

# UDDC Lab News

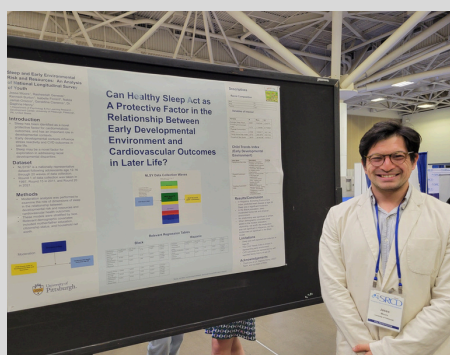
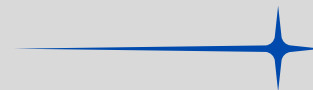


## The REAACH Study Shines a Spotlight on Youth Health

Dr. Daphne Henry (pictured left), the UDDC Lab's director, led the team's work on the *Resilient Environments Advancing Adolescent and Child Health* (REAACH) Study. The key goal of the REAACH Study is to identify the factors and experiences that shape young people's health in our region (see pages 2 – 4).



## HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE



### Research Updates

The UDDC Lab headed to Minneapolis, MN for the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) Biennial Meeting in May 2025 (see page 5).



### Community Engagement

The UDDC Team enjoyed opportunities to engage and collaborate with community members and partners (see pages 6 – 7).



### UDDC Team Kudos

UDDC undergrad research assistant, Erin Lancaster (pictured above), and PhD student, Nabila Jamal Orozco, defended academic milestones this spring (see page 8).

## REAACH explores determinants of youth health in Western PA

REAACH is a multifaceted study of the key formative experiences that influence mental, behavioral, and physical health in children ages 11 to 14. REAACH has collected data from a cross section of community members, including community stakeholders who work or volunteer in youth and family serving organizations as well as local parents and teens.

Stakeholders, parents, and teens expressed concerns about social media's negative influence on young people's self-concept, the COVID-19 pandemic's lingering impacts on children's academic and social functioning, and youth's risky health-related behaviors, such as chronic vaping, poor nutrition, and disrupted sleep—all key drivers of cardiovascular health. By pinpointing these core health concerns, these conversations have shaped the REAACH Study's key questions and future directions.

Stay tuned for upcoming REAACH Research Briefs for more details!



### The REAACH Study: An Overview

#### REAACH Study Phases

Phase 1: Stakeholder Focus Groups



Phase 2a: Parent Focus Groups



Phase 2b: Youth Focus Groups

underway!

Phase 3: Surveys, Interviews, & Direct Health Assessments with Parents and Children

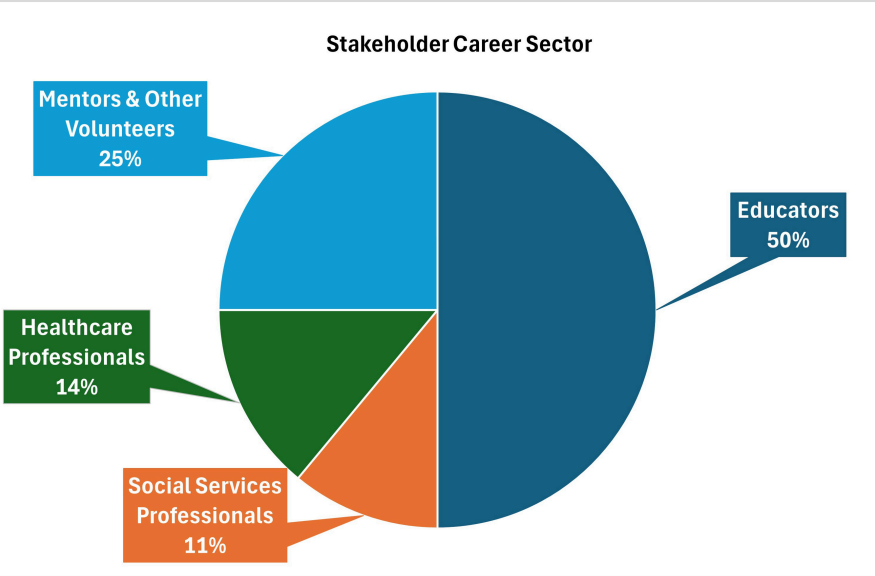
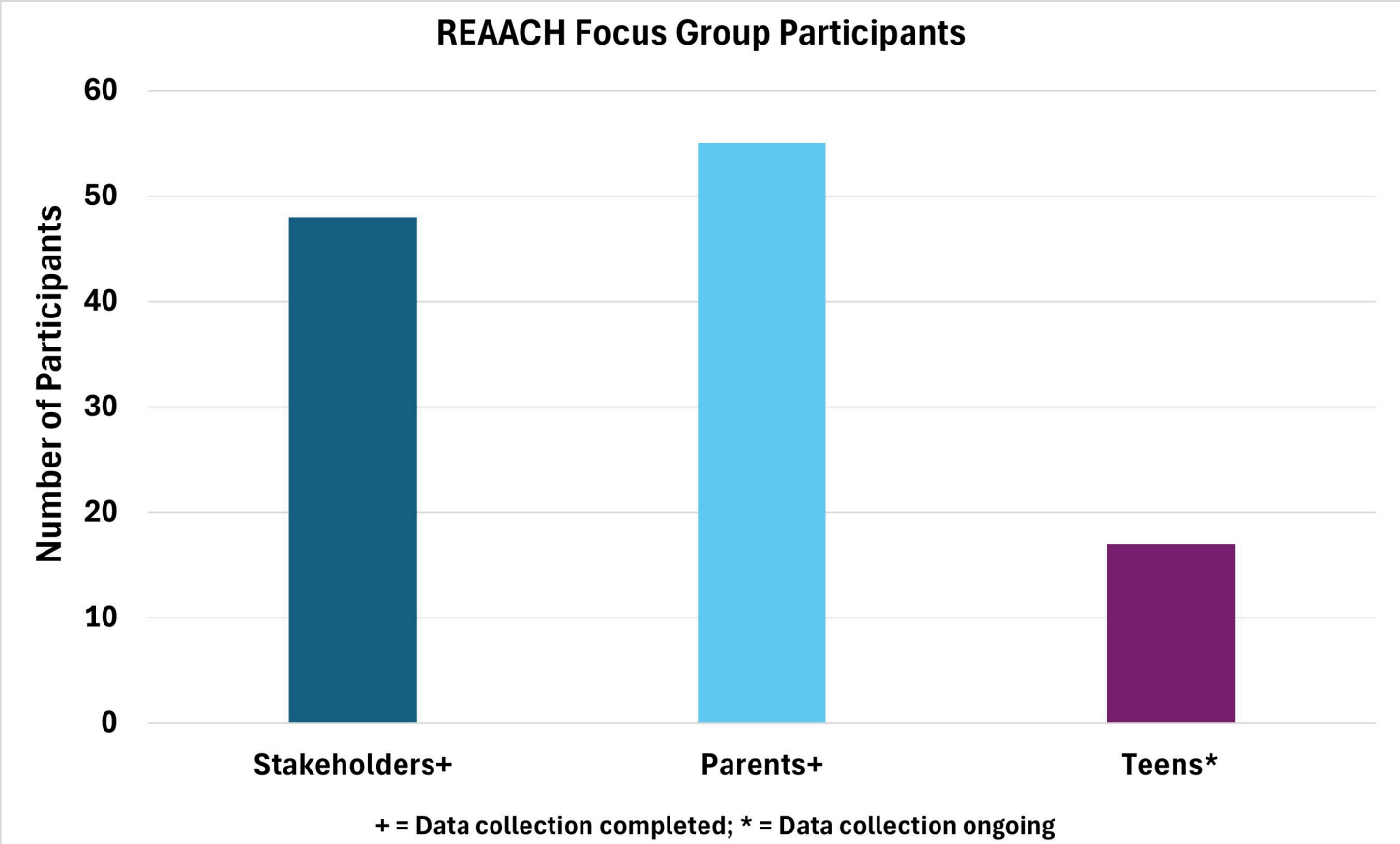
underway!

At each phase, REAACH has used insights from the community to inform the study.

# The REAACH Study: A Data Snapshot

## Who Participated in REAACH Focus Groups?

One primary aim of REAACH is to include the perspectives of a diverse set of community members. To that end, we have had conversations with professionals who work or volunteer in family- and youth-serving organizations, parents of teens in our region, and young people living in local communities. The graph presented below shows the distribution of REAACH focus group participants.



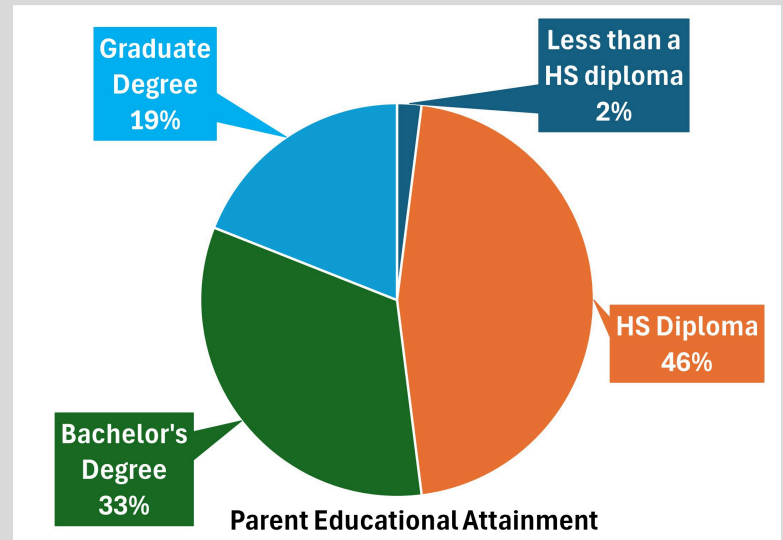
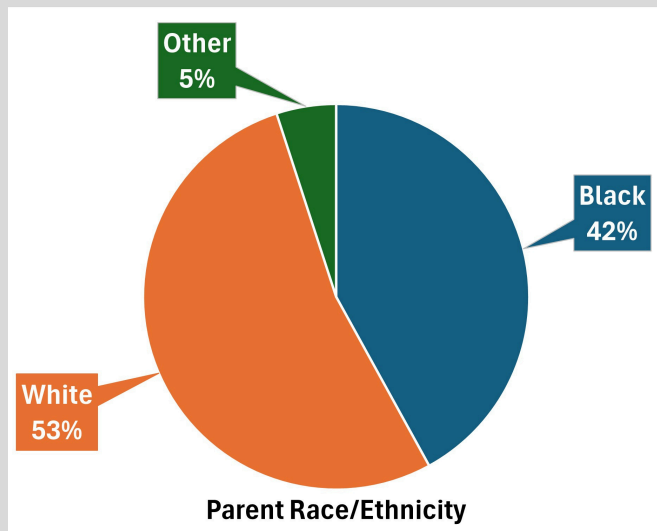
## Where Did REAACH Stakeholders Work?

Stakeholders who participated in REAACH focus groups worked in a variety of professional positions (see the figure on the left), with half of the respondents identifying as educators, one quarter serving as mentors and other volunteers, another 14% reporting employment in the healthcare sector, and the final 11% working in social services positions. These varied roles reflect their wide-ranging involvement in activities that support youth well-being.



## The REAACH Study: A Data Snapshot

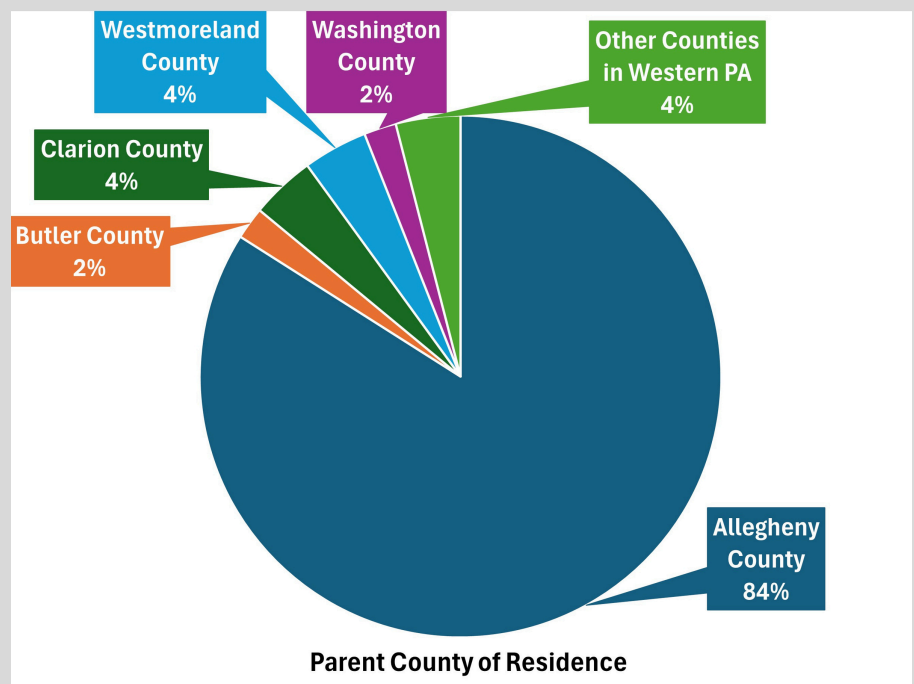
Parents who participated in REAACH focus groups were diverse in their racial, ethnic, and educational makeup.



Another principal goal of REAACH is to ensure it captures the experiences and viewpoints of an array of community members. Consequently, the UDDC team has worked to ensure our informants are racially and ethnically diverse (see chart on the left) as well as socioeconomically heterogeneous (see chart above).

REAACH parent participants lived in communities across Western PA.

The majority of parents who participated in REAACH focus groups lived in neighborhoods across Allegheny County (see chart on the right). Sixteen percent of parents resided in surrounding areas, including Butler, Clarion, Washington, and Westmoreland Counties, as well as other counties across Western PA.



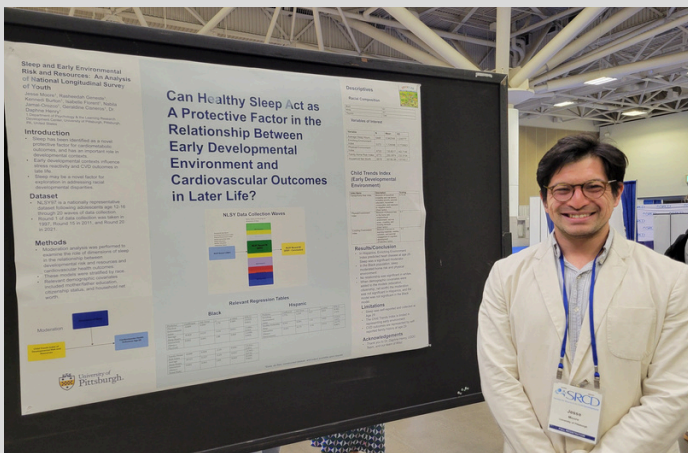


## UDDC Research Featured at SRCD Conference

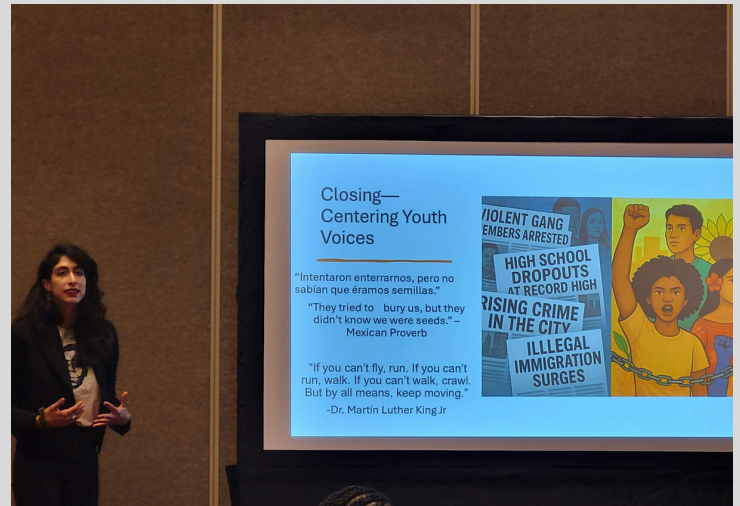


At the 2025 Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) conference, Dr. Henry and UDDC PhD student, Nabila Jamal Orozco, M.S. (pictured below) organized a symposium titled *Building Resilience: Sociocultural and Contextual Influences on Youth Empowerment and Critical Consciousness*, which brought together researchers to share their research-derived insights into how young people's family, school, and community experiences shape their perceptions of and responses to social inequality.

Dr. Henry's (pictured above) presentation at SRCD titled *Roots of Critical Action: Examining How Parental Ethnic-Racial Socialization Shapes Critical Action in Black and Latine Youth* highlights how parents' messages about racial and ethnic identity and racial inequality influence youth's involvement in advocacy and activism.



UDDC Lab Manager, Jesse Moore, M.S., (pictured above) shared findings from his study that used national data to investigate whether healthy sleep patterns support better cardiovascular health in young adults who experienced environmental adversities in their family and neighborhood environments during childhood. Jesse's investigation showcases one primary focus of research in the UDDC Lab—namely, identifying risk and protective factors that undergird or undermine children's and teens' emotional and physical health.



Nabila led another SRCD research panel called *Roots of Resistance: Understanding Youth Critical Consciousness in the Context of Racism and Resilience*. The event convened researchers whose work explored how young people's experiences with bias and discrimination influence their involvement in social change. Nabila also presented a paper she co-authored with Dr. Henry titled *From Awareness to Resistance: How Black and Latine Youth Navigate Racism Through Critical Action*. Their work examines how young people respond to different forms of racism—such as unfair treatment by individuals, systems, or in the media—by taking action to effect change.



## UDDC Community Outreach

Geraldine Cisneros (pictured left), UDDC PhD student, and Dr. Henry participated in the May 2025 Latino Health Fair in East Liberty, sharing bilingual resources on youth mental health and highlighting the UDDC Lab's community-engaged research with Latine families.



Rasheedah Geneste, Nana Menon, and Bianca Rana (pictured left) represented the UDDC Lab at the Northside Wellness Symposium, interacting with community members, including Holly Frazier, a well-known participant from the *Dance Moms* TV show! Rasheedah, Nana, and Bianca engaged in conversations about youth mental health, wellness, and the importance of community-engaged research.

Rasheedah (pictured right) also presented at the Kingsley Association's TEEN L.E.A.D. (Leadership. Education. Assistance. Development.) program, where she spoke with local youth about college readiness and shared her personal journey as an aspiring doctoral student, offering her insights on and practical guidance about navigating higher education.



Dr. Henry and Jesse Moore (pictured left) attended the Black Men's Wellness Day event in Pittsburgh's Westinghouse Park in July 2024. This gathering aligned with the UDDC Lab's commitment to health equity and community engagement. They connected with attendees, shared insights from our youth-focused research, and supported efforts to address health disparities in Black communities in our region.



## UDDC Community Outreach



Geraldine Cisneros and Dr. Henry (pictured left) represented the UDDC Lab at the April 2025 Birthing While Black event in the Hill District, where they engaged with local residents and community leaders who sought to raise awareness about alarming disparities in Black maternal health outcomes. They shared information about the lab's research and connected with local advocates committed to promoting health equity among Black moms.

At the Hazelwood Green community event, team members, Kennedi Burton (an alumna UDDC post-baccalaureate fellow) and Jesse Moore (both pictured right), connected with local residents. They played games, shared information about our research, and participated in conversations with community members about how best to support young people's health and well-being in the Pittsburgh metro. It was an interesting and lively afternoon of relationship-building in Hazelwood!



Undergraduate research assistants, Chloe Dodgion, Emily Taylor, and Ilhaam Husain (pictured left), represented the UDDC Lab at the Trunk or Treat event in Pittsburgh, doing their part to contribute to a fun and festive atmosphere for the families and youth. Their participation helped build community connections and spread awareness about our ongoing research initiatives centered on health resilience among youth.

Nabila Jamal Orozco and Dayna Jones, the Kingsley Association's youth program director, (both pictured right) spent time getting to know each other at the Kingsley Association's community center in May 2025. Nabila learned about the center's plethora of activities and shared opportunities for youth and families to participate in the UDDC Lab's research.





## Congratulations Erin, Nabila, and Rasheedah!



Erin Lancaster successfully defended her senior honors thesis in April 2025! Erin's ambitious multi-study project combined analysis of existing national data and collection of focus group data from local parents to investigate racial/ethnic differences in adolescent mental health and explore parents' perspectives on how best to support youth's emotional well-being. Erin's study earned her the prestigious Bachelor of Philosophy degree, which is a testament to the caliber of her work. We're incredibly proud of Erin for her thoughtful, health equity-focused research and can't wait to see the impact she makes in the field of youth mental health!



Nabila Jamal Orozco successfully defended her dissertation proposal in April and will launch her study, *Empowered Voices: How Civic Action Shapes Youth Mental Health and Well-being*, this summer. Nabila's research explores how Black, Latine, and Middle Eastern and North African youth experience and engage in civic action as well as how that engagement impacts their mental health and well-being. Grounded in community partnerships and youth voices, her study centers the roles of identity, systemic inequities, and critical consciousness in shaping youth development. We are very proud to support Nabila as she begins this important and timely work!



Rasheedah Geneste presented results from her postbaccalaureate capstone project at the Hot Metal Bridge Research Symposium on April 18, 2025. Her study explored how Black parents' social identities, such as their ethnicity and social class, influenced what they communicated to their children about their racial and cultural identities and how to navigate experiences with discrimination. Rasheedah's work is one facet of a larger project that Dr. Henry helms with support from UDDC staff and students. Rasheedah's insightful contributions to this project demonstrate her deep commitment to research that highlights cultural strengths in Black and other families of color. We greatly appreciate Rasheedah's leadership and look forward to witnessing all that she accomplishes in the future!

# MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD ★ JOIN ONE OF UDDC'S STUDIES!

## Understanding Development in Diverse Contexts (UDDC) Lab

### R.E.A.A.C.H STUDY

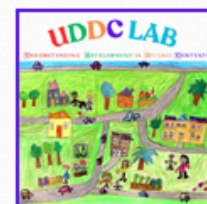
RESILIENT ENVIRONMENTS ADVANCING  
ADOLESCENT AND CHILD HEALTH

DO YOU HAVE A CHILD BETWEEN THE AGES OF 11-14?  
IF SO, WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU AND YOUR CHILD ABOUT YOUR  
PERSPECTIVES ON WHAT SUPPORTS HEALTH AND WELL-BEING.

WHAT DOES THE STUDY INVOLVE?	WHERE WILL WE MEET?	COMPENSATION?
<p><b>YOU AND YOUR CHILD</b></p> <p>✓ <b>Surveys</b> ✓ <b>Interviews</b></p> <p>WE WILL ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR AND YOUR CHILD'S PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH</p>	<p><b>YOU CHOOSE!</b></p> <p>HOME COMMUNITY UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH</p>	<p><b>YES!</b></p> <p><b>PARENT/GUARDIAN:</b></p> <p>UP TO \$120</p> <p><b>CHILD:</b></p> <p>UP TO \$100</p>



SCAN THE QR CODE TO JOIN OUR RESEARCH STUDY!



If you have any questions, contact our team at  
UDDC@PITT.EDU or (412)-383-2380



University of  
Pittsburgh



# MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD ★ JOIN ONE OF UDDC'S STUDIES!

Understanding Sociocultural  
Influences on Youth Mental  
Health Study

## Community Conversations about Youth Mental Health

Are you a parent with a child or teen between the ages of 12 to 17?

We are looking to understand what parents think helps keep children mentally healthy and happy in Western Pennsylvania. Join us to share your experiences and insight!

**\*All responses will be kept confidential\***

What helps children thrive?

Join a 90-minute discussion on youth mental health!



Scan Here To Sign Up



If you have any questions, contact our team at [UDDC@PITT.EDU](mailto:UDDC@PITT.EDU) or (412)-383-2380 ★

You will be compensated \$30 for your participation in this study.





# MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD ★ JOIN ONE OF UDDC'S STUDIES!

ENGAGED MINDS PROMOTING OPTIMAL WELL-BEING AND  
EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE  
(EMPOWER)

## Conversations About Culture & Youth Mental Health

ARE YOU A PARENT WITH  
A CHILD WHO IS BETWEEN  
11 AND 17 YEARS OLD?

ARE YOU A YOUNG  
PERSON WHO IS BETWEEN  
11 AND 17 YEARS OLD

HELP US LEARN HOW CULTURE AND COMMUNITY  
SHAPE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

**The EMPOWER research study wants to hear from parents/caregivers and their children (ages 11 - 17) about how family and cultural experiences influence youth mental health. Both a caregiver and child from the same family must be willing to participate.**

### WHAT TO EXPECT:

- 60 - 90 Minute Individual Interviews
- Scheduled at Your Convenience
- In-Person or Online Over Zoom

### IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATING:

Email: [UDDC@pitt.edu](mailto:UDDC@pitt.edu)

Call: (412) 383-2380

- Parents & Youth Will Be Compensated
- Parents: \$40
- Youth: \$30

SCAN HERE TO SIGN UP



MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD ★ JOIN ONE OF UDDC'S STUDIES!

## EMPOWERED VOICES PROJECT

# YOUTH NEEDED



### Engage in:

- ☐ Focus Group (60 mins)
- OR
- ☐ Interview (60 mins)
- ☐ Short Survey

Are you **Black, Latine, or Middle Eastern/North African** between the ages of **12-18** and take part in **civic action (e.g., community participation, political involvement, activism or advocacy) of any kind**? You might be eligible to participate in our project!

Talk about your experiences with **civic engagement in 60-90 min conversation online or in-person** and answer short surveys about **mental health** and **well-being**! All responses will be kept confidential.

Scan here to sign-up!



**\$30 for your participation!**



To learn more about how to get involved, text, email, or call Nabila Jamal Orozco at **(256) 715-2069** or **NPJ11@pitt.edu**





# Acknowledgments:

## Thank you to our Amazing Community Partners!!



The **Kingsley Association**, based in Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood, has partnered with the UDDC Lab to support learning and enrichment opportunities for local youth and offer information about community-based research. Together, they are working to recruit local youth and promote mental health and civic empowerment. This collaboration reflects Kingsley's strong commitment to uplifting young people and strengthening community well-being.

### Contact Information:

Address: 6435 Frankstown Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Phone: (412) 661-8751

Website: [www.kingsleyassociation.org](http://www.kingsleyassociation.org)

Leaders at **Youth Enrichment Services (YES)**, also located in East Liberty, have engaged with the UDDC Lab to discuss interventions to enhance youth's civic engagement and identify avenues to empower teens to tackle societal challenges and bolster their abilities promote their own and their peers' positive development. YES will also host its annual Violence Prevention Research and Practitioner Symposium this summer (July 7-9), which will facilitate dialogue among youth leaders, university scholars, and community advocates about strategies to curtail gun violence and engender healing.



### Contact Information:

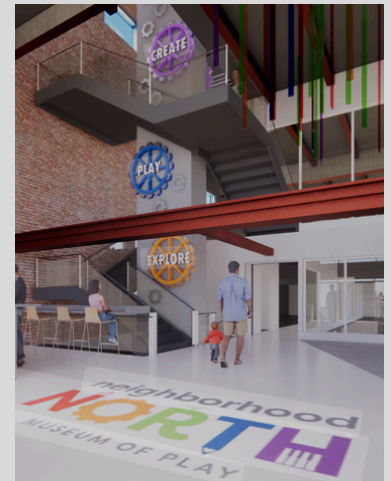
Address: 6035 Broad Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Phone: (412) 661-7834

Website: [www.yespgh.org](http://www.yespgh.org)



**Junior Achievement of Western PA** (pictured left) and **Neighborhood North Museum of Play** (pictured right) have partnered with the UDDC Lab to support our research efforts by sharing information about REACH and hosting focus groups. Their leaders and staff have offered welcoming spaces for community dialogue, and both organizations provide innovative enrichment programs for children in our region.



Junior Achievement of Western PA (pictured above)

Address: 90 Emerson Lane, Suite 1405, Bridgeville, PA 15017

Phone: (412) 208-4747

Website: [www.juniorachievement.org/web/ja-westernpa](http://www.juniorachievement.org/web/ja-westernpa)

Neighborhood North Museum of Play (pictured above)

Address: 216 N Jefferson St, New Castle, PA 16101

Phone: (724) 698-6927

Website: [www.neighborhoodnorth.com](http://www.neighborhoodnorth.com)



## Lab Member of the Month!

Each month, we celebrate a UDDC Lab Member of the Month to recognize the dedication, hard work, and community spirit of our team. This spotlight honors a member who has gone above and beyond in advancing our mission through research, outreach, and collaboration.

### Isabelle Florent



This month, we're proud to recognize Isabelle Florent as our UDDC Lab Member of the Month! Isabelle is a rising senior who is majoring in Psychology at Pitt. Isabelle is an exceptional student and a conscientious, versatile, and skilled research assistant. She consistently brings energy, thoughtfulness, and commitment to our community-based research and outreach efforts. Whether she's supporting research tasks or representing the lab at local events, Isabelle's dedication to our lab's mission truly stands out.