

It was one WHAM of a weekend

The Women's Health Activist Movement Global (WHAMglobal) connected with hundreds of women and girls on June 8 and 9 with two public events on the theme of "Birthing A Movement."

WHAMglobal's mission is to identify the root causes of maternal mortality and better understand how to support and care for moms through the entirety of their care. At the William Pitt Union in Oakland on June 8, WHAMglobal – along with several key partners -- hosted an evening of art and activism, including a reception and pop-up exhibit featuring 11 local feminist artists celebrating pregnancy and motherhood.

More than 100 guests visited the displays that included paintings, quilts, and individual cards with freshwater pearls representing women who have died due to complications from childbirth. Nearly all the artists were on hand to engage with guests, who shared their own childbirth experiences on video. Pitt Public Health shared a documentary about menstrual practices and displacement in Far-West Nepal, as well as a visual storytelling experience titled "Your Stories, Period," a

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Debra L. Caplan, MPA; Patricia L. Siger ; and Karen Wolk Feinstein, PhD at *Birthing A Movement* on Saturday, June 8.

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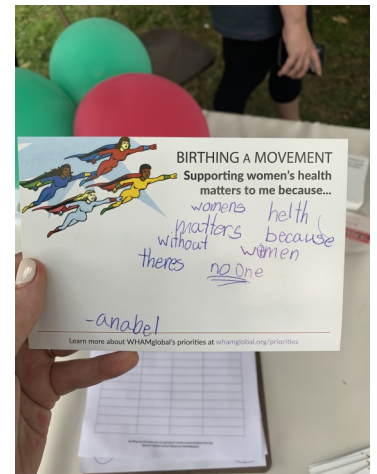
collection of text-based and illustrated stories about living without access to menstrual products. AHN Women provided an interactive exhibit, “All of Her. All of Her Life,” showcasing 365 days of women’s health experiences at Allegheny Health Network.

On June 9, WHAMglobal engaged with the nearly 4,000 attendees of the annual Summer Reading Extravaganza outside of the main Carnegie Library in Oakland. WHAM’s activity and information tent offered painting for kids, visually appealing books about a growing family, pregnancy, motherhood, and youth activism. Staff signed up 200 people to receive more information, and 57 women and girls completed story cards completing the sentence “Supporting women’s health matters to me because... .”

As momentum continues to grow, WHAMglobal is looking forward toward leveraging its growing networks of advocates both locally and nationally to further its regional and national policy agenda.



(top) Two paintings from Natalie Hays Stewart; (left) Jessica Burke, PhD, Pitt Public Health participates in interactive art by Elizabeth Myers Castonguay, MFA; (right) William Pitt Union.



(left) Families talk to WHAMglobal staff at the Summer Reading Extravaganza; (top middle) Families displaying their advocacy cards; (bottom middle) the Birthing A Movement tent; (right) “Women’s health matters because without women, there’s no one.”

Maternal Health-Focused Patient Safety Fellowship Kicks Off

Where is the safest and most comprehensive perinatal program in Pennsylvania? How are maternal health practitioners factoring “implementation science” into their programs? On June 4, this summer’s Patient Safety Fellowship kicked off with the unique opportunity to combine Jewish Healthcare Foundation’s signature quality improvement methodology (Perfecting Patient CareSM) with a newly integrated focus on maternal health. Fellows will work alongside five members of the newly formed



Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative (PA PQC) to examine how health systems throughout the commonwealth are improving maternal health outcomes.

The diverse cohort of 30 Patient Safety Fellows includes representatives from nine colleges in the region and 17 disciplines. They are exploring how to improve maternal health outcomes, while learning and applying models for quality improvement and implementation science to identify what sets them apart from their peers. Participants are AHN West Penn Hospital, Geisinger Health System in Danville, Moses Taylor Hospital in Scranton, Penn Medicine Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, and UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital.



Karen Feinstein leads a panel during a Patient Safety Fellowship session with a representative from each participating PA PQC site. In person: Nancy Cupps, MSN, UPMC; and Deborah McDonald, RN, Allegheny Health Network; On screen: Elissa Concini, MSN, Geisinger Health System; Sindhu Srinivas, MD, the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania; and Brian Wilcox, MD, Moses Taylor Hospital.

Health implementation science was first introduced to the Patient Safety Fellowship in 2018. It allows quality improvement work to consider its broader context -- examining factors such as policies and incentives, organizational culture and structure, individual values and beliefs, and the planning, execution, and evaluation of projects.

From late June throughout early July, the fellows are interviewing practitioners at each of the five hospitals about their perinatal care and their quality improvement projects. They will analyze their

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qualitative and the submitted quantitative data to identify which of the five hospitals has the most comprehensive quality improvement approach. That participant will receive the 2019 Patient Safety Award for Perinatal Care at the fellows' final meeting on July 30.

The fellows have been enthusiastic in their engagement and appreciation for the opportunity. "As one with no prior experience in quality improvement or implementation science. I've found the fellowship to be absolutely invaluable," said Elizabeth Balskus, a 2019 fellow and PhD student in healthcare ethics at Duquesne University. "It's been great to building upon my research skills."

Participating hospitals were selected based on their quality improvement projects, including efforts to address some of the following: severe hypertension, hemorrhage, depression, social determinants of health, substance use disorders, and opioid-exposed newborns. The award was open to all PA PQC members.



Fellows participate in brainstorming and collaborative learning exercises as part of the Patient Safety Fellowship.

AIDS Free Pittsburgh, Partners Celebrate Pride with Party + Biomedical Awareness

While the number of documented HIV infections in Allegheny County has declined over the past two years, the rate of infection reported among black men who have sex with men (MSM, in clinic parlance) is alarming high compared with the overall population.

With that in mind, AIDS Free Pittsburgh used the opening weekend of 2019 Pride to host a free, festive street party at East Liberty's Ace Hotel, where more than 600 people enjoyed live music and performances, danced into the wee hours, and took advantage of free healthcare screenings.

AIDS Free Pittsburgh is a coalition of regional



Leikeli47 performs at *Too Hot for July* at the Ace Hotel on June 6.

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stakeholders to support and improve the care of people living with HIV/AIDS, as well as of HIV-free people in high-risk communities. The Jewish Healthcare Foundation is a founding member.

June 6 was the AIDS Free Pittsburgh's annual biomedical awareness event, sponsored in partnership with several LGBTQ organizations. This year they included [SisTersPGH](#), an advocacy and housing support organization for transgender/nonbinary people, and Honcho, which organizes monthly dance parties. Another key sponsor was [True T PGH](#), which since 2012 has organized balls (part of the house-ballroom scene, which can include drag shows and voguing competitions) to celebrate the LGBTQ community and raise money for services and support to marginalized people of color within the community.

Named *Too Hot for July*, the party included performances by RCA recording artist Leikeli47 and singer moon baby. The DJs for the event were DJs Grace, HUNY, and New Word Disorder. A vogue dance battle capped the evening with high energy and positivity – and for the winner, a trophy and \$350 prize.

But the real win for AIDS Free Pittsburgh was extending its reach. More than twice as many people attended the event as last year, and 40 individuals were screened for HIV and other STIs. Central Outreach Wellness Center and Planned Parenthood of Western PA conducted the screenings, and along with other community healthcare providers shared information in advancements in HIV prevention and treatment and answered other health and wellness questions in an upbeat, welcoming setting.

The party, free to the public, was sponsored by Coordinated Care Network, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and Allegheny Health Network, the University of Pittsburgh's HIV Prevention Program, Pitt Men's Study, Clinical & Translational Science Institute's All of Us Pennsylvania, Prevention Point Pittsburgh, and Pittsburgh AIDS Center for Treatment.



(left) The vogue dance battle at *Too Hot for July*; (right) attendees enjoy the atmosphere at the Ace Hotel.

Teen Mental Health Summit Advances National “Policy Playbook” Effort

JHF, AcademyHealth and ACT for Health took a big step forward June 5 to develop a “policy playbook” to mobilize a national effort around teen mental health.

The National Summit for Policy and Action on Teen Mental Health Crises in Washington, D.C. brought together more than 50 stakeholders from across the nation to develop a crisis safety net from the bottom up, with national policy support from at the top. JHF President and CEO Karen Feinstein, AcademyHealth Lisa Simpson, and ACT for Health President and CEO Richard Wittenberg provided an overview of the mental health struggles confronting American teens. Suicide is on the rise, as is self-injury, problematic drug use, and violent crime.



Karen Feinstein presents at the National Summit for Policy and Action on Teen Mental Health Crises.

Practitioners, policy analysts, researchers, educators, and other stakeholders prioritized policy recommendations based on their effectiveness and feasibility and developed advocacy strategies for the high-priority items. Policy recommendations include best-practice models of care; the application of information and communication technology; workforce development; performance improvement; financing and funding; teen-centeredness and family engagement strategies; and research and evaluation.

As a next step, AcademyHealth will draft a policy playbook by the end of the summer. Meanwhile, JHF is working from the bottom up via the 15217 initiative, a community-wide effort which will provide a neighborhood crisis safety net and help build teens’ emotional resilience.

JHF, Partners Share Best Practices on Evaluations



Karen Feinstein presents at the Grantmakers in Health Conference.

Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) joined with fellow healthcare foundations last month to share best practices on evaluations at the annual at Grantmakers in Health conference in Seattle.

During the June 12-14 gathering, JHF President and CEO Karen Feinstein and Mara Leff, the Foundation’s Director of Innovation, presented “Learning from Each Other: Getting Evaluations of Complex Health Interventions Right.” Joining them on the panel were Terry Fulmer, president of the older adult-focused John A. Hartford Foundation, and Russell Johnson, president and CEO of Montgomery County, Pa.’s HealthSpark Foundation.

The panelists discussed the value of involving implementers and evaluators in developing change models, as well as the limitations of

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scientific evaluation methods that ignore human context in improvement projects, and rigid adherence to prospective modeling that prevents midcourse corrections.

Participants learned about recent collective design process recommendations for foundation-funded demonstrations, and panelists engaged attendees in discussing solutions. At the end of the session, attendees were provided access to a resource developed by JHF called “Getting Evaluations of Complex Health Interventions Right: A Sample Playbook for Seeding Conversations.”

The three-day GIH conference, titled “Ideas, Innovations, and Impact,” was attended by nearly 700 individuals. JHF hosted a dinner with fellow Jewish healthcare “conversion” foundations, sharing program news and shared priorities, and discussing opportunities for collaboration. Guests included leadership and staff from Chicago’s Michael Reese Health Trust, Cleveland’s Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation, and the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey.



JHF’s Feinstein was president of Grantmakers in Health for three years during a period when many hospitals were sold, and the value of their assets “converted” into grant-making foundations.

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation hosted dinner during the conference.



Pittsburgh’s Collaborative Approach Inspires Charlotte, N.C. Visitors

Pittsburgh’s philanthropic leadership and spirit of collaboration is worth as much attention as its storied sports teams. That’s why delegations from several U.S. cities visit each year.

Nearly 150 civic and business leaders from the Tar Heel State spent June 12-14 in Pittsburgh. Under the auspices of the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance – chaired by an executive of the four-state healthcare network Novant Health – they met with elected officials, business leaders and JHF’s own director of government grants and policy, Robert Ferguson.

Ferguson joined Allegheny Health Network President and CEO Cynthia Hundorfean, The Heinz

Endowments’ Grant Oliphant, and The Pittsburgh Foundation’s Lisa Schroeder on a panel to share examples of the region’s collaborative successes -- as well as its challenges around inequities.



Robert Ferguson, MPH, represents the Jewish Healthcare Foundation during a forum for the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance.

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(L to R) Lisa Schroeder, The Pittsburgh Foundation, Grant Oliphant, The Heinz Endowments, Cynthia Hundorfean, Allegheny Health Network, and Robert Ferguson, Jewish Healthcare Foundation.

Ferguson described JHF's investment in reducing maternal mortality, noting that three times as many American mothers die before, during, or after childbirth as those in other developed countries. The statistics are even more dire for black women, who are three times more likely than their white counterparts not to survive childbirth. Wrap-around support services for both moms and babies -- from pre-conception to successful attachment after birth -- are key to ensuring a strong family unit.

He shared information about JHF's work with community health workers, particularly the movement toward preventative models around social determinants of health. That includes collaborating with patient-centered medical homes to identify

challenges patients may be facing around housing, food insecurity and other concerns.

Ferguson also described how the Foundation is helping to share tools with young Pittsburghers to offer peer support and advocate for a safety net of behavioral health services.

PRHI Shares Quality Improvement Model for I/DD Groups at Summit

Value-based reimbursement is creating challenges in developmental and behavioral health just as it has for physical health care providers.

Intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) organizations are looking to make a smooth transition to this different payment structure.

Value-based payment typically refers to symptom reduction, functional improvement, and overall wellness. Current reimbursements in the behavioral health sector have been based on number of visits, level of acuity, diagnosis, and service types -- without requiring outcomes data. Payers will now begin to reimburse based on outcomes and value, which equates to reduced costs from their perspective. I/DD organizations will need to get on board.



Bruce Block, MD, Chief Learning and Medical Informatics Officer, PRHI; Carli Friedman, Director of Research, The Council on Quality and Leadership; and Patrick Maynard, PhD, CEO & President, I Am Boundless, Inc. at the 2019 I/DD Executive Summit.

Navigating this changing marketplace was the focus of the June 3 I/DD executive summit in New Orleans, attended by C-suite and director-level executives. The summit opened the four-day OPEN

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MINDS Strategy & Innovation Institute, which explores ways to developing innovative collaborations and productive partnerships among payers, health systems, and care management organizations.

Dr. Bruce Block, Chief Learning and Medical Informatics Officer at the Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative (PRHI), provided a blueprint of what quality improvement could look like when embedded in an organization. He emphasized the importance of collecting and using data to identify improvement opportunities for outcomes. While I/DD organizations regularly collect utilization data, few have adopted outcome measures that could support value-based payment. Successfully embedding quality improvement, however, would require leadership buy-in, a focus on organizational and client concerns, and a well-supported QI infrastructure.

The good news: no I/DD organization need start from scratch. Block stressed that PRHI offers a range of resources and learning services to help in responding to this new demand.

Dementia Friends Press State Lawmakers for Action During Alzheimer's Advocacy Day

Senior Quality Improvement Specialists and Dementia Friends Pennsylvania Statewide Coordinators Stacie Bonenberger and Anneliese Perry expanded their advocacy efforts to Harrisburg on June 3 as part of Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month. Organized by AIM (Alzheimer's Impact Movement), the advocacy arm of the Alzheimer's Association, Bonenberger and Perry were part of a 67-person contingent that spent the day meeting with legislators and making two specific requests for action. Bonenberger met with Senator Jay Costa and Kate McMullen, the director of constituent services for Representative Frank Dermody, while Perry sat down with Senator Pam Iovino and Representative Valerie Gaydos.



Bonenberger and Perry asked the legislators to update the Older Adult Protective Services Act. This would help protect Pennsylvanians from abuse and financial exploitation by supporting a final bill that would address regulations governing care provider hiring practices, which were ruled unconstitutional in 2015.

In addition, they asked legislators to move forward with Senate Bill 277/House Bill 51, which would allow timely access to home and community-based services for those living with dementia and the people who care for them. Specifically, an individual would be deemed "eligible" for Medicaid benefits when applying for in-home care, thus allowing them to receive services while paperwork is

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processed. This would prevent unnecessary and costly institutionalization of individuals who want to remain in their home and receive daily living care. (UPDATE: As of June 18, the Senate Health and Human Services Committee unanimously voted out Senate Bill 277.)

From the House and Senate floors, Bonenberger and Perry also request that legislators share dementia awareness information throughout their district offices and on social media.

Dementia Friends Pennsylvania will continue its advocacy in Harrisburg through information sessions and Dementia Friends Champion Training for members of the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias State Plan Task Force, and for the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.



Joni Shenck, Alzheimer's Association of Greater PA Chapter, Representative Valerie Gaydos, and Anneliese Perry.

JHF Shares Geriatric-Friendly Health Practice Guidance to NRHI

The U.S. healthcare system is not ready for the “silver tsunami” — the coming tide of elderly patients. JHF Chief Program and Chief Operating Officer Nancy Zionts addressed this issue during a national webinar presented to members of the Network for Regional Healthcare Improvement (NRHI) on June 20.

“An influx of aging baby boomers will drastically shift the healthcare landscape,” Zionts said. “Just as the way we work, the way we experience music, TV and travel has changed over the years, so too is what we will want and need from health care.”

Webinar attendees acknowledged that while most of their primary care practices have seen a surge in senior patients, few have specialized staff or training in place to serve them. Zionts challenged the audience to rethink how to deliver skilled care. Solely training more geriatricians will not keep pace with demand. (Despite the high job satisfaction geriatricians report, few medical students are choosing the specialty.) Instead, Zionts emphasized the importance of forming multi-disciplinary teams at the primary care level. These should include social workers, pharmacists, and behavioral health and dementia specialists to assist the doctors and nurses in meeting the aging patient's complex needs, as well as community partners.

Key domains of geriatric-friendly primary care include communication, environment of care, assessments and screening, medication and pharmacy, care coordination, goals of care, advance care planning, and family and caregiver involvement. A healthcare team that establishes relationships with patients and family caregivers will be better able to understand and meet their changing needs. Zionts also referred participants to the John A. Hartford Foundation, which offers toolkits and other resources specifically around needs of older adults.

JHF leads information sessions about care for older adults, nursing-home residents

Over the past six years, Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) has served as the lead education partner to improve the quality of care and reduce avoidable hospitalizations among Pennsylvania's long-stay nursing home residents. Nancy Zions, JHF's Chief Operating and Chief Program Officer led webinars on June 11 and 13 for partners in the initiative called RAVEN – Reduce Avoidable Hospitalizations using Evidence-based interventions for Nursing Facility Residents. Zions outlined how the new Community HealthChoices Managed Long-Term Services and Supports initiative will affect continuity of care for residents in skilled nursing facilities.

Zions shared resources available on Tomorrow's HealthCare™ that will continue to provide RAVEN facilities with the most up-to-date information to assist them as the program continues to roll out across the Keystone State.

On June 1, advocates in aging, housing, and LGBTQ+ rights met in Green Tree with more than 100 older members of Allegheny County's LGBTQ+ community to better understand the housing opportunities and challenges they face. Led by AARP Pennsylvania, the PERSAD Center and Western Pennsylvania SAGE, the day-long gathering included a breakout session led by Zions, joined by leaders from the National LGBT Housing Initiative and ACTION-Housing. In another session, Zions also helped outline the importance of understanding and completing various end-of-life and advance-care planning tools. JHF Program Associate Rachel Goldberger co-facilitated a breakout session on advocacy for people age 50+ with members of Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh members, and members of the legislative staffs of U.S. Sen. Bob Casey and state Rep. Dan Frankel. Opportunities to continue the housing conversation will be hosted on JHF's Virtual Senior Academy platform.

The United Way's Bob Nelkin... It will never be goodbye!

Many of us have enjoyed collaborating with Bob Nelkin over the course of our varied careers. Whether it was working on the Home Rule Amendment, the Youth Crime Prevention Council, or the Homeless Task Force, one thing is for sure — his passion for social reform knows no bounds. He turned the United Way of Allegheny County (now United Way of Southwestern PA) into one of the most successful organizations of its kind in the country.

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation will be forever grateful to Bob for his years of board service. The positive ripples that Bob has sent out across the Pittsburgh region are immeasurable, but one example is perhaps representative: following one of the thousands of presentations Bob made in the community over the years, he connected with a high school student worried about the mental health concerns of fellow teens in her Orthodox community.

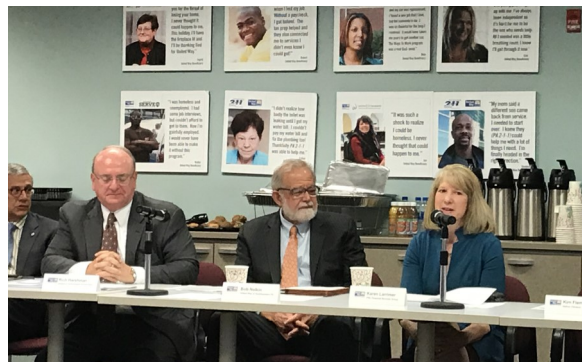


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“I know just the place for you!”

Bob invited her to our Adolescent Behavioral Health Kickoff in 2018 and the rest, as they say, is history. This young woman is now a leader among our youth advocates and among the youth in her community.

Thank you, Bob, for all that you’ve done — and will continue to do, just by being you. Happy retirement!



Karen Hacker Takes Pittsburgh Experience to CDC

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation says farewell and thank you to Dr. Karen Hacker, who is taking her intensely local experience in Pittsburgh and Boston to the national level.

Hacker this month joins the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as the director of chronic disease prevention and health promotion.

Since taking over the Allegheny County Health Department in 2013, Hacker modernized operations, hiring enforcement staff as well as leaders with diverse, expansive expertise, and earning the department national accreditation. Under her leadership, enforcement hearings around industrial and environmental pollution as well as housing and restaurant violations increased dramatically. Previously, Hacker taught at Harvard Medical School and School of Public Health while directing a community research organization within the Cambridge Health Alliance.



Buhl Foundation Vice President Diana Bucco, Karen Hacker, and JHF’s Karen Feinstein in the Japanese Garden in the QI²T Center.

JHF Welcomes Former Journalist to Communications Team

Bonnie Pfister joined JHF as health writer/communications specialist in June. She assumes editorship of the monthly Window newsletter, and will be assisting with writing, editing and other needs around the Liftoff PGH 2020 conference as well as in support of WHAMglobal, and the adolescent behavioral health initiative.

Pfister has long been interested and engaged in issues around women’s access to health care, particularly reproductive health and wellness. She worked with another WHAM – the activist Women’s Health Action & Mobilization – in New York City, and later created content for the launch of



the mobile birth control concierge Bedsider.org for the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

A journalist for more than a dozen years, Pfister specialized in economic and business issues as a staffer for The Associated Press, Hearst Newspapers and daily and weekly publications in New York City and Texas, reporting frequently from the border and throughout Mexico. A native of McKees Rocks, she gum-banded back to the region in 2006 for a stint the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* before joining the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. There she created and managed multi-media content for its website supporting the 2009 G-20 Pittsburgh Summit, as well as for its award-winning digital workforce initiative and job search engine ImaginePittsburgh.com.

Pfister earned a dual Magazine Journalism and International Relations degree from Syracuse University, and speaks Spanish and French.



Gathering at the at the Duquesne Club on the evening before the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions Leadership Summit were: Craig Brammer, CEO of the Cincinnati-based Health Collaborative and The Network for Regional Healthcare Improvement (NRHI); Karen Feinstein; Elizabeth Mitchell, President and CEO of San Francisco's Pacific Business Group On Health; and Daniel Wolfson, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Philadelphia-based ABIM Foundation.

JHF Staff Profiles: Hanifa Nakiryowa, Global Health Associate

If you want to learn about resilience, meet Hanifa Nakiryowa.

Even as a child, Hanifa challenged the norms in a society where women are expected to be subservient to the men in their lives. She earned a bachelor's degree in education at Makerere University in her hometown of Kampala, Uganda as well as a master's in economics at Kenya's University of Nairobi.

She was raising two children while teaching at a local university and had just started a contract as a researcher for UNICEF program to protect and strengthen the rights of women and girls.

Then her life changed in an instant. In 2011, her ex-husband hired a man to throw acid in her face – an extreme but not-unheard-of tactic used by



some men in that region to maim and stigmatize women who step outside traditional roles. She was hospitalized for more than a year and has endured 18 surgeries to repair her face and body, and the emotional and physical pain continues.

But that incident did not define her. Instead, an activist was born. By 2012 she had founded the Centre for Rehabilitation of Survivors of Acid and Burns Violence. While also working with an orphanage for children of women injured in acid attacks, she met a visiting scholar: Louis A. Picard, director of the University of Pittsburgh's African Studies Program. In 2015, Hanifa and her daughters turned the page on a new chapter of their lives half a world away. She earned a master's degree in International Development from Pitt's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs and joined the Jewish Healthcare Foundation as a Global Health Associate.

Given the deeply patriarchal nature of Ugandan society, how did you come to pursue such a high level of education and a career?

(Laughing) It was because of my father – although it was far from his ideal scenario. He was a well-known religious figure in our community who had the bad luck to have his firstborn (me) and second-born kids are girls. To maintain the status befitting his role – and against the advice of his family – he sent us not only through elementary school but also on to college, saying, 'If I don't educate my daughters, I might not have any children to educate at all. And then what kind of man am I?' I knew that in time he might give in to his family's wishes, so I worked very hard and won scholarships that allowed me to keep going even if he were to change his mind.

Why did you become an activist?

I have always been passionate about women's rights. After surviving years of domestic abuse and then the acid attack, I wanted to advocate for women in Uganda who were afraid.

What excites you most about JHF's work?

The advocacy. As part of the Women's Health Activist Movement Global (WHAMglobal), I got to research how the Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC) operates in Pennsylvania. We found that other states do a far better job of enrolling and maintaining participation in the program. We are trying [to reinvigorate and reimagine WIC](#) to improve maternal health outcomes across the state.

How does your work here differ from what you could do in Uganda?

The UNICEF program I worked with advocated for the rights of women and girls, and for maternal health. I believe that all women should receive at least basic health care. Poverty exists in both countries, but there are almost no resources in Uganda. Even free universal education is relatively new; when I was growing up, you had to pay even for elementary school. Here, you have programs like WIC. It feels good to be in a place where resources exist, and to be able to find the right programs and to help people in need to access them.

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What about southwestern Pennsylvania do you particularly enjoy or appreciate?

Pittsburgh has the wealth of being a locally global community. People coming from different parts of the world, bringing their culture and language. There are restaurants where I can enjoy food similar to what I loved in Kampala. I'm right in Pittsburgh, but I'm connected to home.

Resources like libraries allow people to find services or referrals for services they need: that's a step toward embracing the global community that lives within the local Pittsburgh region.

It was huge for me to find there are English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in the public schools. Kids from around the world can learn alongside local Pittsburgh kids.

And the strong sense of community makes me happy. At home, my daughters would go out in the morning to play with the neighborhood kids, come in for lunch, and go back out to run around until the evening. To live in a place where I can tell my kids, "Go walk to the library," is huge.

What kind of advice do you offer your daughters?

My girls are very independent. I remind them every day to stand up for what is right and not to put up with oppression. I lived my life in a cycle of oppression: I'd leave my husband, go back to my family, and they urge me to go back to him. It was normalized in my culture and upbringing. I tell my girls that if you're not comfortable with the situation, it's not right. Speak up about it.

Your daughters must be very proud of the work you've done.

My 9 year old recently completed a school assignment about role models. She wrote that her mother inspires her— that her mother is compassionate, she cares about other people who are struggling, and she goes out of her way to help those in need. This pushes me to strive to be a better person every day because I know I am planting seeds for the kind of citizens I am raising in my daughters.

Connect with the Jewish Healthcare Foundation:

