



**CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY**
Mary Ann Swetland Center
for Environmental Health

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



**Accelerating Progress Towards
Environmental Health for All Communities**

Table of Contents

The Swetland Center focuses on research, training and education, and community engagement to build capacity for the next generation of scientists to work alongside community partners to promote healthy places for people to thrive. The following report provides an overview of our activities throughout 2024.

1	DIRECTOR'S NOTE
2	OUR MISSION AND MODEL
3	BY THE NUMBERS
4	STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
5	SNAP-ED IMPLEMENTATION
7	REACH: COMMUNITY NUTRITION PROGRAM
9	NOURSHING POWER NETWORK
11	OHIO SNAP-ED STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROJECT
13	THE HEALING COMMUNITIES STUDY
15	OH/PA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CONSORTIUM
17	CTSC'S COMMUNITY ENGAGED RESEARCH SUPPORT
18	TRAINING
19	ADVISORY BOARD
20	2024 FUNDERS
21	LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

Director's Note



Darcy Freedman, PhD, MPH
DIRECTOR

“

Thank you for your continued support of the Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health. In 2024, we significantly expanded the Swetland Center's scope, along with Case Western Reserve University's, by launching the SNAP-Ed program in Cuyahoga County. This initiative ushered in five new staff and numerous opportunities to serve the Greater Cleveland community. Additionally, we gained momentum with the Nourishing Power Network, collaborating with its Advisory Council to support two emerging Nutrition Zones in Cleveland. We are now settled in our new home at the MidTown Collaboration Center, which offers exciting opportunities for collaboration with partners. We are grateful for your partnership and trust in our efforts to translate research into practices that foster vibrant communities.

In solidarity,

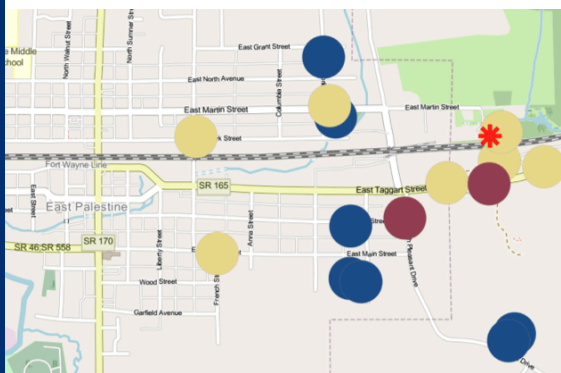
Our Mission and Model

Studying the complex interplay between environmental drivers and population health outcomes to advance environmental health for all communities.



Community

Today, the Swetland Center continues Mary Ann Swetland's legacy by building community partnerships to find and scale solutions to redress the environment's disparate impact on communities in Cleveland and beyond. Our community-engaged and action-oriented research maintains a focus on community ownership and translation to foster sustainability.



Research

The Swetland Center's research investigates environmental drivers of health inequities with the goal of translating our findings into policies, practices, and relationships that promote community and population health. In 2024, this included the Nourishing Power Network, Ohio SNAP-Ed Stakeholder Engagement Project, and Ohio/Pennsylvania University Research Consortium.



Training

The Center is committed to developing scholars and practitioners skilled to move knowledge into actions that advance environmental health for all communities. Our commitment to training was exhibited through our monthly seminar series, the Daniel Lewis Ravin, MD Award, the Nourishing Power Fellowship, and our ongoing contributions to curriculum development in the CWRU School of Medicine.

By the Numbers

The Swetland Center prioritizes dissemination of our research using diverse modalities to accelerate translation into data-driven policies and practices that advance environmental health for all communities.

8

PUBLISHED
MANUSCRIPTS

18

CONFERENCE
PRESENTATIONS

7

POSTER
PRESENTATIONS

2

TECHNICAL
REPORTS

6

SWETLAND
SEMINARS

\$2.35
million
2024 OPERATING BUDGET

86
STAFF, TRAINEES,
PARTNERS, AND FACULTY
AFFILIATES

Strategic Priorities

2024 - 2029

Through collaborative, cross-institutional, and multi-sector initiatives led and/or supported by the Swetland Center over the next five years, the Center will leverage the legacy of Mary Ann Swetland and her family's commitment to environmental health to achieve transformative impacts for all communities.

The following report highlights our continued efforts to align our work to these strategic priorities.

Goal 1

Implement, evaluate, and sustain collaborative research that leads to systems transformation resulting in environmental health for all communities.

Goal 2

Grow research capacity building opportunities related to our expertise in food systems transformation, environmental justice, community-engaged research, and community-level translational science.

Goal 3

Strengthen and nurture relationships within and across the university, institutions, organizations, and communities to support agile research, training, and community engagement focused on the bold goal of environmental health for all communities.

Goal 4

Achieve collective impact through shared and synergistic strategies implemented within CWRU's Institute for Population and Community Health and the Swetland Center's new location at the MidTown Collaboration Center.

COMMUNITY

New in 2024 **SNAP-Ed Implementation**



OHIO SNAP-ED

Program Overview

The Swetland Center partnered with The Ohio State University Extension to provide SNAP-Ed in Cuyahoga County. SNAP-Ed is a free, evidence based nutrition education program serving individuals eligible to receive SNAP benefits or other means-tested federal assistance programs throughout Ohio. The program provides education to help people make their SNAP dollars stretch, learn how to shop for and cook healthy meals, and lead physically active lifestyles.

COMMUNITY

SNAP-Ed Implementation

Program Highlights



A Growing Team

The SNAP-Ed team hired a Manager along with 4 Program Assistants. Two of the 4 Program Assistants successfully completed a 16-week training, Navigating for Success, through The Ohio State University Extension Office. These Program Assistants completed the National Nutrition Certification Program through Utah State University. All other team members will complete both trainings in 2025.



A Renewed Commitment

Both indirect and direct programming returned to Cuyahoga County in 2024, as new partnerships were established. More than 450 community members in Cuyahoga County attended CWRU's SNAP-Ed programs that launched in Q4 of 2024.

By the Numbers



Direct SNAP-Ed Programming

41

PARTICIPANTS

Attended four (4) sessions at The Centers/Liberty and one (1) at the National Church Residences/Carnegie Tower



Indirect SNAP-Ed Programming

444

ATTENDEES

Attended 17 sessions at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank and one (1) session at Fairstead Properties



COMMUNITY

REACH: Community Nutrition Program



Program Overview

The vision of the REACH Community Nutrition program led by the Swetland Center is to ensure anyone in Cuyahoga County can access a produce prescription from their healthcare provider when needed. Working with partners, we seek to:

- Expand the number of clinical sites offering produce prescriptions.
- Increase the number of people in prioritized areas of Cuyahoga County using fruit and vegetable incentives and produce prescriptions.
- Ensure local produce prescription programs are culturally tailored and sourcing as much of their food as possible from local growers and suppliers.

COMMUNITY

REACH: Community Nutrition Program

Program Highlights

- 8 individuals recruited to join the REACH Fellowship
- 35 individuals joined the Produce Prescription Working Group
- Hosted the "Produce Prescriptions 101" workshop
- Launched a produce prescription landscape analysis

REACH Fellowship 2025 Cohort



Holly Davenport
That Brown Girl
Spice



Kelli Littlejohn
Dove Legacy
Health



Brejona Whitlock
Collinwood Friends
Garden



Kedon Newton
MetroHealth
CWRU



**Beverly "Codi"
Cody**
Wholistic Alchemy



**Asya "Azzy"
Aretskin-Hariton**
MetroHealth



Tim Lewis
Rid-All Green
Partnership



Veronica Walton
Food Depot to
Health

Program Success

One of the two (2) organizations to complete a TA session was awarded funding to expand their produce prescription program to serve patients diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes.

By the Numbers

6

Farmers' Markets (FM) using Produce Path to increase customer engagement and expand use of fruit and vegetable incentive programs

373

New individuals enrolled in the Produce Perks fruit and vegetable incentive program at Produce Path markets

\$16,608

Value of SNAP transactions at FMs participating in REACH

\$15,418

Value of the incentive program transactions at FMs participating in REACH

RESEARCH

Nourishing Power Network

ADDRESSING
GOAL

1



Program Overview

The Nourishing Power Network is part of the Nourishing Neighborhoods Empowering Communities study conducted by Case Western Reserve University in partnership with Neighborhood Connections and the study's Advisory Council.

The Nourishing Power Network consists of four components:

- Advisory Council
- Networking
- Fellowship
- Nutrition Equity Fund

Nourishing Power

Program Highlights



Nourishing Power Network

- 8 fellows graduated in May 2024. Each fellow received a Nutrition Equity Innovation Prize, provided by the Nutrition Equity Fund (NEF) to acknowledge their efforts
- The Advisory Council granted two \$70k awards from the NEF to local collectives working to advance Nutrition Zones
- The Advisory Council granted \$20k from the NEF to support evaluation work of their first grantee, Jardin 4 Life



Telling the Story of Systems Change

The Nourishing Power Network engaged a marketing firm to develop audio-visual and written pieces on the story of its systems-change strategy, which will be released in spring 2025.

By the Numbers

\$165K

In 2024, The Nutrition Equity Fund granted a total of \$165k to community leaders to advance nutrition health for all individuals in Greater Cleveland.

\$200K

Awarded \$200K from the Cleveland Clinic to increase support for community-driven food justice initiatives focused on ending childhood hunger in Greater Cleveland.



2023-2024 Nourishing Power Fellowship Cohort

L-R: Janet Nevels, Ridwan Lawal, Katarina Smiley, Narkeita Motaabbed, Cheryl Clements, Vernon Clements, and Mikki Smith
(Sonia Cruz Matos was there in spirit)



Throughout the 2023-2024 Nourishing Power Fellowship, five teams of local food justice leaders grew their vision for food justice into action plans that will spark and expand supply and demand for culturally relevant and nutritious foods created by Asian, Black, Indigenous, and Latino/a/x food growers and makers.



Members of the Nourishing Power Network Leadership Team (L-R: Dawn Glasco, Darcy Freedman, Shirley Bell) celebrate their new partnership with Dr. Tomislav Mihaljevic, CEO, President, and Morton L. Mandel CEO Chair of Cleveland Clinic.

RESEARCH

Ohio SNAP-Ed Stakeholder Engagement Project



PSE | READI

Program Overview

The Ohio SNAP-Ed Stakeholder Engagement Project to Promote Healthy Food Access (OSSEP) is a partnership between the Swetland Center and The Ohio State University SNAP-Ed Program. The purpose of the OSSEP project is to develop tools for engaging diverse stakeholders, including SNAP-Ed practitioners and SNAP and other low-income consumers, in Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) changes designed to promote healthy food access. The project currently supports the development, implementation, dissemination, and evaluation of two tools:

- **Produce Path for Customers**
(Formerly FM Engage)
- **PSE Readiness Assessment and Decision Instrument (PSE READI)**

RESEARCH

Ohio SNAP-Ed Stakeholder Engagement Project

Program Highlights

- Completed a six month PSE READI quality improvement project involving 10 SNAP-Ed Program Assistants (PAs) with experience and interest in implementing PSEs in food pantries.
- Completed a five-part workshop series for SNAP-Ed PAs across Ohio on the PSE READI and steps to prepare to implement community nutrition PSEs.

By the Numbers

6

Implemented the Produce Path Customer Portal at six markets across Northeast Ohio



5

Hired five community champions to promote the Produce Path app



RESEARCH

The HEALing Communities Study



NIH HEAL INITIATIVE

HEALing Communities Study

Program Overview

The Swetland Center supported community engagement strategies within the HEALing Communities Study (HCS). This four state study had the goal of reducing opioid overdose deaths throughout four states:

- Ohio
- Kentucky
- New York
- Massachusetts

RESEARCH

The HEALing Communities Study

All HEALing Communities Study manuscripts, toolkits and other dissemination materials are available online.

Program Highlights

Study goals included, increasing:

- Overdose education and naloxone distribution
- Access to medications for opioid use disorder
- Safer opioid prescribing and dispensing practices

While the intervention ended in December 2023, the four-state team and community partners have assembled a repository of resources for dissemination. In 2024, the HCS team focused on disseminating findings related to the implementation of the Community that HEAL (CTH) intervention in collaboration with The Ohio State University and the University of Cincinnati.

By the Numbers

36

TAILORED PRESENTATIONS

The HEALing Communities Study delivered 36 tailored presentations across 36 counties in Ohio, along with seven presentations to statewide organizations, 14 presentations at professional and research conferences, and a session at the November Swetland Seminar.

45

MANUSCRIPTS

The HEALing team at CWRU, in collaboration with the HCS Consortium, contributed to the writing, editing, and publication of 45 manuscripts. Eight have been published, with the remaining expected to be completed in 2025. Swetland Center team members are currently lead authors on five of these manuscripts.

RESEARCH

OH/PA University Research Consortium

ADDRESSING
GOAL

3

Ohio/Pennsylvania University Research Consortium



Program Overview

Over the past year, the Swetland Center provided convening support for the Ohio/Pennsylvania University Research Consortium. This collaboration between seven universities and nearly two dozen researchers co-led by:

- Case Western Reserve University
- The Ohio State University
- Kent State University
- University of Pittsburgh

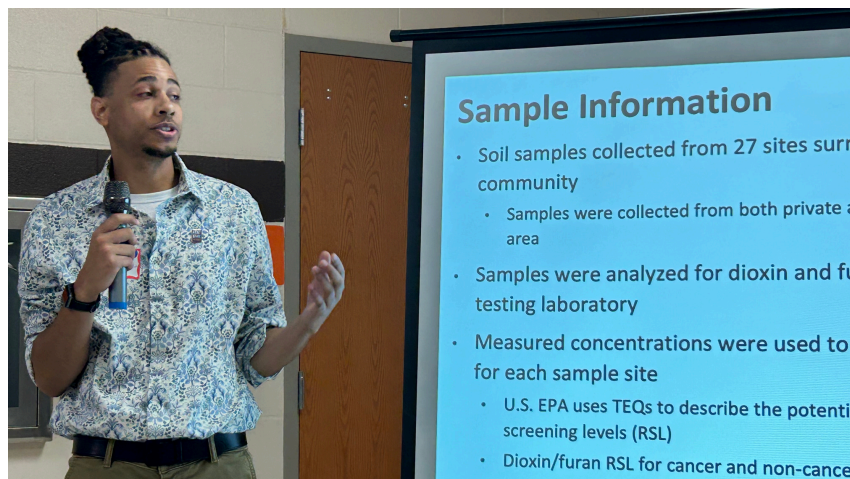
The consortium seeks to provide accurate, data-driven information to the East Palestine community following the train derailment in February 2023.

RESEARCH

OH/PA University Research Consortium

All data briefs
are available
online [here](#).

Program Highlights



Dr. Myron Lard sharing results of soil samples collected near East Palestine at the July 2024 public convening hosted at East Palestine High School.



State of the Science Reports

The team organized and assessed existing data with the goal of informing the community about what is known and not known. Based on these data, the team developed recommendations and suggested further research to aid the community's efforts in public health and environmental monitoring.



Public Meetings

Public meetings provided the opportunity to share the consortium's data summaries with interested groups. Hosted in April and July 2024, members of the consortium discussed data briefs and shared recommendations to shape future research.

RESEARCH

CTSC's Community Engaged Research Support



Dr. Freedman's team was awarded a pilot grant for the Educate to Achieve (E2A) Program: Training to Achieve Optimal Health through Translational Science. Pictured with Dr. McComsey, Principal Investigator of the CTSC of Northern Ohio.

Program Overview

The Clinical and Translational Science Collaborative (CTSC) of Northern Ohio, a collaborative among:

- Case Western Reserve University
- Cleveland Clinic
- MetroHealth
- University Hospitals
- VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System
- Northeast Ohio Medical University
- University of Toledo

The CTSC aspires to be a catalyst for high quality clinical and translational science and transformative research to positively impact the health of those in Northern Ohio and beyond. The Swetland Center supports the community engaged research infrastructure of the CTSC.

Program Highlights



Community Engagement (CE) Studios

- Successfully launched the pilot of two CE Studios, supported by insights from the established Vanderbilt model.
- The pilot studios engaged 17 community experts whose feedback was compiled and returned to the investigators to guide their research.
- 40+ individuals expressed interest in either serving as a community expert or facilitating a future CE Studio.



CTSC's Community Advisory Board

- In July, the Community Advisory Board 2.0 began its term representing various fields and expertise including higher education, non-profit management, and healthcare.
- Identified opportunities for the CAB to provide insight via consultation sessions for CTSC-affiliated programs and initiatives during bi-monthly meetings.

TRAINING

Educating the Next Generation of Environmental Health Researchers



Program Overview

The Swetland Center is committed to providing training and professional development to educate the next generation of environmental health researchers and increase research capacity within our community.

Daniel Lewis Ravin, MD Award

The Daniel Lewis Ravin, MD Award honors MD students and PhD candidates enrolled in the School of Medicine at Case Western Reserve University who show promise in the fields of occupational or environmental health.

The 2024–2025 Award Recipients



Nikita Das
MD STUDENT



Trina Pal
MD STUDENT



Nikhila Yerabandi
MD STUDENT

Post-Doctoral Success



Shannon Walker, PhD, MEd, BA

Postdoctoral Scholar Shannon Walker serves as a co-investigator on an NIH funded project examining "The Role of Medically Tailored Groceries in Mitigating Food Insecurity and Improving Pregnancy Outcomes through Clinic-Community Partnerships." (PI: D. Borawski)



Swetland Center Advisory Council

Sheila Abraham, PhD

Advisor, Environmental Risk Management

Richard T. Andrews

Publisher & Editor, The Real Deal Press

Mary Burns

Community Advocate

Nicole Burt, PhD

*Curator of Human Health & Evolutionary Medicine
Cleveland Museum of Natural History*

Crystal Davis

*Senior Midwest Regional Director
National Parks Conservation Association*

G. Keymah Durden III

Co-Founder, Rid-All Green Partnership

Marianne Eppig, MCRP, MA

Trustee, Sears-Swetland Family Foundation

Ruth Swetland Eppig

*Chair, Swetland Center for Environmental Health Advisory Board
President, Sears-Swetland Family Foundation*

Lydia Harrington

*Trustee for the Sears Swetland Family Foundation and
Harrington Family Foundation*

Stephen McHale

Founder, Explorys, an IBM company

Torrey McMillan, MA

Director, Center for Sustainability, Hathaway Brown School

Frances Mills, MA

Commission of Health, Cleveland Department of Public Health

Karen Bolte Mulloy, DO, MSCH

*Associate Professor, Department of Family Medicine and Community Health,
Case Western Reserve University*

Brandy Phipps, Ph.D.

*Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural & Life Sciences, Agriculture
Research Development Program
Chair, Inter-institutional Network for Food, Agriculture, and Sustainability
(INFAS)*

Kristie R. Ross, MD, MS

*Chief, Division of Pediatric Pulmonology and Sleep Medicine, UH Rainbow
Babies and Children's Hospital; Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Case
Western Reserve University School of Medicine*

Kurt C. Stange, MD, PhD

*Distinguished University Professor and Dorothy Jones Weatherhead
Professor, Professor of Family Medicine & Community Health, Population &
Quantitative Health Sciences, Oncology, and Sociology
Case Western Reserve University*

Colleen Walsh, PhD

School of Health Science, Cleveland State University

Shanelle Smith Whigham, MBA

Senior VP, National Community Engagement Director, Key Bank

Margaret W. Wong, Esq.

*President & Managing Partner
Margaret W. Wong & Associates Co., LPA*

2024 Funders

Our work is made possible by the generous and ongoing support of our funders.

Thanks to their shared vision and generous financial support, we are empowered and enabled to do this critical work.



**\$2.35
million**
2024 Operating budget

The Andrews Foundation
Case Comprehensive Cancer Center
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Cleveland Clinic
Clinical & Translational Science Collaborative (CTSC) of Northern Ohio
CWRU Office of Research and Technology Management
Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research
John Carroll University Donnelly School of Leadership and Social Innovation
Margaret W. Wong
The MetroHealth System
National Dairy Council
National Institute of Drug Abuse
Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods
Robert Reakirt Foundation
Sears-Swetland Family Foundation
Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Vitamix Corporation

A Look at 2025 and Beyond

As of March 2025, our team is based at the MidTown Collaboration Center (MCC), located in the historic Hough neighborhood. The aim of the Center is to bring multiple sectors, companies and disciplines under one roof to foster a new model for a “both/and” approach to economic development that centers around community.



ADDRESSING
GOAL

4

MidTown Collaboration Center

1974 E 66th Street
Cleveland, OH 44103

As we Approach 2025

The Swetland Center specializes in **boundary-spanning** and **collaborative** research and training focused on achieving environmental health for all communities through food systems transformation and environmental justice.

We do this through:

- Sustained and trusting partnerships that include multidisciplinary and cross-sector collaborators.
- Responsive and adaptive approaches aligned with emergent environmental health needs and opportunities.
- Community-engaged and action-oriented research with a focus on community ownership and translation.
- Immersive training opportunities strengthening research capacity to address the social and structural drivers of environmental health.



**CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY**
**Mary Ann Swetland Center
for Environmental Health**

Accelerating Progress Towards Environmental Health for All Communities

CASE.EDU/Swetland
1974 E 66th Street, Suite 300 | Cleveland, OH 44103