

FALL 2022

GIFT *of* GIVING

NEWS FOR DONORS AND FRIENDS OF THE CLEVELAND FOUNDATION



Combating the **MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**

A transformative gift from **Ashley and Michael Fisher** will help University Hospitals expand pediatric mental health services

Inside:

Introducing the **MidTown Collaboration Center**





Introducing the MIDTOWN COLLABORATION CENTER

This summer, the Cleveland Foundation and its partners unveiled plans for the **MidTown Collaboration Center**. Located in the historic Hough neighborhood, the building aims to bring multiple sectors, companies and disciplines under one roof and is a new model for a “both and” approach to economic development that centers around community. The 95,000-square-foot project builds upon the momentum of the adjacent Cleveland Foundation headquarters and aims to be both regionally significant and locally transformative.

The Cleveland Foundation and JumpStart, in partnership with MidTown Cleveland, are leading this catalytic project with key partners to co-locate innovative aspects of their research and programming in the first building. Partners include: Case Western Reserve University, University Hospitals, the Cleveland Institute of Art, Hyland Software and ECDI (the country’s largest SBA micro lender).

The building will house between 220-250 direct full-time jobs. Multiple anchor institutions are bringing new innovative programs that will create jobs, focus on community and position this district as the place in the region to collaborate.

Learn more about this transformative project at www.ClevelandFoundation.org/MidTown.

ANNOUNCING NEW ADVANCEMENT TEAM LEADERS

Following a national search, the Cleveland Foundation is pleased to announce that **Leta Obertacz** has joined the foundation’s leadership team as senior vice president for advancement, as of Sept. 6, 2022. Obertacz brings almost 20 years of fundraising experience to the foundation, most recently serving as director of advancement for the Cleveland Zoological Society, where she led numerous highly successful fundraising campaigns dedicated to the best quality animal care, education and meaningful guest experiences. In addition to the news of Obertacz’s new role, the foundation also announced the promotion of **Ginger Mlakar** to the role of general counsel and vice president for advancement.



Leta Obertacz Ginger Mlakar

“We are so pleased to welcome Leta Obertacz to the Cleveland Foundation’s leadership team and promote Ginger Mlakar to a new role on our Advancement team during a watershed moment in our organization’s history,” said Ronn Richard, Cleveland Foundation president & CEO. “Leta’s extensive fundraising experience and commitment to the community will be incredibly valuable to the work of the Advancement team and the foundation overall as we activate our new strategic direction and welcome the community to our new home in MidTown.”



The Cleveland Foundation Executive Committee held a retreat this September and is currently finalizing our strategic plan.

CLOSELY HELD BUSINESS ASSETS CAN BE AN UNTAPPED CHARITABLE RESOURCE

Over the course of their lifetimes, many entrepreneurs have formed one or more successful business partnerships and companies with private stock or closely held business units. In fact, of the 27 million businesses in the United States, only a small fraction are created with publicly traded stock. As such, we have seen many donors utilizing highly appreciated private stock or closely held business units to fund their charitable endeavors. The Cleveland Foundation works with our donors and their professional advisors to navigate the often-complex tax

and legal rules pertaining to contributing these types of assets to a charitable fund, such as a donor advised fund. It can be especially important to consider a donor’s options if the donor is contemplating an upcoming potential sale of the stock or units and is looking into ways to reduce capital gains related to a sale. We have the expertise and a streamlined approach to handling these types of transactions. It can be a win-win depending upon your goals. To learn more, please contact your philanthropic advisor or the **Advancement Team** at 877-554-5054.

Why I Give:

*CLE Consulting Firm’s
Meltrice Sharp and LaRese Purnell*

Financial experts **Meltrice Sharp** and **LaRese Purnell** are in the business of giving back. Through CLE Consulting, the accounting, tax, financial services, and business consulting firm they built, they help individuals and businesses get their financial footing. And through their philanthropic activities, they help build up entrepreneurs and families, with a special emphasis on Greater Cleveland’s Black community. Earlier this year, they established the CLE Impact Foundation Fund, a donor advised fund at the Cleveland Foundation, that will help them support initiatives that advance financial literacy and promote the kind of wealth creation that will sustain families and communities for generations.

We spoke with the business partners about the inspiration behind their fund, their professional and philanthropic mission, and their advice to others looking to make an impact in their communities.



What is your definition of philanthropy?

Meltrice Sharp (MS): My definition for philanthropy is simple: It’s your rent for living on this earth. It’s a must, and there are no options other than to give back.

LaRese Purnell (LP): The definition I learned from my mother is to always be kind to others, no matter what you’re going through. Webster’s Dictionary talks about giving back with money, but I believe it’s giving of your time, talent and treasure that allows you to be philanthropic.

How did you come to be philanthropic?

MS: Growing up humble and being on the receiving side of support from someone who had a heart of gold. Knowing how much of an impact that made on my family, it was always something I dreamed as a kid of doing — giving back to other people. It’s a blessing to be a blessing.

LP: I didn’t always know where our next meal was coming from, but my mom always embedded in us the importance of giving back to others and how we want to make sure we share what we do have. When I’m giving, it’s a true calling. I get excited about making the change in the trajectory of someone’s life.

What inspired you to start the CLE Impact Foundation Fund and why did you choose the Cleveland Foundation as a charitable partner?

MS: We want to change the financial trajectory of our community. We talk all the time about how this vision is bigger than both of us, so it can’t die with either of us. It was one of the things we knew was important for us to do to continue the legacy. Our problem is choosing where to give, and we knew the Cleveland Foundation would help us build the framework to help our giving mission.

LP: We talked about our guiding principles and how we want to help establish future financial leaders that look like myself and Meltrice. The best way to do that is to invest in them. With the fund, we can align with the Cleveland Foundation and the great work they do to advance our philanthropic efforts in the community.

What would you say to others to encourage them to give back?

MS: Just do it, don’t wait. If you’re not going to be part of the solution, then don’t just talk about the problem.

LP: Giving comes at all levels. We sometimes get stuck thinking ‘I don’t have enough money’ or ‘I don’t have enough time.’ But all of us have the capacity to get involved to make an impact on our community.

Visit www.ClevelandFoundation.org/CLEConsulting to hear more from CLE Consulting Firm’s Meltrice Sharp and LaRese Purnell and see their story on video.

Combating the MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Philanthropists **Ashley and Michael Fisher** help expand pediatric mental health services at **University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's**



University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's (Photo by University Hospitals)

The stress of the COVID-19 pandemic weighs heavily on all, perhaps none more than America's young people. Experts were warning of an intensifying mental health crisis among children and young adults in the United States before the pandemic – data from the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau shows that more than 13% of U.S. children ages 3-17 had a diagnosed mental or behavioral health condition, a 60% increase from 2007. According to the Centers for Disease Control, suicide rates, stable from 2000-2007, leapt nearly 60% by 2018.

The fear, isolation and uncertainty swirling around the pandemic has only exacerbated the national crisis in pediatric and adolescent mental health. In December 2021, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a public health advisory about the "urgent need to address the nation's youth mental health crisis." At University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's, clinicians are seeing a 20% increase in pediatric patients receiving mental and behavioral health services.

A TIME TO ACT

Greater Cleveland-area philanthropists **Ashley and Michael Fisher** have long been passionate advocates for health-related causes, particularly since their son was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. As they saw the toll the mental health crisis was taking on a health care system already stressed by the physical health emergency of COVID-19, they were inspired to act. Their \$2 million gift from their Cleveland Foundation donor advised fund to UH Rainbow Babies & Children's will help the hospital system expand its network of mental health services across the region.

The physical effects of the pandemic are easy to see, said Michael Fisher. "What isn't as obvious is the mental health aspect that comes from the stress, the isolation and the worry. When you're struggling with your mental health, it can be debilitating. I hope our gift can help UH Rainbow increase capacity, including telemedicine options, and help make sure all the services patients are receiving are aligned."

"We have the opportunity to help UH Rainbow change the paradigm and better integrate mental health services."

— Ashley Fisher

Michael Fisher is a veteran technology executive currently serving as the chief technology officer for Etsy, while Ashley puts her energy toward helping children and families in the local community through her volunteer work. Both have a lifelong passion for giving back to their communities, but their philanthropic journey changed with their son's diagnosis, according to Ashley.

"The diagnosis pushed us into more hands-on work, like advocacy and fundraising," said Michael. "After a few years, we took a step back from that and started thinking about other areas we really care about."

The Fishers have a long history of supporting organizations that serve children and families in Northeast Ohio through their donor advised fund at the Cleveland Foundation, which they established in 2012.

"The DAF has allowed us to put money aside while we figure out the areas where we want to focus," said Michael. "It's given us time to think, and we've seen such a positive impact from our participation in the last decade."

When they saw the toll the mounting mental health crisis was taking in their community, they reached out to their philanthropic advisor at the Cleveland Foundation, Jason Weiner, to see where their charitable dollars could make an impact.

"We have been honored to serve as philanthropic partners to the Fisher family for the last decade," said Weiner. "Their transformative gift to University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's is an inspiration to anyone looking to make an impact on the lives of young people in Greater Cleveland."

MORE COMPREHENSIVE CARE

The family's generosity will support additional mental health workers at UH Rainbow facilities, new technology systems and specialized programs to meet the needs of teens and young adults.

"It is so important that our patients receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time, for all medical needs, but especially critical in mental and behavioral health conditions," said Patti DePompei, RN, MSN, president, UH Rainbow Babies & Children's and UH MacDonal Women's hospitals and Rainbow Babies & Children's Foundation Chair in Leadership and Innovation. "The support of the Fisher family will improve access to experts in this area and leverage new technology systems for caregivers to follow-up with patients and their families so they are never alone in their treatment plan."



Ashley and Michael Fisher

Another key to improving access to mental health care for young patients is better systems for tracking and follow-up. The Fishers' gift to UH Rainbow will also support new technology and systems development to ensure patients' health history follows them wherever they seek care, which is especially critical in crisis situations. Additionally, long-term, outpatient follow-up can help reduce emergency department visits and minimize mental health crisis situations.

"The Fisher family's gift will help us reduce the number of inpatient admissions for our young patients in need of mental health care, which will allow us to focus on longer term care plans and outpatient follow-up," explained Charles Macias, MD, MPH, chief quality officer, UH Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital. "Their generosity will also allow more patients in need of acute care to stay in the UH health system."

The Fishers are excited to be part of changing the mental and behavioral health care landscape in Northeast Ohio and hope their gift might inspire others to make a difference in their community.

"When we think of philanthropy, we think of making the world a better place."

— Michael Fisher

Hear more from the Fishers on what inspired their most recent gift at www.ClevelandFoundation.org/Fishers. Visit www.ClevelandFoundation.org/DAF to learn more about establishing a donor advised fund for your family.

Discussing Philanthropic Equity

At the 2022 African American Philanthropy Summit



Hundreds of change-makers gathered to discuss philanthropic equity and creating impact in communities at the 2022 Cleveland Foundation **AFRICAN AMERICAN PHILANTHROPY SUMMIT** on April 30. Attendees had the opportunity to network and dive into deep conversations around pressing topics in philanthropy at breakout sessions throughout the day. They also heard insights from featured speakers **Kevin Clayton**, senior vice president, head of social impact and equity for the Cleveland Cavaliers; and **Michele Ghee**, former CEO of EBONY and JET magazines. **Melody Hobson**, co-CEO & president of Ariel Investments and vice chair of Starbucks, also shared remarks via Zoom.

Breakout session topics included vibrant discussions around multi-level engagement in philanthropy; financial equity in philanthropy; and the growth of environmental, social and governance (ESG) in the sector. Moderators, panelists and attendees shared insights on how to better engage community members directly in social change work, how to ensure equity in giving, integrating sustainability and social impact into investments, and more.

The Cleveland Foundation African American Philanthropy Committee convenes the African American Philanthropy Summit every two years to raise the visibility of African American philanthropy in the region and to honor local African American philanthropists who are making a lasting and significant impact.

Featured morning speaker Kevin Clayton discussed his own journey working in the field of diversity, equity & inclusion (DE&I). Michele Ghee delivered the event's luncheon keynote address.

"The power of giving has truly changed a lot of lives, but none more than mine," Ghee said, as she shared insights on leadership, resilience, and her role as a servant-leader with summit attendees.

During the summit, newly elected Cleveland Foundation Board Chairperson **Constance Hill-Johnson** also announced that the foundation and its partners awarded \$1,575,000 to 43 Black-led and Black-serving nonprofit organizations in Greater Cleveland in the second round of grantmaking from the Cleveland Black Futures Fund.



Left to right: **Steve Sanders**, AAPC member; **Ron Johnson**, AAPC co-chair; **Michele Ghee**, former CEO of EBONY & JET; **Constance Hill-Johnson**, Cleveland Foundation Board Chairperson; **Kevin McDaniel**, AAPC member; **Justin Horton**, AAPC Member; **Terri Eason**, Cleveland Foundation Senior Director of Advancement Equity Initiatives; **Robyn Minter Smyers**, AAPC member; **Belva Denmark Tibbs**, AAPC member; **Jazain Long**, AAPC member; and **Kevin Clayton**, senior vice president, head of social impact and equity for the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Check out highlights from the **SUMMIT** at www.ClevelandFoundation.org/AAPC2022.

FROM HERE TO CAREER

The **Greater Cleveland Career Consortium** helps Northeast Ohio students explore and pursue their paths to success after high school.

Jaylin Brown entered 11th grade at Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD)'s Ginn Academy on the fence about college. Looking for a different path to follow, he joined MAGNET's Early College Early Career program, which places high school juniors and seniors like him with local employers to gain exposure to high-tech manufacturing jobs. "I'd never been exposed to manufacturing, but it sounded like a good opportunity," he said. "I was able to learn the field in general, gain a bunch of different skills and make money while doing it. So it was a win-win-win for a high school student."

Working a day or two a week during his junior and senior years at Cleveland-based Lincoln Electric—a global leader in welding-related manufacturing—Brown learned the ins and outs of robotic welding and a stack of skills he says will help him no matter where his career takes him.

"This program has opened my eyes to a whole set of possibilities I'd never considered," Brown said.

Earlier this year, the Cleveland Foundation joined the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and other Northeast Ohio business, civic and education leaders to launch the **Greater Cleveland Career Consortium** to help make career-guiding experiences like Brown's part of every Cuyahoga County student's journey. Autumn Russell, a well-respected professional in the education and workforce fields, was selected as the Consortium's first executive director. The Consortium was formed as a result of a three-year planning process, which also produced a Cleveland-specific career planning and exploration program called Planning and Career Exploration, or PACE. PACE, which was rolled out in the Cleveland school district last November, will introduce all students to career possibilities at an early age and guide them as they develop the confidence, knowledge, skills, and relationships required to achieve their goals. Cuyahoga County Council recently approved a \$3 million investment to the Consortium to expand this work beyond Cleveland to suburban school districts.

The goal of the Consortium is to ensure that every student in the region graduates from high school with a career vision and a plan for how to achieve it.

"It's critical to get students thinking about their careers early and to help them understand the myriad of career opportunities, what they are interested in, and how those interests intersect with their strengths," according to **Helen Williams**, Cleveland Foundation program director of education. "We want them to



Mayor Justin Bibb addresses attendees at the launch of the Greater Cleveland Career Consortium on March 8.

have ownership of defining their own success and help them build the best path to get them there."

Career exploration and guidance will be embedded in a student's experience from sixth grade through graduation, including school curriculum, time set aside for advising, and out-of-school work exposure and experiences.

CMSD Chief Executive Officer **Eric Gordon** shared, "This initiative moves us away from the false dichotomy of 'college' versus 'career' and toward a shared understanding that a quality, family-sustaining wage career is the ultimate goal for all students. We are here to help them discover pathways to that goal—which may or may not include college—and support them along the way." CEO Gordon said the initiative also recognizes that none of the sectors involved can develop the workforce alone.

The Consortium will also help Greater Cleveland's employers navigate current challenges in filling jobs.

"Today's hiring environment is one of the most competitive we've seen in many decades," said **Shana Marbury**, general counsel and senior vice president of talent for the Greater Cleveland Partnership. "Employers are eager to find tools that help them develop a strong, diverse, local workforce pipeline to fill their open jobs now and in the future. The Greater Cleveland Career Consortium is just such a tool."

Do you want to help guide Cleveland students to successful careers? Learn more about the Greater Cleveland Career Consortium and how you can get involved at www.greaterclecc.org.

SAVE THE DATE:

HEADQUARTERS CELEBRATION WEEKEND & 2023 ANNUAL MEETING

JULY 13-15, 2023

Join us as we mark the grand opening of our new headquarters in MidTown and the **2023 Cleveland Foundation Annual Meeting Presented by KeyBank**. This multi-day series of special events will include tours, entertainment, art exhibitions, local cuisine and activities with partners along the E. 66th Street corridor and beyond. Stay tuned as we share more details in the coming months!



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BE A PART OF THE BIGGER PICTURE

The Advancement Team hosted a continuing education event for professional advisors and Organizational Fund Partners in October. If you want to discuss year-end giving opportunities, please call us at 877.554.5054.



PHOTO BY PAUL MOSKOWITZ