

Pitt-Assisted Communities & Schools

—— Connecting the Cathedral to the Community ——



University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work



Mission & Vision

PACS mobilizes University of Pittsburgh resources to enrich the lives of children, youth, and families, and advances the university's commitment to transformative teaching, research, and community service.

PACS currently works with Faison Elementary, Lincoln Elementary, and Westinghouse Academy (6-12) focusing on academic, health, and mental health support. PACS seeks to serve the students and parents, school personnel, and community at large.

Our vision is to build upon our existing relationships with the Homewood Children's Village, the Pittsburgh Public Schools, and a variety of other private, nonprofit, and government entities to support a feeder pattern-wide network of schools and the community institutions that anchor them, including local organizations, churches, and families.



Target Areas

Community Development
Education
Family Engagement
Health & Wellness
Mental Health

EVALUATE with innovative data systems to monitor and assess the services received and the progress of individual students in the community.

DEVELOP tiered support systems designed to recognize the needs for supports that will advance the development of all students while directly serving students with more severe or urgent challenges at home and/or at school.

MOBILIZE resources of the University of Pittsburgh to enhance the community's strengths and address their needs.

Goals

RECRUIT, train, and deploy university students, faculty, & staff to support communities.

MATCH unmet community needs with corresponding university resources.

IMPROVE the overall quality of life for students and families in Homewood.

SUPPORT school-wide improvements in math, reading, & science proficiency levels.

INCREASE the number students who attend and graduate from college.

What are University-Assisted Community Schools?



University assisted community schools are university-school-community partnerships that combine the strengths and resources of families, public schools, health, mental health and social services organizations, and universities to transform schools into comprehensive community centers that effectively educate children, remove nonacademic barriers to their academic success, and revitalize the neighborhoods in which they live, learn, play and worship (Harkavy, et al., 2013)

“A comprehensive approach designed to meet the holistic needs of students and families in the Homewood community and in the Westinghouse Network”



The PACS model is designed to efficiently coordinate and leverage University of Pittsburgh resources to provide tailored services to the youth of the Westinghouse Network. A growing body of research demonstrates the positive impact of university-assisted community schools on student outcomes in high-need contexts. Incorporating best practices from the existing research, our goal is to establish a network of Pitt-Assisted Communities & Schools!

Our work is primarily modeled after University of Pennsylvania’s successful 20-year partnership with schools in West Philadelphia. Research shows that students achieve at higher levels when support systems are available to them on a consistent and intentional manner. In this process, university and community assets are key drivers in increasing student achievement levels, all while improving neighborhood schools and revitalizing communities.

To date, more than 100 University of Pittsburgh students, faculty and staff, across various disciplines, have been engaged in research, teaching and service projects in, about, and for the benefit of Homewood. Together, these projects have yielded significant results. The goals of PACS are simply to coordinate, focus, and multiply the magnitude and impact of Pitt’s role as a key anchor institution for the benefit of the children, families, and residents of our region’s most challenged communities.

Our Team



Dr. John Wallace Jr. is the principal investigator on the University of Pittsburgh Center on Race and Social Problems' Comm-Univer-City of Pittsburgh Project, an integrated program of research, teaching, and service designed to investigate and ameliorate social problems that disproportionately impact economically disadvantaged children, families, and communities. He received his bachelor's in Sociology from the University of Chicago earned his PhD and master's degree in Sociology from the University of Michigan.



Dr. James P. Huguley is an Assistant Professor at the University of Pittsburgh's Center on Race and Social Problems and School of Social Work. His research focuses on school-based interventions that promote positive academic and mental health outcomes for African American youth. He received his bachelor's in English-Secondary Education from Providence College, and both his master's in Risk and Prevention and doctorate in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard University.



Chalis S. Henderson serves as the Director of University Resources and is responsible for cultivating university resources and securing outside funding and resources for PACS programming. Chalis has worked at universities and community organizations leveraging resources to benefit students and educators. She received her bachelor's in Organizational Communication from the University of North Carolina Charlotte and earned her master's degree in Student Affairs Administration from Michigan State University.



Esohe Osai serves as the PACS Director of University Services and is responsible for strategically deploying and coordinating university resources in the network schools and evaluating the effectiveness of these programs. She received her bachelor's degree in Education from the University of Michigan and completed a master's degree focused on youth development programming at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a master's in psychology from the University of Michigan.

Want to learn more?

www.socialwork.pitt.edu

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