

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



MARY ANN SWETLAND
CENTER FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Darcy Freedman
DIRECTOR

This past year represented an important transition for the Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health. In 2019, we welcomed more than two dozen staff and trainees who contributed each day to the research, training and community engagement agenda of the Swetland Center; furthered our program of research focused on food systems and health; and engaged more than 50 stakeholders in the development of our future research agenda focused on neighborhood-level treatment of environmental health exposures. At the core of each of these activities were the *people* including community leaders, organizational partners, governmental stakeholders, our 14 new faculty affiliates, our Advisory Council and staff who demonstrated a willingness to collaborate in new ways to identify and test solutions that advance environmental health equity. Witnessing this unwavering commitment to *do better for our community* by leveraging research and training to inform community systems change has been the most rewarding part of my first year as Director. As we begin a new decade, I look forward to working with existing and growing new partners to develop and scale solutions that transform environmental determinants of health inequities through policies and practices that promote community and population health for all.

With gratitude,

Our Mission & Vision

Our mission at the Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health, located in the School of Medicine at CWRU, is to study the complex interplay between the environment and health. The center places special emphasis on investigating the environmental determinants of health inequities to translate these findings into policies and practices that promote community and population health. The strategic vision of the Swetland Center is to leverage diverse skills and experiences through transformative research, training and community engagement in order to achieve environmental health equity by:

- Advancing applied and community-engaged environmental health research.
- Integrating environmental health and community systems science into medical and graduate education.
- Engaging the community in research translation to inform changes in policy and practice.

Our Values



Innovative



Inclusive



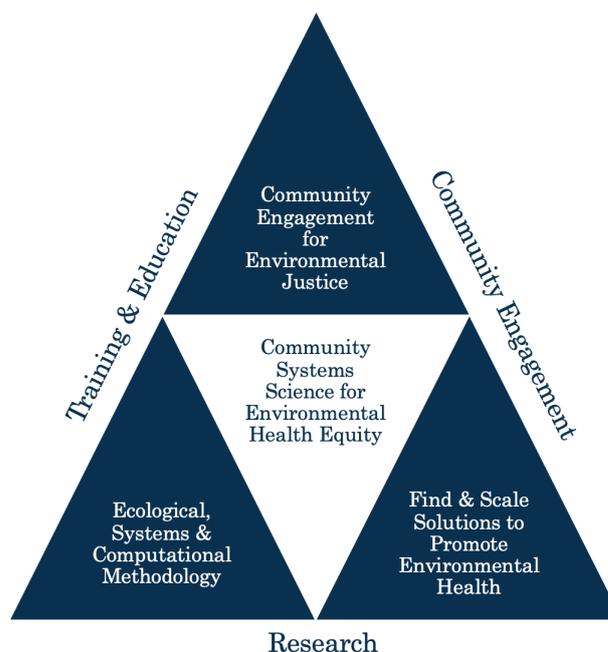
Collaborative



Community Engaged

Our Approach

The Swetland Center operates within a three-pronged approach focused on research, training and education and community engagement. Our goal is to build capacity for the next generation of scientists to work alongside our community partners to promote healthy places for people to thrive.



2019 Funders

Our work would not be possible without generous contributions from funders supporting the Swetland Center in 2019.

- Clinical and Transnational Science Collaborative (CTSC) at CWRU *
- Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research
- Michael and Susan Dell Foundation
- Nationwide Children's Hospital
- National Cancer Institute/VentureWell *
- National Dairy Council
- National Institute of Drug Abuse *
- Sears Swetland Family Foundation
- Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland
- Steven J. McHale Family Foundation
- The S. Livingston Mather Charitable Trust *
- U.S. Department of Agriculture

*Newly funded research in 2019

RESEARCH

The climate is ripe in Cleveland to propel beyond identifying environmental health concerns to focus on finding and scaling solutions to promote health equity locally and beyond. In 2019, the Swetland Center housed multiple initiatives focused on food systems change, evaluation of nutrition incentive programs and capacity building to advance healthy environments. Our research typologies include intervention development, dissemination and implementation science, systems modeling, and real-world evaluations that aim to inform policies and best practices. Here we highlight our newest efforts to innovate environmental health equity research.

Dissemination

The impact of our research findings are directly linked to our dissemination efforts. Equally important is ensuring diversity of their translation to reach a variety of audiences. We aim to provide a menu of ways to access our work that can be utilized to inform policy, systems and environmental change.

2019 Dissemination Products

| | |
|--|----|
| Publications by Core & Affiliate Faculty | 22 |
| Invited Presentations | 12 |
| Media Articles & Data Briefs | 4 |
| Swetland Seminars | 13 |
| Local, State, & National Trainings | 6 |

HEALing Communities Study (HCS)

Case Western Reserve University received a **\$65.9 million** federal grant from the National Institutes of Health to launch Ohio's participation in the HCS. This initiative will plan, implement and evaluate data-driven approaches to integrate multi-pronged, evidence-based interventions within health care, behavioral health, justice systems and communities to **reduce opioid fatalities by 40%**. Faculty from the School of Medicine, College of Arts and Sciences and the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences have joined forces with stakeholders from across Ohio to combat the opioid crisis. Dr. Freedman is co-leading Community Engagement efforts for Ohio and Landscape Analysis data report planning with the national team.

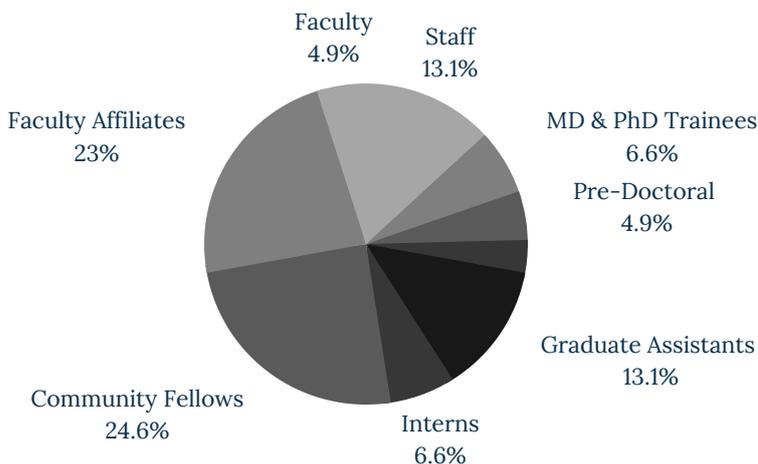
Speeding Research-tested INTerventions (SPRINT)



The Swetland Center was selected to participate in the National Cancer Institute's **SPRINT program**. This program offered researchers the opportunity to transform evidence-based interventions into "market-ready products" to increase uptake. The team included four members of the Swetland Center as well as two entrepreneurial mentors from **CWRU LaunchNet**. In 8 intensive weeks, they took a deep dive exploring how to scale the FreshLink Ambassador intervention; the core research of the CDC-funded Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods from 2014-2019.

2019 Center Staff Makeup

The Swetland Center is focused on creating a diverse set of opportunities to engage students, staff, faculty and lifelong learners.



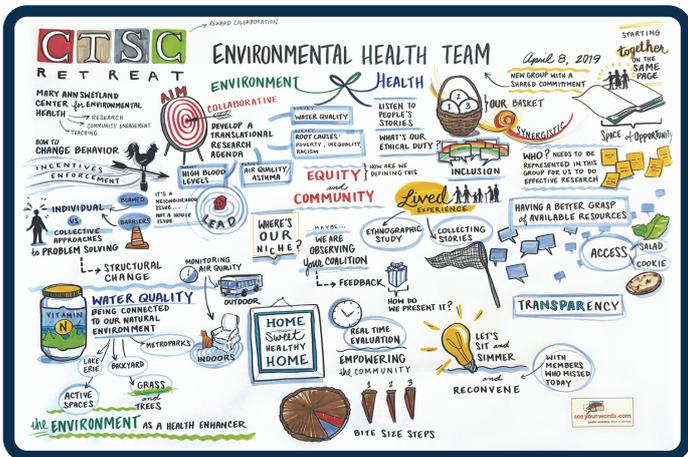
Convening Ideas & Actions: Creating Food Opportunities for the Future

In May 2019, over **150** stakeholders came together to: **(1)** Learn more about the systems that shape food experiences in Greater Cleveland, **(2)** Voice opinions about opportunities and barriers to equitable food systems change and **(3)** Identify solutions to create food opportunities for our future. The event generated ideas for solutions to improve economic opportunity, food security, and nutrition equity and fostered relationships that can be leveraged for equitable food systems change.



Clinical and Translational Science Collaborative (CTSC) Strategic Planning Process for Team Science

The Swetland Center was fortunate to receive pilot funding through the CTSC to support multi-disciplinary collaboratives by developing a **Translational Research Project (TRP)**. We utilized this opportunity to bring together a diverse group of over **25** stakeholders to co-create a plan for a translational research project and agenda for the Center. As a result, a new focus of reducing asthma disparities among Cleveland youth emerged. This also informed our proposal to the National Institute of Health for funding and recognition as a **Center of Excellence in Environmental Health Equity**. In early 2020, we will begin pilot work to inform the creation of a **Child Asthma Improvement Review (C-AIR)** modeled from the Fetal Infant Mortality Review process. This initiative will begin on the near west-side of Cleveland with the long term goal of reducing pediatric asthma disparities through neighborhood-level treatment.



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Summer Internship Training Program

In June 2019, the Swetland Center welcomed our first cohort of **5** summer interns. Our inaugural class included trainees from three schools at CWRU and from Tri-C. They participated in an intense 8-week internship where they had the opportunity to learn new skills working on various research projects housed within the Center. From data collection to organizational development, the interns engaged in meaningful activities that enriched both their learning and our growth as a center.



PSE-READI Tool Training

The Building Capacity for Obesity Prevention Project (**BCOP**) celebrated its statewide launch of **PSEREADI.org** in early 2019. The website features four PSE READI assessment tools, an extensive online resource library of worksheets, toolkits, general resources and a series of 20 videos featuring community nutrition practitioners from across Ohio working in the four community nutrition intervention areas. The BCOP team provided targeted training for practitioners on how to use the tool via five topic-specific webinars and a statewide training.



Looking to 2020

- Broaden focus on finding and scaling solutions to promote environmental health equity and inform policies and practices.
- Increase opportunities for all learners through advancing our second cohort of summer interns and building capacity for training of doctoral students and investigators.
- Collaborate with university services to improve our sustainability initiatives and become a leader in green office practices.
- Develop and test decision support tools to offer a systems lens, within an equity framework, to inform a community driven process for creating sustainable local food systems.
- Grow our seminar series to feature local and national leaders in environmental health and highlight the work of our affiliates.