director of Computer Reach, presented a *Collaboration & Capacity Building* session on JHF's Virtual Senior Academy (VSA), focused on using technology to reduce isolation and loneliness among older adults. The Virtual Senior Academy uses an innovative technology approach to virtually connect older adults to one another via VSA's online platform. Mara and Dave discussed the exciting partnership between the Virtual Senior Academy and Computer Reach, a local non-profit aimed at increasing connection to technology and improving digital literacy in the community. The joint "Tech Buddy" initiative aims to help older adults use the Virtual Senior Academy to connect with new people, learn new topics, and expand their social networks. Those interested in learning how to volunteer to serve as tech buddies should contact Mara at [Leff@jhf.org](mailto:Leff@jhf.org).



## Natalie Stewart, communications and design professional, joins Liftoff PGH team

Natalie Stewart joined the Jewish Healthcare Foundation on December 2 as the new Creative Communications Designer supporting the Liftoff PGH initiative and the Foundation's communications team. Stewart specializes in visual design, having worked internationally as a communications director, graphic designer, and digital marketing officer. Prior to joining JHF, Stewart lead communications at the Pittsburgh-based Green Building Alliance, developing the sustainability nonprofit's first comprehensive visual identity in addition to managing messaging across media campaigns. She also spent three years in Jordan at a local television production company where she directed cross platform digital marketing and documentary script writing. Stewart holds a Bachelor's degree in International Studies from Johns Hopkins University, and can often be found peddling between farmers markets (and new countries) with a generous stash of pastries.



## Tribute in memory of Leon Zionts

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation is an organization that continually experiments with ways to reach and inspire action among its staff, board members and the public at large to advance healthcare innovation, advocacy, collaboration, and education in the interest of better population health. We can't do it alone. Capturing the eyes, ears, and especially the hearts of those who embrace this mission takes a special kind of talent and an open-handed willingness to share it for a good cause. Leon Zionts did just this, generously sharing his prodigious speaking, musical, and acting talents to bring alive the vital human stories underlying JHF initiatives.

A beloved and accomplished actor, musician and theater producer, Leon nevertheless made time to bring to life stories of health and health care that needed to be heard. In a dramatic reading from a Creative Nonfiction anthology, he shared the story of a struggle with mental illness. His hilarious musical parody playing the president of a 'bystander' board dramatized what boards should *not* do. Together with his life partner, JHF COO and Chief Program Officer Nancy Zionts, he wrote and performed *PRHI: The Musical* – a delightful anthology of songs telling the story of PRHI's 20 years of trying to improve health care.



*Nancy Zionts, COO and Chief Program Officer at JHF, and her husband, Leon Zionts, at the PRHI 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on June 19, 2018.*

Finally, Leon shared his smooth baritone voice as voice-over artist for the Foundation's signature end-of-life curriculum, *Closure 101*. Proudly (and humorously) calling himself "the voice of death" for JHF, he recorded dozens of scenarios depicting conversations between physicians and patients. In March 2019, with palliative care physician Bob Arnold, he completed a Pennsylvania POLST (PA Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment) video to train the next generation of physicians to have conversations with patients about death and dying. When three weeks later, Leon was himself diagnosed with terminal cancer, he was asked whether he still felt comfortable being part of the project. He didn't hesitate. "Absolutely," he said emphatically. "It's so important."

Leon drew on his love of the arts to reach people. Voice. Song. Drama. We are grateful for his talents and his partnership shared generously over many years and express our deepest condolences to Nancy and to his children Allison Laine and Dani Lyon. When asked to share our own skills, may we all say 'yes' more often, in Leon's memory.



## Death and Dying Fellowship applications open

Returning in January 2020, the Death & Dying Fellowship takes on a key challenge: the reality that professionals are not well prepared to deal with death, dying, and grieving families. Part of the Feinstein Fellowships created and organized by the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and Health Careers Futures, this Fellowship allows participants to learn, confront, and discuss the legal, medical, social, cultural, familial, and spiritual aspects of death and dying within a multi-disciplinary group in a low-pressure environment. The sessions will include site visits, facilitated conversations, and opportunities to practice conversation skills—a timely skill since Medicare approved payment for advanced care planning. During the final session, Fellows will create a community action plan.



## End of year JHF Board Meeting

The year-end board meetings of the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and its supporting organizations, Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative and Health Careers Futures, were celebrations of board volunteers generous with their time and expertise, and the hardworking staff dedicated to advancing the Foundation's program and policy outcomes. In a series of fast-moving presentations, staff from every major Foundation program showcased 2019's accomplishments and shared previews of what's coming in 2020. The meetings were an opportunity to highlight just how much a small group of extraordinarily skilled and energetic staff can accomplish, and gave board and staff members opportunities to enjoy shared pride and get to know one another better.



*The HIV/AIDS Team at the JHF Board Meeting*



*Ashley Chung, MPH, Program Associate for the HIV/AIDS Team, presents on JHF's Ryan White Part B contract and the work with the Minority AIDS Initiative.*



*JT Stoner, MPH, AIDS Free Pittsburgh Health Services Coordinator, presents on AIDS Free Pittsburgh.*



*Stacie Bonenberger, MOT, Senior Quality Improvement Specialist, presents on various Senior Connections programs including RAVEN and Dementia Friends Pennsylvania.*



*Anneliese Perry, MS, Senior Quality Improvement Specialist, presents on the GRAN Intergenerational Reading program and the CHW Apprenticeship Program.*



*Deborah Murdoch, MPH, Program Manager, presents on the 15217 Neighborhood-based Teen Mental Health Initiative.*



*Robert Ferguson, MPH, Director of Government Grants and Policy, presents on the maternal health initiatives: Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative, Reinvesting In Health, and the Patient Safety Fellowship.*



*Hanifa Nakiryowa, MID, Global Health Associate, presents on the Women's Health Activist Movement Global (WHAMglobal).*



*Megan Butler, MS, Program Associate, presents on Liff Off PGH 2020.*



*Karen Wolk Feinstein, PhD, President and CEO, recaps JHF's accomplishments in 2019.*