



# The Role of Community Safety in Obesity Prevention: Exploring How Exposure to Crime and Violence Affect Physical Activity and Healthy Eating

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Thought-Leaders' Forum  
September 22-23, 2011: A Summary for Practitioners

## BACKGROUND

Violence and the fear of violence affect where people live, work, and shop, and influence whether children are allowed to play outside or walk to school.<sup>1</sup> Neighborhoods with high levels of violence tend to have underdeveloped or poorly maintained green spaces, limited healthy food options, and numerous alcohol and tobacco outlets, all factors associated with obesity.<sup>2</sup> Actions to reduce violence and the fear of violence—among all Americans, in all communities—can therefore play a key role in helping individuals gain access to healthy foods and increase their physical activity and, in this way, reduce rates of obesity.

The connection between community safety and obesity prevention was the topic of a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)-sponsored thought-leaders forum, *The Role of Community Safety in Obesity Prevention: Exploring How Exposure to Crime and Violence Impact Physical Activity and Healthy Eating*, which took place at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta September 22–23, 2011.

Chaired by Larry Cohen of the Prevention Institute and Caterina Roman of Temple University, the meeting convened experts in violence prevention, healthy eating, and active living who reviewed and discussed presentations by community-based practitioners, researchers, funders, and advocates with expertise in psychology, criminology, public health, housing, transportation, community and economic development, nutrition, and parks development. See [Appendix 1](#) for a list of participants and [Appendix 2](#) for summary descriptions of their organizations. The purpose of the forum was to:

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<sup>1</sup> Cohen L, Davis R, Lee V, and Valdovinos E. *Addressing the Intersection: Preventing Violence and Promoting Healthy Eating and Active Living*. Oakland, CA: Prevention Institute, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

- Build a common understanding of how community safety and perceptions of safety influence physical activity and access to healthy foods
- Share innovative, effective, community-based violence prevention practices that promote a sense of safety and physical activity and support access to healthy food
- Determine how best to measure community safety, physical activity, and healthy eating
- Identify ways to advance this emerging interdisciplinary field through partnerships, research, information-sharing, and policy initiatives

This paper presents the main findings from the meeting with a focus on providing information that practitioners—community residents, service providers, and youth—can use. A [companion paper](#) presents the main findings of value to researchers. As one theme of the forum was the need for cross-disciplinary work that connects practitioners with researchers, this paper also briefly notes these research-related recommendations.

## **BUILDING THIS NEW FIELD REQUIRES A STRONGER INFRASTRUCTURE**

While forum participants expressed their enthusiasm for the potential of an interdisciplinary field combining work on community safety, physical activity, and healthy eating, they also were cautious. This field is still very much in its infancy, participants agreed, and needs some basic building blocks to support future work:

- **More disciplines need to be involved.** As noted above, law enforcement, community organizing, and housing services have a history of working together on reducing violence. Framing violence prevention as a public health issue is a new practice, one that will require broader partnerships and new types of collaborations.
- **The field needs a common language.** Terms like "crime," "violence," and "safety" currently have different connotations for different disciplines, limiting communication about the extent of problems and the sharing of information about potential solutions.
- **Practitioners and researchers need ways to share their knowledge, experience, and results.** At the forum, participants relished the opportunity to share new findings about issues such as the impact of peer pressure on violent behavior among youth: this experience highlighted the lack of similar forums through which research findings can inform practitioner collaboration around program design and advocacy, and the experience of practitioners can inform further research.

Forum participants also discussed the need for research that explores the specific ways in which violence prevention can change people's perceptions about health and physical

activity, leading them to be more active and eat healthier foods. Please see the [report for researchers](#) for more details.

## MODELS OF EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION EXIST

At the forum, participants reviewed several examples of cross-sectoral community action:

- **Providence, R.I.** A long-term relationship between law enforcement and the community development group Olneyville Housing Corporation decreased crime and increased park use in a low-income area of Providence. The partnership conducted focus groups and interviews with residents to develop its neighborhood-improvement strategy. This collaborative approach resulted in the renovation of blighted buildings in and around crime “hot spots” and the redesign of a nine-acre park. After these improvements were made, residents’ use of the park’s bike path increased and the number of police calls to the crime hot spots significantly decreased.
- **Philadelphia.** Hunting Park is an 87-acre park in an area of Philadelphia that has high rates of obesity and crime. A collaborative effort between the community-based park advocacy group [Hunting Park United](#) and [The Food Trust](#)<sup>3</sup> (a Philadelphia-based organization that works to improve the health of children and adults, promote good nutrition, increase access to nutritious foods, and advocate for better public policy) worked to redesign parts of the park, improve local housing, involve youth in job training and education about park maintenance, and create a community garden and farmer’s market. This effort focused on helping youth gain marketable skills and experience a sense of ownership of the community-improvement efforts. The partnership also tracked whether community violence and crime in and around renovated parks were influenced by environmental changes, such as improved lighting and increased surveillance.
- **Pittsburgh.** The [Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy](#), founded in December 1996 by a group of citizens concerned with the deteriorating conditions of Pittsburgh's parks, partnered with researchers at Columbia University to collect data on park usage. From this data, the researchers were able to identify factors that promote increased use of Pittsburgh’s parks: e.g., removing barriers to park entry, promoting civic investment, connecting parks to all modes of transportation, and aligning advocates’ agendas and timelines with those of the parks’ management. The conservancy and Columbia also have collaborated on surveys of Pittsburgh residents to track whether park improvements influence residents’ perceptions and use of the city’s parks. Representatives from the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and Columbia have presented at cross-sector conferences and professional meetings, teaching others about their collaboration.
- **The State of New Jersey.** The New Jersey State Department of Health’s Office of Nutrition and Fitness led a statewide, public–private partnership that included experts

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<sup>3</sup> RWJF funds both these organizations.

from community-based obesity-prevention programs, university researchers, and others. The partnership oversaw the collection of data about violence, healthy eating, and active living, and promoted use of the data to develop policies conducive to environmental change. The partnership used input from community members to develop surveys tailored to specific communities and supported the addition of survey questions to the state’s Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System. All members of the partnership have access to the resulting enriched data.

- ***Chula Vista, Calif.*** As part of a pilot project sponsored by the Convergence Partnership,<sup>4</sup> members of a community partnership in Chula Vista received training and technical assistance in implementing neighborhood-level changes to prevent violence and promote healthy eating and active living. Chula Vista’s partnership consisted of healthy eating and active living advocates, groups focused on preventing violence, local government, law enforcement, residents, and youth.<sup>5</sup> Based on a needs assessment conducted by residents and youth, the partnership made specific recommendations to city government that were then acted upon.

In addition to these case studies, speakers at the forum described further strategies likely to increase safety and the perception of safety, levels of physical activity, and options for healthy eating:

- Business-improvement districts can provide funds for increased surveillance, clearing of vacant lots, graffiti removal and improved lighting.
- Zoning changes and code enforcement can de-concentrate low-income housing areas and promote mixed-income housing and mixed-use development, including retail and other businesses.
- Financial incentives can attract new retailers to a community. Grocery stores, especially, become sources of healthy food and can also provide entry-level jobs and job-skill training.
- Community action can help create safe routes to school.
- After-school programs and other youth engagement activities can provide safe places to play and keep young people constructively occupied.
- Zoning changes can limit liquor outlets in communities.

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<sup>4</sup> RWJF is one funder of the Convergence Partnership. Other funders are Ascension Health, The California Endowment, Kaiser Permanente, Kresge Foundation, Nemours, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention serve as critical technical advisers. PolicyLink, a national research and action institute devoted to advancing economic and social equity, serves as program director for the partnership. Prevention Institute, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to improving community health and equity through effective primary prevention, provides policy research and analysis along with strategic support. See the [website](#) for more information.

<sup>5</sup> See the Community Pilot Projects [web page](#).

## FORUM PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED THREE AREAS FOR ACTION

Based on their consideration of needs, case studies, and other successful strategies, forum participants concluded that future actions to integrate community safety and obesity prevention should focus on:

- Partnerships and linkages
- Policy and regulations
- Measurement and data collection

Please see the report for researchers for the discussion of measurement and data collection. In general, forum participants stressed that communities will need technical assistance to improve their capacity to collect and use data about violence prevention, healthy eating, and active living.

Recommendations related to the other two categories are discussed below.

### Partnerships and Linkages

Forum participants recommended four steps to strengthen the cross-disciplinary collaboration that the integration of community safety and obesity prevention will require:

1. ***Create new, interdisciplinary partnerships among experts from violence prevention, healthy eating, and active living.*** To enrich research and practice, experts from disciplines such as public health, criminal justice, psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, ethnic studies, and urban planning need to collaborate and share their expertise and field knowledge. Forum participants recommended three specific actions to support such collaboration:
  - Establishing new working groups and panels at annual professional conferences, such as those held by the American Psychological Association or the American Public Health Association. These working groups should include both researchers and practitioners.
  - Promoting, among funders, the possibility of several funders contributing to a particular initiative, to model collaboration and bring together potential grantees from different disciplines.
  - Working with the editorial boards of academic journals to support the publication of more interdisciplinary research-note that this action is best undertaken by members of the research community.
2. ***Develop a common language.*** As discussed above, experts in different fields currently define key words differently. The field needs a common language that provides clear, mutually agreed-upon definitions for its central concepts. The field

also needs to use language that can be clearly understood by members of the public, and that supports the idea that healthy and safe living is a public health issue affecting all citizens, regardless of whether they live in high-crime areas.

3. ***Use community experience and knowledge to guide interventions (and inform field research).*** Actions to prevent violence and promote healthy eating and active living are improved when local residents (including local youth) and representatives from community-based organizations contribute to their development. Participation leads to community members becoming local champions of the work, and will help sustain efforts over time. Local youth can enrich the quality of practice: they can challenge conventional thinking, provide generational insights, offer inspiration to practitioners through their energy and creativity,<sup>6</sup> and can motivate other youth to get involved.

Community members and youth also can enrich research with their experience (see the [report for researchers](#)). Briefly, community members can contribute their knowledge of community needs and local attitudes to help structure data collection, and can help disseminate research findings in their communities.

4. ***Build awareness of promising community-based programs and field-specific resources.*** No synthesis exists of promising community strategies for reducing violence and preventing obesity. Forum participants agreed that increasing knowledge about such programs should be a goal; the forum's case study presentations on collaborative work being carried out in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Providence, R.I., for example, sparked lively discussion about strategy and effective partnership building. Lessons learned from a community's successes and failures can shape future practice and guide replication efforts.

Participants recommended the creation of an online repository to house shared information in an accessible way. They suggested adding and linking this repository to existing websites of the following organizations or groups:

- National Collaborative Childhood Obesity Research
- Prevention Institute
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- CDC's Division of Violence Prevention
- CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity
- Department of Justice
- Active Living Research

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<sup>6</sup> *Best Practices User Guide: Youth Engagement—State and Community Interventions*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center on Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2010.

- Urban Networks to Increase Thriving Youth
- PolicyLink

## Policies and Regulations

Forum participants made three recommendations relating to policy and regulation.

- ***Use health impact assessments (HIAs) to inform public policy.*** HIAs provide a structured way of collecting data to gauge how a policy decision related to urban planning, governmental regulation, or land use might affect the health of the public. Coalitions of community groups and local governments could use the data in an HIA, for example, to identify the location and distribution of alcohol outlets in a community, and with this information design policies or regulations to limit such businesses near parks, playgrounds, and schools. More and more communities are using HIAs and they are proving a valuable tool in building community-wide consensus.
- ***Engage communities as equal partners in the research process to build consensus and develop a strong advocacy platform for policy change.*** Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is an approach to policy research that treats trained researchers and community members (including local youth) as fully equal partners in a research study. The experiences and knowledge of community members combine to identify policy and regulatory changes with the greatest chance of success; the scholarly training of researchers provides the methodology for confirming the changes' impact.
- ***Fund and implement place-based policies that can help prevent violence and promote healthy eating and active living.*** Forum participants discussed how an evaluation of CDC's Urban Networks to Increase Thriving Youth (UNITY) RoadMap found that cities using cross-sector partnerships to implement place-based violence-prevention strategies were effective in reducing violence.<sup>7</sup> Based on this discussion, forum participants recommended the following specific place-based policies:
  - Place-based policing, with its focus on concentrated areas of high crime
  - Business-improvement districts (BIDs), which lead to cleaner and more orderly neighborhoods
  - Zoning policies that lead to pedestrian-friendly roadways, sidewalks, green spaces, and lighting
  - Safe-street housing design, in which houses are built with front porches and stoops, to promote community interaction and encourage people to spend time outside

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<sup>7</sup> See the [Unity RoadMap](#).

- Mixed-use development that attracts new businesses to neighborhoods and supports pedestrian travel<sup>8</sup>
- Mixed-income housing, to reduce the concentration of poverty

## USEFUL WORK CAN START RIGHT NOW

Participants identified several steps to build quickly on the forum's work:

- ***CDC staff at the forum proposed forming a cross-disciplinary CDC working group on violence prevention and obesity prevention.*** Once this group is functioning within the CDC, it can begin to involve others (e.g., members of RWJF's Childhood Obesity team) in its work.
- ***Participants urged that a follow-up thought-leaders' forum be planned for the Washington area*** (to facilitate participation by representatives from the federal Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Health and Human Services, the National Institute of Justice, and other federal agencies). Planners should also consider inviting representatives from appropriate foundations, advocacy groups, research institutes, and the editorial boards of relevant academic journals.
- ***Participants identified ways in which they can, individually, support relevant cross-disciplinary work in spheres where they exert influence:***
  - Championing more expansive editorial approaches within discipline-specific journals (including the creation of special issues that address violence prevention, healthy eating, and active living to improve community health)
  - Developing research approaches that tap expertise across sectors and engage community members and youth
  - Advocating for cross-sector programming at professional annual meetings
  - Supporting and developing funding initiatives that mandate multi-disciplinary partnerships and/or give priority to grantees who exhibit readiness and commitment to work across the fields of violence prevention and obesity prevention

## CONCLUSION

Building a field of practice and research that integrates work on community safety with work on obesity prevention is a noble goal. Some necessary elements are in place: early models of cross-sectoral collaboration, identified strategies to reduce crime and the perception of crime, and other strategies that support more active living and the availability of healthy food.

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<sup>8</sup> See [article](#) about Christopher Browning.

Fully developing the field, however, requires further attention to the partners who should be involved, the data that should be collected, the research that should be conducted, and the policies and regulations necessary to support the work. The RWJF thought-leaders forum, *The Role of Community Safety in Obesity Prevention: Exploring How Exposure to Crime and Violence Impact Physical Activity and Healthy Eating*, provided an opportunity for experts in many disciplines to share their perspectives on the specific actions that should be taken in each of these areas.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Forum Participants

*(Positions and affiliations current at the time of the forum)*

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## APPENDIX 2

### Organizational Biographies

#### ***Active Living by Design***

*Active Living by Design* (August 2001 to February 2010) was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as a core program in its Active Living portfolio, which also included *Active Living Research*, *Leadership for Healthy Communities*, Active Living Network, and the *Active Living Resource Center*. *Active Living by Design* created community-led change by working with local and national partners to build a culture of active living and healthy eating. The program's national program office was at the North Carolina Institute for Public Health at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health in Chapel Hill, N.C. Its vision was healthy communities where routine physical activity and healthy eating are accessible, easy and affordable to everyone. Since the end of *Active Living by Design*, the program's management has become the national program office for Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* grant program. See [Program Results](#) on *Active Living by Design* for more information. See [Progress Report](#) for more information on *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities*.

#### ***Active Living Research***

*Active Living Research* (August 2000 to present) is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) that is part of its Active Living Portfolio (also including *Active Living by Design*, *Leadership for Healthy Communities*, Active Living Network, and the *Active Living Resource Center*). It has managed \$24 million in 221 research grants that examine how environments and policies impact physical activity and aims to identify promising approaches for preventing childhood obesity, especially among ethnic minorities and children living in low-income communities. At the [annual conference](#), researchers, policy-makers, and funders come together to share findings and learn about the latest thinking and research methods related to [active living](#) among children and families. The program supports using sound [scientific research](#) to impact public policy and serve as a [resource](#) for policy-makers and other researchers. See [Program Results](#) for more information.

#### ***Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity in the National Center for Chronic Disease Control and Prevention***

CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity focuses on improving communities to support healthy eating and active living. The division provides support (i.e., program implementation and evaluation, technical assistance, training, surveillance and applied research, translation and dissemination, and partnership development) to

states, communities, and national partners to implement policy, system, and environmental strategies that will improve dietary quality, increase physical activity, and reduce obesity across multiple settings—such as child care facilities, workplaces, hospitals and medical care facilities, schools, and communities.

### ***Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health in the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion***

The mission at the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion is to lead efforts that promote health and well-being through prevention and control of chronic diseases. The Division of Adolescent and School Health, housed within the national center, promotes the health and well-being of children and adolescents to enable them to become healthy and productive adults. To achieve its mission, the Division of Adolescent and School Health works to: (1) collect and report data on youth health risk behaviors and school-based health policies and programs; (2) expand the knowledge base to understand and address critical health risk behaviors among youth; (3) review research findings, identify effective policies and programs, and develop guidelines and implementation tools for schools to promote health among young people; and (4) provide funding and assistance to education and health agencies and national organizations to plan, implement, and evaluate effective school health policies and programs.

### ***Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Violence Prevention in the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control***

In 1992 the CDC established the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control as the lead federal organization for violence prevention. The Division of Violence Prevention is one of three divisions within the center. Its mission is to create a society where people can live to their full potential by preventing violence and reducing its consequences. The division is committed to stopping violence through primary prevention, and its work involves monitoring violence-related injuries; conducting research on the factors that put people at risk or protect them from violence; creating and evaluating the effectiveness of violence prevention programs; helping state and local partners plan, implement, and evaluate prevention programs; and conducting research on the effective adoption and dissemination of prevention strategies.

### ***Columbia University: Mailman School of Public Health***

The Mailman School addresses health challenges through a broad lens, creating public health programs that can serve as models and be replicated across the country and around the world in order to reach large numbers of people with life-saving interventions. Located in Washington Heights in Northern Manhattan, the Mailman School has been a partner in the community for decades. The school has embraced its location as an

opportunity to plunge into every aspect of urban healthcare. The school works with diverse populations throughout New York City’s five boroughs on HIV/AIDS education, prevention, and care; smoking cessation initiatives; school-based clinics; and programs to stem the growing asthma epidemic in urban environments.

### **CureViolence**

CureViolence is the new name for the national expansion of CeaseFire, a Chicago-based violence prevention program. It is administered by the Chicago Project for Violence Prevention (CPVP), which is located at the University of Illinois’ School of Public Health. CureViolence is an interdisciplinary public health approach to violence prevention. The program’s thesis is that violence is a learned behavior that can be prevented using disease-control methods. CureViolence works to interrupt the cycle of violence and to change norms about behavior. Some program elements focus on risky activities by a small number of carefully selected members of the community with a high chance of either “being shot or being a shooter” in the immediate future. The job of outreach workers is to mentor and counsel them, assess their needs, and connect them with a broad range of services. CureViolence is a data-driven model—through a combination of statistical information and street knowledge, program staff members identify where to concentrate their efforts, focus their resources, and intervene in violence. This data guides them to the communities most impacted. It provides a picture of those individuals at the highest risk for violence. And, most importantly, it shows staff members how they can intervene.

### **Harvard University Department of Health Policy and Management**

The Department of Health Policy and Management is committed to training and inspiring the next generation of health care leaders. Its students and faculty seek to make the world a better place by improving health and health care. The department works on problems ranging from making the delivery of care safer and more efficient, to expanding health insurance coverage and eliminating disparities, to designing and improving the performance of entire health systems. Its educational programs focus on helping students develop the critical thinking and applied problem-solving skills needed to address a wide variety of public health challenges. All of its students have significant prior work experience and they enrich the classroom with their insights and perspectives.

### **Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities**

A national program of RWJF, *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* (December 2007 to December 2013) has a primary goal of implementing systems, policy, and environmental change strategies that can increase opportunities for physical activity and improve access to affordable healthy foods for children and families across the United States. The program places special emphasis on reaching children who are at highest risk for obesity

on the basis of race/ethnicity, income, and geographic location. On December 2, 2008, the Foundation announced grants to nine leading communities sites (Chicago; Columbia, Mo; Louisville, Ky.; Seattle; Somerville, Mass.; Washington; and Baldwin Park, Central Valley, and Oakland, Calif.). Forty additional communities received grants in December 2009.

### ***Hunting Park United***

**Hunting Park United** was formed as part of a major revitalization of a large park in the center of the distressed North Philadelphia neighborhood of Hunting Park. The main mission is to serve as stewards of Hunting Park, the 87-acre park for which the neighborhood is named. Staff has recently expanded its scope of work to include youth environmental stewardship development; food and nutrition advocacy and action; the repurposing of the built environment to create better opportunities for physical fitness and active living; and violence prevention through participatory community engagement, workforce development, and entrepreneurial activities.

### ***Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Department of Health Policy and Management, Center for Injury Research and Policy***

The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health was founded in 1916, and is the number one ranked school of public health in the world. The mission of the school's Department of Health Policy and Management is to advance the public's health through the development, implementation, and evaluation of effective health and social policies. The Johns Hopkins Center for Injury Research and Policy, housed within the department, is one of the 11 Injury Control Research Centers currently receiving core funding from the CDC. The center was created in 1987 and its mission is to address all phases of injury control within its theme of "Science Informing Program and Policy."

### ***Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)***

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (**LISC**) is dedicated to helping nonprofit community development organizations transform distressed neighborhoods into healthy and sustainable communities—good places to work, do business, and raise children. LISC mobilizes corporate, government, and philanthropic support to provide local community developers with financial, policy, and technical assistance delivered through both national programs and through staff members who are based in every city and many of the rural areas where our partners are working. LISC staff helps identify priorities and challenges, delivering the most appropriate support in areas including: expanding investment in housing and other real estate; increasing family income and wealth; stimulating economic development; improving access to quality education; and supporting healthy environments and lifestyles.

### ***Olneyville Housing Corporation***

The [Olneyville Housing Corporation](#) is a comprehensive, neighborhood-based community-development corporation that has worked since 1988 to revitalize the Olneyville section of Providence, R.I., through the renovation and development of housing opportunities for low-income residents of the neighborhood. While Olneyville Housing Corporation's primary function is to facilitate the creation and revitalization of affordable housing, the organization takes a holistic approach to community strengthening which includes economic development, individual wealth-building, and collaboration with residents and similarly charged organizations with the goal of helping Olneyville residents to build wealth and strengthen their community bonds.

### ***Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy***

[Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy](#) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life for the people of Pittsburgh by restoring the park system to excellence in partnership with the city. Work is conducted primarily in the four regional parks of Pittsburgh, Pa.: [Frick Park](#), [Schenley Park](#), [Highland Park](#), and [Riverview Park](#), although the Conservancy works in other city parks as resources permit. The Conservancy was founded in 1996 by Meg Cheever, who modeled it on other private/public partnerships in Louisville, Ky.; New York City; and Buffalo, N.Y. It has a constituency of more than 8,000 members.

### ***Prevention Institute***

[Prevention Institute](#) was founded in 1997 to serve as a focal point for primary prevention practice—promoting policies, organizational practices, and collaborative efforts that improve health and quality of life. As a national nonprofit organization, the institute is committed to preventing illness and injury, to fostering health and social equity, and to building momentum for community prevention as an integral component of a quality health system. Prevention Institute synthesizes research and practice; develops prevention tools and frameworks; helps design and guide interdisciplinary partnerships; and conducts training and strategic consultation with government, foundations, and community-based organizations nationwide and internationally.

### ***Safe Routes to School National Partnership***

Launched in August 2005, the [Safe Routes to School National Partnership](#) is a fast-growing network of hundreds of organizations, government agencies, and professional groups working to set goals, share best practices, leverage infrastructure and program funding, and advance policy change to help agencies that implement Safe Routes to School programs. The partnership's mission is to advocate for safe walking and bicycling to and from schools, and in daily life, to improve the health and well-being of America's children and to foster the creation of livable, sustainable communities.

## ***ShapingNJ***

**ShapingNJ** is located in the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, the Office of Nutrition & Fitness. The office seeks to promote healthier, more active communities and reduce and prevent obesity in New Jersey. The office coordinates the Fruit and Veggies More Matters Program, the New Jersey Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, and several other initiatives. One of the primary areas of focus of the office is to develop and coordinate ShapingNJ, the statewide, public–private partnership for nutrition, physical activity, and obesity prevention. The goal of this partnership is to prevent obesity and improve the health of populations that are at risk for poor health outcomes in New Jersey by making “the healthy choice, the easy choice.”

## ***Shawnee Neighborhood Association***

The **Shawnee Neighborhood Association** is a non-profit corporation committed to developing and supporting neighborhood programs, services, businesses and activities that empower and improve the quality of life for all residents in the neighborhood. As part of the “Healthy Zone” initiative in Louisville, Ky., the project team is working closely with youth and local businesses to encourage neighborhood residents to walk to their local grocery stores and access spaces for recreation and activity. The project promotes safety with an “eyes-on-the-street” approach, decreasing visual obstructions to the street by limiting alcohol advertisements in Shawnee neighborhood stores, increasing lighting, and decreasing graffiti and neighborhood blight.

## ***Temple University Department of Criminal Justice***

Temple University’s Department of Criminal Justice consists of an eclectic body of scholars committed to deepening the understanding of crime, governance, and social justice. Faculty and student research emphasizes interdisciplinary and multi-method inquiries that make a difference to policy and practice. Faculty pursue cutting-edge research and innovation that draws from and extends many strands of social science, including criminology and criminal justice, geography, history, experimental psychology, social psychology, social work, sociology, and social ecology. Faculty and students explore critical issues in Philadelphia and across the United States in the context of global developments and concerns.

## ***The California Endowment***

**The California Endowment** is a private, statewide health foundation that was created in 1996 as a result of Blue Cross of California’s creation of WellPoint Health Networks, a for-profit corporation. This conversion created the endowment because the value of Blue Cross had to remain in the nonprofit sector. The California Endowment's mission is to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and

communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians.

### ***The Food Trust***

The Food Trust strives to make healthy food available to all and helps to expand the supply of food resources available to low-income communities by advocating policies that increase the availability of fresh food in communities, creating model programs, undertaking research studies on food disparities, and disseminating findings to government officials and policy-makers. The Food Trust was a partner in creating the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative, the nation's first statewide program to address the lack of access to healthy food in low-income neighborhoods. With RWJF funding, the Food Trust is working with partners in Illinois, Louisiana, and New Jersey to explore state-level solutions to the problem of poor food access.

### ***University of Alabama–Birmingham School of Public Health***

The challenges for the future of public health find an ideal home at the University of Alabama (UAB) School of Public Health. The interests of faculty and staff extend from community organization in the Black Belt regions of rural Alabama to understanding the dynamics of the HIV epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa. Few universities offer the almost limitless interdisciplinary collaborative atmosphere available to students at the UAB School of Public Health. Located in the heart of the largest academic health center in the Southeast, the UAB School of Public Health is embracing these challenges in Alabama and around the world, building the next generation of bold professionals leading innovation in public health.

### ***University of Pennsylvania Department of Criminology***

The Department of Criminology at the University of Pennsylvania includes the study of a wide range of victims and actors with research from a host of related disciplines, including public health, statistics, psychology, epidemiology, sociology, law, and the neurosciences. The University of Pennsylvania has the longest continuous program of research and teaching in criminology of any American university, with a rich history, strong tradition, and distinguished group of alumni. Today, Penn offers an interdisciplinary undergraduate major in criminology, a unique professional master of science in criminology, and a PhD program for a select group of students.