

THE  
EQUITY  
IMPACT  
CENTER  
REPORT



2021 — 2024

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Written and Edited by Rachel Amanor, Community Data Scientist  
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Photography by Kitoko Chargois

# LEIGH SOLOMON PUGLIANO

In 2018, I recognized significant gaps in the solutions that were being implemented to address the needs of leaders and entrepreneurs. Our regional challenges did not simply require better solutions; we needed new, innovative, creative, holistic, and data-informed approaches. My theory of change? **Programs and solutions designed with frameworks and methodologies that utilize accurate data and incorporate appropriate skills, knowledge, expertise, and insights from those with lived experience will provide a transformative experience for the stakeholder and yield incredible results.** Our solutions create a ripple effect of impact at the individual, organizational, and systemic levels. We cannot solve problems that don't exist, and we cannot simply build a solution to solve a problem without accounting for systemic barriers and addressing the intersectional impact of those barriers.

In 2020, my team released our 34-page literature review titled *Building a New Nonprofit Leadership Model Centering Intersectional Equity and Social Justice*. This work informed the design of both the Transformative Leader program and the foundation of the Equity | Impact Center.

This organization is a culmination of all my work and experience gained as a strategist, consultant, educator, entrepreneur, and musician. My work is guided by the knowledge acquired through working across sectors, the collection of thousands of stories I've read and listened to, and research. To do this work well, I've partnered with experts who have proven success in their areas of expertise. Unlike many initiatives in Pittsburgh that waste time and resources and perpetuate inequity, our work is developed and implemented by experts. We are founders, entrepreneurs, technologists, researchers, artists, and community leaders. We are who we seek to serve. Our impact isn't just in the numbers, which are significant and continuously growing. It's in the stories told by newly empowered individuals whose lives have been changed for the better, it's in the innovation and creativity sparked by experiencing something new, it's in the exposing and challenging of organizations and institutions perpetuating harmful practices and ineffective programs, and it's in the fabric of all who have adopted our processes, frameworks, and practices. In just 3 1/2 years, I have seen our impact throughout the Pittsburgh region.



# BUILDING

Values & Intentions

# THE CENTER

ADVANCING SYSTEMICALLY MARGINALIZED  
COMMUNITIES THROUGH EQUITY-CENTERED  
SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS.

The Equity | Impact Center is a research based organization dedicated to transforming leaders, founders, organizations, and ecosystems to build a more equitable society and improve quality of life. The Equity | Impact Center specializes in delivering equity-centered and impact-driven sustainable solutions through people-centered, intentionally designed strategies that are consistently responsive to the evolving needs of communities and individuals. We steward change initiatives by empowering solutions developed by diverse people with lived experience, critical skills, appropriate knowledge, expertise, and innovative perspectives.

## *Building the Center: Values & Intentions*

While the Equity | Impact Center intends to advance the work of businesses, governments, institutions, and nonprofit organizations to drive equitable systems change throughout the U.S., we are currently focused on the Pittsburgh region. We address systemic inequities across social, cultural, and economic sectors with comprehensive, intentionally designed solutions. Since our launch, we've designed and implemented viable systems-level interventions to support economic resilience in marginalized communities and develop founders and social justice, nonprofit, and institutional leaders. We understand that systemic inequities impact people across communities, identities, and areas of work; therefore, our processes are efficient and intentional.

We develop data-driven solutions that provide the education, tools, and resources necessary to mitigate harm and support, sustain, and advance individuals and organizations. Our work enables systemic change in the region by explicitly centering people who have been historically excluded or marginalized and providing real and comprehensive opportunities for transformative change that produce immediate outcomes and will positively impact future generations.



## THE VALUES THAT GUIDE OUR WORK;

**Amplify:** We strengthen voices and empower the ideas of partners and program participants

**Advance:** We provide resources and empower marginalized leaders with the intention of a more equitable and just future

**Authenticity:** We prioritize the combined value of lived experience, knowledge, skills, and expertise

**Access:** We ensure resources and networks are available to underserved and marginalized people

**Accountability:** We strive to incorporate an equity-centered value system and mission at all points of planning, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation

## THE INTENTIONS OF OUR WORK;

- *Enhance* the capabilities and acumen of leaders who prioritize equity.
- *Increase* the capability of nonprofit and social justice leaders to assess and evaluate their work and effectively report their organization's outcomes and impact.
- *Create* affirmative spaces for Black leaders to connect, share, learn, and collaborate.
- *Implement* successful program design models that are developed and executed by those with lived experience, critical skills, knowledge, and expertise.
- *Model* equity-centered program design and implementation models that center traditionally marginalized people and could serve as a framework to be replicated by any organization, government entity, or foundation missioned to be more equitable, just, and inclusive.
- *Support* social justice, nonprofit, and marginalized leaders in developing strategies to navigate an inequitable system while simultaneously working to dismantle and improve it.
- *Reinforce* regional initiatives by designing solutions and strategies that prioritize data and center equity in all aspects of planning, design, implementation, and evaluation.

## OUR COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

- We center the people and the work
- We model our values in practice
- We honor the process
- We act with intention
- We practice accountability
- We practice cultural humility

Launching officially in 2021, the Equity | Impact Center has already made a significant impact on the Pittsburgh region. Notable successes include:

Since our launch in 2021, our programming and strategic consulting services have supported:

Additionally, we have:

- Running 14 programs
- Holding 17 community events with over 1500+ event attendees
- Partnerships with Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation, The Kelly Strayhorn Theater, Carnegie Mellon University, Carnegie Museum of Pittsburgh, Women in Tech PGH

- 30+ leaders
- 45+ organizations
- 40+ artists and creative entrepreneurs

- Provided 3000+ hours of mentoring and coaching to nonprofit, business, and community leaders
- Dispersed over \$300,000 in unrestricted funds to equity leaders and artists
- Launched the first national program of its kind in the SCALE Fellowship, a dynamic program designed to advance Black women in music providing skills, resources, and access to industry experts

# RESULTS

SIGNATURE  
PROGRAMS

# TRANSFORMATIVE

# LEADER

Recognizing and connecting *changemakers* across the U.S., an award and professional development program for leaders addressing systemic inequity through social, cultural, economic, or community-based solutions

# LEADER PROGRAM

A comprehensive leadership development initiative for equity-centered leaders dedicated to advancing their knowledge, building community, and implementing effective impact-driven strategic solutions. This capacity-building and leadership development program supports leaders through structured curricula and individualized support. TLP provides targeted knowledge and resources and experiential opportunities to engage with peers around common issues, challenges, and promising practices.

## PROGRAM INTENTIONS & COMPONENTS

- Facilitated learning through discussions that follow a curriculum designed to build specific areas of knowledge
- Individualized personal leadership development
- Mentoring and coaching based on the specific needs of the leader and the strategic growth plan
- Training, tools, and resources that focus on wellness and care for social impact and equity leaders



NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

20

OUTCOMES

Dollars Invested =

\$60k

in financial rewards

Total Number of People Engaged =

200+



## IMPLEMENTATION

- **Curriculum & Program Design:**  
Leigh Solomon Pugliano
- **Speakers & Experts:**
  - ▶ Dr. Anu Jain
  - ▶ Felicia Savage Friedman
  - ▶ Dr. Tameka Cage Conely
  - ▶ Ayana Ledford
  - ▶ Janera Solomon
  - ▶ Damon Young
  - ▶ Dr. Andre Samuel



## TRANSFORMATIVE LEADER PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

Through this program, participants gain a profound understanding of transformative leadership principles rooted in equity and justice. They emerge equipped with actionable strategies to embrace their leadership responsibilities and seamlessly integrate these values into their work.

With a carefully designed strategic roadmap, they identify clear goals, establish priorities, outline intended outcomes, and define measurable benchmarks for success—ensuring their growth plan is both purposeful and impactful.

Participants become part of a dynamic and supportive community of like-minded leaders, fostering connections that span the region and extend across the United States. This network amplifies their collective ability to drive meaningful change.

The program offers a financial award, granting recipients the flexibility to invest in areas they believe will most effectively further their impact. Additionally, they are given opportunities to engage with their community, presenting their work to garner support, attract investment, and amplify innovative solutions.

A deeper comprehension of equity principles equips participants to embed justice-centered practices within their organizations. They also gain insights into leveraging research and data to inform their strategies, implement effective data collection, and enhance the quality of their programs and initiatives.

Lastly, this journey cultivates greater self-confidence, heightened self-awareness, and a renewed appreciation of their intrinsic value—empowering them to lead with conviction and positively influence every facet of their life and work.

*“I connected deeply with the time we spent early on getting to understand where people were coming to this work from. I appreciated the range of experiences the cohort had in being thoughtful advocates for social justice, equity, and for inclusion.”*



*“I’m elated to be a part of such an amazing talented group of individuals who are making an impact on people of color and in their communities. Thus far, the information and selected presenters were awesome, and very informative, and the content was relative to the Transformation Leader program.”*

*“Leigh investing in me gives me hope; ‘thank you,’ isn’t able to capture how I feel about the experience. The Equity | Impact Center is setting itself above a lot of other leadership programs I’ve participated in.”*



NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

23

OUTCOMES

Dollars Invested =  
**\$200k+**

Artist Showcases =

3

Live Shows =

2

Fellows Celebrations =

2

Additional local artists and creatives engaged =

30+



# SCALE

Advancing Black women in music, connecting the regional music community, and changing the music ecosystem

# FELLOWSHIP

The SCALE Fellowship advances Black women in music by providing learning and resources to improve entrepreneurial acumen and advance creative careers. This program is designed to deepen knowledge of the music industry, build audiences, connect artists, and increase visibility. SCALE guides artists in setting strategic goals and provides tools to craft effective business strategies and opportunities to improve artistry, connect with industry professionals, and provide a dedicated space for the creation, production, and presentation of their work. This program equips artists with the resources and support necessary to build sustainable careers and overcome challenges unique to Black artists while providing a framework for a music ecosystem that connects and advances musicians in our region..

## PROGRAM INTENTIONS

- Establish a positive and supportive environment for Black women in music industry to foster a community
- Offer financial assistance to empower Black women in music
- Provide a platform to highlight and showcase the talents of Black women in music
- Equip Black women in music with entrepreneurial skills through tools and resources
- Contribute to the creation of an equity-centered, inclusive, and uplifting ecosystem for emerging artists

## PROGRAM COMPONENTS:

- Professional Development
- Entrepreneurial Workshops
- \$12,000 Investment for Each Fellow
- \$3,000 Direct Award
- \$9,000 of professional consulting services, artist development, recording and studio time, and technical support
- Artist produced showcase

## SCALE FELLOWSHIP OUTCOMES

The SCALE Fellowship Program equips participants with the tools and insights needed to elevate their careers and businesses to new heights. At its core is the development of a strategic roadmap, enabling fellows to identify goals, prioritize actions, outline intended outcomes, and establish measurable success indicators for sustained growth.

Participants gain enhanced business acumen and a deeper understanding of the music industry, complete with practical tools and strategies to navigate its complexities. By mastering goal-setting and planning processes, fellows are empowered to set ambitious targets and chart effective paths to achievement.

A comprehensive business development guide helps participants navigate the essentials of establishing a business entity, addressing critical areas such as documentation, tax, and legal requirements. Additionally, they receive expert guidance in crafting revenue models and uncovering new revenue streams, ensuring their ventures are financially resilient and innovative.

The program connects fellows with industry experts who serve as mentors, offering ongoing insights and support. Fellows also join a vibrant peer community, fostering collaboration, resource sharing, and amplification of one another's efforts.

Practical outcomes include high-quality, professionally produced materials for press kits, promotions, and grant applications—essential tools to elevate their visibility and secure opportunities. They also deepen their understanding of equity principles, learning how to operationalize these values within their businesses and organizations.

Through the fellowship, participants develop skills to leverage research and data for informed decision-making, enabling them to refine strategies and enhance their initiatives. Finally, the program cultivates self-confidence, self-awareness, and an appreciation of their unique value, empowering them to make a lasting impact on their work and the world around them.

## IMPLEMENTATION

- **Program Design & Facilitator:**  
Leigh Solomon Pugliano
- **Speakers and Experts:**
  - ▶ Dr. Brittany Blackwell, Institute of Research and Global Strategies
  - ▶ Jason McKoy, McKoy Creative
  - ▶ Eritza Laues, Grammy award-winning Songwriter
  - ▶ Tanisha Jackson, Attorney & Black Music Historian
  - ▶ Jacquelin Walker, Entertainment Attorney
  - ▶ Tami Latrell, Publisher, Mezzo Agency
  - ▶ Cannon Mapp, Producer & Songwriter
  - ▶ Matt Firek, Music Engineer | Fire K Studios
- **Guest Speakers**
  - ▶ Rachel Cargle, Author | Founder of Loveland Foundation
  - ▶ Kelauni Jasmyn, Black Tech Ventures
  - ▶ Tone Jones, Disney | Grammy award-winning Songwriter and Producer
  - ▶ **Spotlight Speaker:**  
Gladys Knight

### Program Partners:

Ayesha Scott, Covalent, Tree Lady Studios, McKoy Creative, Joshua Franzos, Jay Barlow Styling, Beat by Nesh, Luxurae Hair, DomiTheMUA



“As a proud graduate of the SCALE fellowship and Intervals, both programs of the Equity | Impact Center, our connection to Leigh Solomon Pugliano and the Center runs deep. Meeting Leigh through this program was a transformative experience; her unwavering support and belief in my vision as an artist and us as a band, have been instrumental in our growth. Leigh has not only been a supporter but a cheerleader for Central Flow, encouraging us to push the boundaries of our creative expression.”

– *Shawna Mays*

“Leigh has been a huge mentor and inspiration for me in my personal development and growth as well as my career! She has helped me through thick and thin and with Leighs help, I have been able to accomplish so many goals! Being a part of the SCALE cohort has impacted my life in such a positive way and has given me the connections, resources and tools that I need for success!”

– *DJ FEMII*



NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

23

OUTCOMES

Dollars Invested =  
**\$200k+**

Total Number of People Engaged =

**500+**



# THE FULL

Nonprofit Accelerator In Collaboration With SVP Pittsburgh

# CIRCLE

Full Circle is a proven capacity-building program dedicated to enhancing organizational efficiency, program implementation, and financial sustainability, ultimately amplifying overall impact. Over a 3-month period, this cohort-based initiative, expertly facilitated by Leigh Solomon Pugliano, integrates workshops, mentoring, networking opportunities, and a culminating pitch event. The program leverages the expertise of SVP Partners, who serve as mentors and coaches, guiding nonprofit leaders in crafting strategic solutions to address both immediate and persistent challenges within their organizations. Full Circle is specifically crafted to propel organizations toward impactful solutions and improved financial sustainability. The culmination of the program involves a pitch-style showcase event.

## OUTCOMES

- Enhanced organizational efficiency and customized strategies for financial sustainability
- Better understanding of the goal-setting and strategic planning process to build internal capacity
- Improved storytelling methods and materials
- Increased knowledge and awareness of social issues and the people and organizations addressing these issues
- Relationships and increased network across sectors
- Professional produced video highlighting the nonprofit to be used for future grantmaking and impact storytelling purposes

# EQUITY IMPACT

## CENTER

### IMPLEMENTATION

- **Curriculum Design & Facilitator:**  
Leigh Solomon Pugliano
- **Coaches:**
  - ▶ Christine Gameos
  - ▶ Alison Falk
  - ▶ Zuly Inirio
  - ▶ Betsy Iri zarry
  - ▶ Mike Mavrich
  - ▶ Markeya Lowry
  - ▶ Shanae Phillips
  - ▶ Lou Camerlengo
  - ▶ Eileen Forrester
  - ▶ Tiffany Huff-Strothers
  - ▶ Ben Utter
  - ▶ Kimberly Zahler
  - ▶ Brett Fulesday

*"If I had to try to summarize the coaching experience in one word, transformational is it. For as much as the nonprofit leaders and their respective organizations grow over the course of the Full Circle Program, so, too, do the coaches -- so everyone participating in and graduating from the program emerges as a better person."*

*-Brett Fulesday*

*"Participating in the Full Circle program has been an incredibly transformative experience. It provided valuable insights and connections that have strengthened my organization's mission and impact. Through the program, I've had the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded leaders and develop innovative strategies to serve our community better."*

*-Terri Shields*





# CREATIVES IN

The Creative in Residence Program (CIR) supports artists prioritizing social justice and economic growth. CIR provides resources and guidance for artists to create sustainable careers.

# RESIDENCE

The Creative in Residence Program (CIR) was designed to support and invest in artists who prioritize social justice in their creative work. CIR will support the economic growth and advancement of creatives while working simultaneously towards broader systems change that includes artists and creatives in community and economic advancement. Since its founding, the Equity | Impact Center has focused on designing viable systems-level interventions to support economic resilience in marginalized communities. The CIR program offers the resources and strategic guidance needed for artist entrepreneurs to develop a sustainable pathway for their creative work.

## COMPONENTS

- \$2000 Financial Award
- Space for Collective Learning and Collaboration
- Leadership and Organizational Development Curriculum
- Ongoing Project Investment & Strategic Support



DESIGNING

Partnerships & Collaborations

FOR IMPACT



# PEER

Comprehensive program curriculum that creates the space for impact-driven tech founders to connect, learn, grow, and develop strategies to advance their business ideas and solutions

# FELLOWSHIP

In 2023, the Equity | Impact Center was awarded the role of BIPOC Specialist for Pittsburgh's Build Back Better Project 5 initiative: Expanding Pathways to Opportunity. The goal of this project was for multiple partners to collaborate on creating a robotics fellowship program. The partners were:

- Innovate PGH (project lead)
- Carnegie Mellon University Robotics Institute (project host)
- Women in Tech PGH (project partner)

As the BIPOC specialist, The Equity | Impact Center provided:

- Research and data to guide the initiative
- Equity/DEI education and guidelines
- Training and mentorship for program partners
- Curriculum design framework
- Project management and program development strategy

## PROGRAM DESIGN:

In the first year of the initiative, The Equity | Impact Center team designed the Promoting Emerging Entrepreneurs in Robotics (PEER) Fellowship. The PEER Fellowship program provides the knowledge, tools, and resources that innovative entrepreneurs need to build and lead successful technology businesses. PEER supports founders who have developed products and solutions incorporating robotics, AI, and/or automation technologies by enhancing their entrepreneurial skills and developing strategies to advance their businesses.

Experts:  
Ellington West, Sonavi Labs  
Dr. Andre Samuel, The Citizen Science Lab  
Jason McKoy, McKoy Creative

Leigh Solomon Pugliano: Program Design, Facilitation, Mentor



The Equity | Impact Center and Leigh Solomon Pugliano provided invaluable leadership, guidance, and expertise to this project. Participants thoroughly enjoyed the portions of the program designed and implemented by our organization. In year two (2024), the Equity | Impact Center designed and led the 4th strategic project design session with the program facilitator to redesign the curriculum with CMU|RI at the center instead of the Equity | Impact Center. Following the session, our organization was shut out from the program by CMU|RI and project lead Innovate PGH. However, we had made such a significant impact on participants and the robotics/tech sector that we continue to support alumni and regional partners in this work.



## WHAT WORKED

- ▶ The Equity | Impact Center's program design framework was proven to work across sectors and stakeholders,
- ▶ Research and data collection supported the design of an incredibly transformative program,
- ▶ The Equity | Impact Center's Collective Impact process was proven to work for equity-centered leaders that prioritize stakeholder impact.

## WHAT DIDN'T WORK

While our partners gained immensely from the work of the Equity | Impact Center, the project was not successful for the following reasons:

- ▶ CMU|RI and Innovate PGH partners did not prioritize data or center equity in their decision-making,
- ▶ CMU|RI Partners and Innovate PGH partners did not have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and expertise to design an equity-centered robotics fellowship program,
- ▶ CMU|RI and Innovate PGH partners were not knowledgeable or well-versed in equity principles and practices,
- ▶ CMU|RI and Innovate PGH used power to adhere to historic practices which further marginalized vulnerable populations,
- ▶ The BBB initiative did not have proper oversight and evaluation processes in place to ensure effective and ethical practices.



# INTERVALS

A multi-track, cohort-style accelerator program for arts leaders and entrepreneurs seeking to develop strategies for growth, build their network, and advance the sector.

# INTERVALS



In 2023, The Equity | Impact Center was contracted by the Pittsburgh Cultural Treasures initiative to design a program that provided supplemental support to artists in the region. The primary objective of the Pittsburgh Cultural Treasures initiative was to develop and implement the most celebratory, elegantly strategic, streamlined and appropriately measured regional challenge program in the nation. The Equity | Impact Center project team used the mission of PCTI to guide their research and design work.

Intervals is a multi-track, cohort-style accelerator program for creative entrepreneurs and arts leaders seeking to develop strategies for growth, build their network, and advance the arts & culture sector in Pittsburgh.

The program advances the fields of creative entrepreneurship and arts leadership in the Pittsburgh community by providing a network of comprehensive support, tailored curriculum, and vetted experts. The Intervals Arts Accelerator Program provided leadership and organizational development curriculum, facilitated cohort-exclusive workshops, space for collective learning and skill-share, resource sharing, financial support in the form of a \$2,000 implementation stipend, project development and strategic investment, and individualized planning sessions for arts leaders and artists.



## ADDITIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

1. Point Park University Presents: Toshi Reagan's *Parable of the Sower* Community Reception
2. Kelly Strayhorn Theater: SUNSTAR Festival – Women & Music
3. Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation: Summer at the Station
4. Carnegie Museum of Art: Listen to Your Art



GATHERINGS

Community, Connection, Growth: The Importance of Gathering

& EVENTS

TOTAL NUMBER  
OF EVENTS

12

EVENTS  
SHOWCASED

Equity | Impact  
Center Launch 2021

AMPLIFY: Celebrating  
Transformative  
Leaders 2021, 2024

SCALE Showcase  
Premiere 2021- 2023

Creative in Residence  
Launch 2022, 2024

Full Circle Final Pitch  
2022 - 2024

SCALE Fundraiser

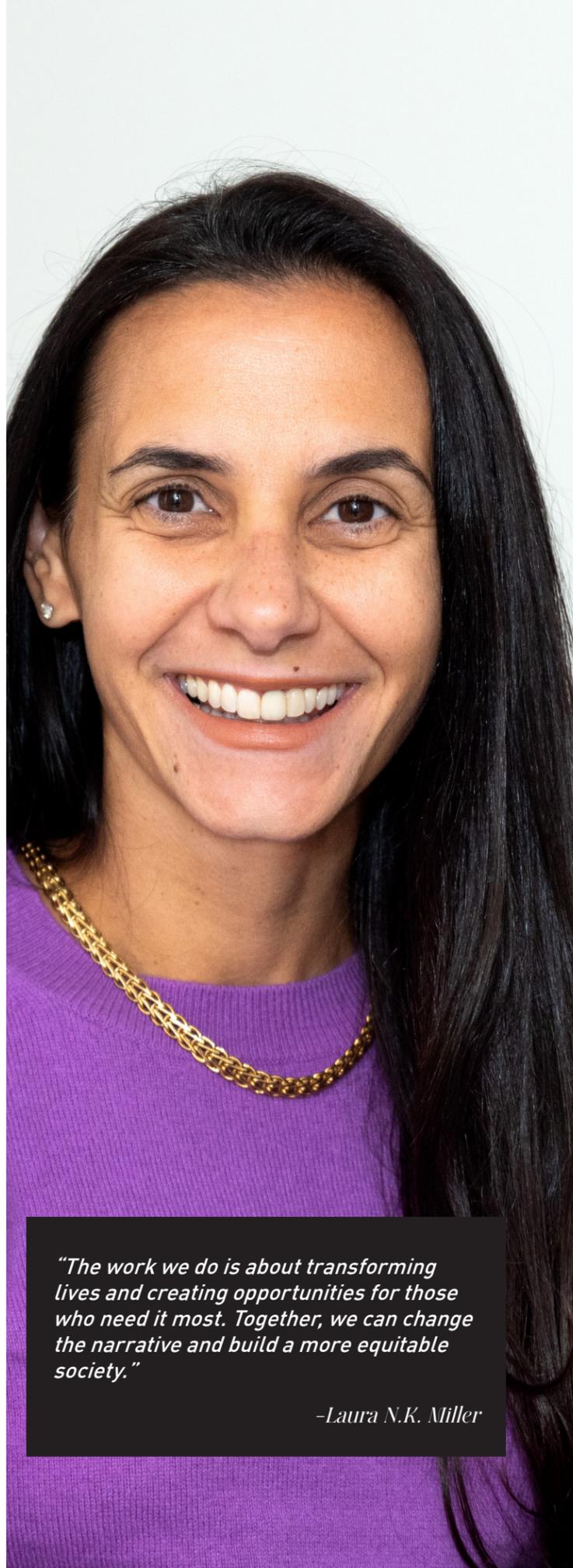
SCALE Live 2024





# LAURA MILLER Board Chair N.K. MILLER

Appointed by President & CEO Leigh Solomon Pugliano, Ms. Miller, Sr. Associate Counsel and VP of Government Programs & Provider Contracting for UPMC Insurance Services Division, brings a wealth of experience to lead the Board of Directors. A distinguished alumna of the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and the Katz Graduate School of Business, Ms. Miller holds a law degree, an MBA, and an undergraduate degree from Pennsylvania State University in Science. Beyond her professional accomplishments, Ms. Miller is a devoted advocate for equity. Her community impact includes serving on the United Way Board of Directors and leading the UW Good Neighbor Volunteer Committee. She also contributes to the Boards of Trustees for the Frick Pittsburgh and Carnegie Library, co-chairing the CLP Inclusion, Equity, Diversity, and Access (IDEA) Committee. Residing in Point Breeze with her husband and two daughters, Ms. Miller exemplifies a commitment to building a more equitable future.



*"The work we do is about transforming lives and creating opportunities for those who need it most. Together, we can change the narrative and build a more equitable society."*  
-Laura N.K. Miller

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS & ADVISORS



Sean Gray  
Board of Directors



Maria Abunto  
Board of Directors



Alice Beckett-Rumberger  
Board of Directors



Eileen Forrester  
Advisory Board



Alydia Thomas  
Advisory Board



David-Michael Pugliano  
Advisory Board

*"The Equity | Impact Center helped me grow and advance many professional skills. Organization, research, and teamwork were just a few abilities that were honed while working there. I also felt cared for within the close-knit, welcoming environment. I adored the space and will be forever grateful to have had the opportunity to work for Leigh."*

*-H. Locateli*

*"Participating in EIC programs has elevated my confidence, self awareness, professional acumen and curated spaces where I have met life long colleagues, supporters and friends."*

*-T. Huff*

*"Our organization is grateful to to have participated in the Full Circle Nonprofit Accelerator Program. The program has given our organization a jump start to build the organization properly. We have connected with other professionals who have helped us to understand the importance of getting pivotal people and resources in place to continue the organization's growth."*

*-S. Duncan*

*"If I had to try to summarize the coaching experience in one word, transformational is it. For as much as the nonprofit leaders and their respective organizations grow over the course of the Full Circle Program, so, too, do the coaches -- so everyone participating in and graduating from the program emerges as a better person."*

*-B. Fulesday*

*"The Equity | Impact Center has made me a better and more confident leader. Its provided me with an amazing network of people to be in community with."*

*-N. Sweet*

*"Participating in the Full Circle program has been an incredibly transformative experience. It provided valuable insights and connections that have strengthened my organization's mission and impact. Through the program, I've had the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded leaders and develop innovative strategies to serve our community better."*

*-T. Shields*

*"The Equity | Impact Center has impacted how I choose to show up as an artist and a black woman. It has inspired me by allowing me to be surrounded by like-minded artists, stakeholders, and leaders and continues to benefit me with fiscal and non-monetary resources, mentorship support, obtaining other grants etc."*

*-E. Johnson*

*"It has provided a platform, a kickstart, a reflection of myself that was hard to see as an independent artist. And now, as a full-time Creative I am implementing so many of the lessons that I learned behind the scenes and in front of the camera to do the best I can."*

*-D. Clarke*

*"Participating in Equity | Impact Center programs has made me a more confident and effective leader. The support offered through intentional mentorship, leadership development, and camaraderie with other like-minded leaders has and continues to be life-changing. The Equity | Impact Center is absolutely essential in order to cultivate a thriving artistic landscape in the city."*

*-B. Perdue*

*"I applied to the Transformative Leader Program out of curiosity, but it quickly became a pivotal experience in my leadership journey. Participating in the Equity | Impact Center programs has given me a deeper understanding of equity, justice, and advocacy, while also helping me navigate the challenges of being a Black woman in leadership. Through meaningful discussions, shared experiences, and artistic reflections, I gained valuable insights on aligning personal values with professional missions, fostering inclusivity, and actively practicing equity. This experience has strengthened my commitment to uplifting diverse voices, ensuring intentional action, and continuously evolving as a leader in education and advocacy."*

*-H. Bryant-Roye*

*"Leigh has been a huge mentor and inspiration for me in my personal development and growth as well as my career! She has helped me through thick and thin and with Leighs help, I have been able to accomplish so many goals! Being a part of the Scale cohort has impacted my life in such a positive way and has given me the connections, resources and tools that I need for success!"*

*-DJ FEMII*

*"This experience has empowered me to pause, reflect, and reevaluate my approach to work, recognizing that personal sacrifice isn't a prerequisite for dedication to our mission. It's crucial to understand that we have the autonomy to reject demands that compromise our wellbeing in favor of institutional agendas or power dynamics. Saying no is an option. Shifting directions is possible. Making choices that prioritize your own health and happiness, without losing sight of your responsibilities, is not only feasible but necessary for sustainable success."*

*-A. Falk*

*"As a proud graduate of the SCALE fellowship and Intervals, both programs of the Equity | Impact Center, our connection to Leigh Solomon Pugliano and the Center runs deep. Meeting Leigh through this program was a transformative experience; her unwavering support and belief in my vision as an artist and us as a band, have been instrumental in our growth. Leigh has not only been a supporter but a cheerleader for Central Flow, encouraging us to push the boundaries of our creative expression."*

*-S. Mays*

# IMPACT

## FUNDERS & SPONSORS



THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS  
HOWARD HEINZ ENDOWMENT • VIRA L. HEINZ ENDOWMENT



UPMC HEALTH PLAN



## PROJECTS SUPPORTED

Artist Talk: Therapeutic Spaces

Assemble: Center for Teaching Artists

Summa Lumma Music Festival

Sweetwater Artist Membership Initiative

Regional Capacity Building Initiative

## ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED

Alumni Theatre Company

Artists Talk Mental Health

Assemble

Awaken Pittsburgh

Black Alumni Council, Columbia University

BLKNMBR

Boys and Girls Club of Western PA

Bounce House

Brew House Association

Carnegie Mellon University Robotics Institute

Central Flow

City of Bridges Community Land Trust

Civically, Inc.

Communitopia

Confluence Ballet

Divine Intervention Ministries

Falk Institute

FroGang Foundation

Girls Going Global

Greenmount East Leadership Project

JADA House International

Kelly Strayhorn Theater

Pittsburgh Learning Commons

Pittsburgh Playhouse, Point Park University

Pittsburgh Robotics Network

Prototype

Radiant Hall

Style 412

Sisters Lifting As We Climb Network

Sweetwater Center for the Arts

SVP Pittsburgh

The Citizen Science Lab

The Esteem Group

The Greenwood Plan

The Secret Society of Black Creatives

Wall to Wall Studios

Washington Urban Debate League

We are Beautiful

Western PA Diaper Bank

When She Thrives

Wilksburg Community Development Corporation (WCDC)

Women In Tech PGH

## SPECIAL THANKS TO

David-Michael Pugliano

Sofia Pugliano

Stella Pugliano

Cece Pugliano

Marilyn Solomon

Phil Solomon

Janera Solomon

Jonnet Solomon

Maria Pugliano

Joseph Pugliano

Karen Abrams

Rachel Amanor

Jay Barlow

Cat Burton

Kitoko Chargois

Debbie Conejo

Diarra Clarke

Harvey "FRZY" Daniels

Dr. Andre Samuel

Matt Firek

Joshua Franzos

Marita Garrett

Sarah Gilmer

Ty Gourley

Dave Hideck

Janita Kilgore

Simon Lindblad

Pam Lewis

Helena Locateli

Morgan Mack

Mia Marshall

Michelle McMurray

Jason McKoy

Amy Medvec

Ashleigh Mitchell

Devon Mitchell

Colleen Moosman

Kendra Ross

Caelan Schick

Ryan Singh

Rob Stephany

Alx Stefano

Damon Young

August Wilson Center for African American Culture

Blooms PGH

Covalent

Fire K Studios

Hollywood Music

Pittsburgh Playhouse

Stage AE

Treelady Studios

# FIN

