

News

Heinz Endowments' Boards Approve Spring Grants

Pittsburgh, May 10, 2005 --- The Heinz Endowments today re-confirmed its commitment to help reinvigorate southwestern Pennsylvania's slow-growth economy by granting a total of \$5.5 million to the Pittsburgh Life Sciences Greenhouse. The universities-state-foundations partnership was created in 1999 to turn bio-medical research spin-offs into a new jobs-generating sector.

Among the regional foundations contributing to the Greenhouse, the Endowments total investment now stands at \$16 million since its first contribution in 2002. The other partners are the Richard King Mellon, McCune, Hillman and Pittsburgh foundations; the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University; and the state Department of Community and Economic Development. Total Greenhouse funding from all sources now stands at about \$103.3 million.

"It's long been the judgment of our staff and boards that the economic future of the region is tied, one way or the other, to the performance of its premiere universities," Endowments President Maxwell King said today following the two-day session of grant approvals. "It's clear that the Greenhouse is one of our best shots in growing new industries, keeping graduates here and attracting new people. In many ways, the success of all our other grantmaking in the region depends on a growing economy," said King, "so it makes sense for foundations to be active in this area."

The Greenhouse support was the largest of the 233 grants awarded during the directors' meeting, but significant investments in large institutions also anchored comprehensive strategies in the five program areas of Economic Opportunity; Arts & Culture; Children, Youth & Families; Education and the Environment. Other grants awarded as part of long-range strategic plan to afford more economic development opportunity for African-American residents in the region include six financial literacy grants, totaling \$530,000, that are designed to help develop money management skills and provide access services to build personal assets.

New on the agenda is a slate of grants, totaling \$775,000, and designed to offer more effective career counseling and jobs exploration opportunities to high school students, many from low-income communities. Among these is a \$225,000 grant to Duquesne University's Career Literacy for African-American Youth, which allows 250 African-American students from nine high schools in Allegheny and Beaver counties to work one-on-one with a volunteer local professional. These mentors provide motivation, inside information and reality checks for students facing career-choice decisions.

The Endowments also continues broad assistance and advocacy strategies in early education, including endorsing a \$1 million

research grant to widen the impact of the early-care-and-education initiative led by the Children, Youth & Families Program staff in partnership with state government. Managed through the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation, the grant will support a state-wide evaluation of the benefits of Pennsylvania's high-quality pre-kindergarten education programs for some 3,000 high-risk children in 17 school districts across the state.

Evaluation findings will be used to bolster the Pennsylvania Quality Pre-Kindergarten Initiative, which advocates for creative, integrated partnerships in early education programs among school district administrators, child care workers and Head Start Program managers in local community settings.

In other human services grantmaking, a \$220,000 grant will go to the Allegheny County Department of Human Services to expand the network of family support centers throughout Allegheny County. The center systems, one of the pillars of the CY&F Program's strategies to keep families together by way of a range of counseling and assistance programs, will add a new center to serve families in the Baldwin-Whitehall neighborhoods of Prospect Park, which has become a settlement area for non-English speaking immigrants; and Green Meadows, which has a newer population of low-income African American families.

Also approved were several grants supporting work by the Endowments' Education Program staff promoting charter schools in the region. One is a \$450,000 award to Propel Schools through the Community Loan Fund of Southwestern Pennsylvania. That initiative promises technical and management assistance to communities that want to start charter schools but are often overwhelmed with numerous tasks that traditional school districts are able to manage because of steady funding and experienced personnel. The goal under the grant is to enable Propel to assist in the opening of seven new charter schools by 2008.

Another \$200,000 grant, also directed through the Community Loan Fund, will allow City Charter High School to complete the build-out of its classroom and administrative space on the eighth floor of a downtown office building. The school, which emphasizes internships and other careers-connected projects that relate students more directly to the working world, also has been supported by the Grable and Richard King Mellon foundations as well as by a state-government tax credit program.

Several grants to position Pittsburgh's health care systems as national leaders in environmental health were approved. Among them is a \$250,000 in funding to enable Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh's new building in Lawrenceville to become a certified green facility. The two-year funding also will allow for the hiring of an environmental health project coordinator. Also part of this agenda is \$200,000 to support a new environmental health research and education center in the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public Health. The money will allow for more detailed monitoring of the region's environmental health trends and community-based research. In one effort, the center is implementing

an environmental health and risk-reduction curriculum at Peabody High School in the Pittsburgh Public Schools system.

Another University of Pittsburgh-connected grant of \$150,000 will go to the school's Cancer Institute to support a six-month study to identify ways in which an environmental health mission can be applied to the institution's research, community programming and operations functions.

Among many environment protection and promotion initiatives, the boards approved a \$350,000 grant to fund the design and engineering of South Shore Riverfront Park, part of the mixed-use development project of the former LTV Steel site known as South Side Works. The park will be located in a 34-acre portion of the site developed by the Soffer Organization – bounded by 26th and Hot Metal streets and by East Carson Street and the Monongahela River.

Continuing the Arts & Culture staff's long-standing effort to build financial stability into arts organizations, several grants designed to help key institutions solidify their operations were approved. Among these is a \$200,000 grant to the Pittsburgh Glass Center, to support its "Campaign for Sustainability," a new business plan designed to increase the center's revenue sources. Also, a \$250,000 grant to the Mattress Factory will support a new marketing position, part of a plan to increase corporate and individual support.

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