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

# The Swetland Scoop

**September 2025**

*Our mission is to accelerate pathways to vibrant and healthy environments through collaborative research, immersive training, and authentic community engagement.*



## News & Announcements

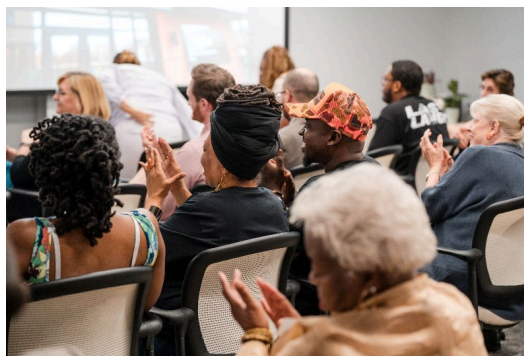
Celebrating the REACH Fellowship 2025 Graduates

in Cuyahoga County. Click the button below to learn more and connect with each fellowship team.

- [Watch the recording of the ceremony](#)
- [View the photo gallery](#)



L to R: Kelli Littlejohn, Linea Webb, Holly Davenport, Brandie Strozier, Beverly Cody, Michael Walton, Veronica Walton, Asya Aretskin-Hariton, Kedon Newton, Brejona Whitlock, and Tim Lewis.



Audience clapping after a team pitched their vision for a produce prescription program.

[Learn More about the Fellows](#)

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Learn about Produce Prescription Programming in our Region

# Produce Prescriptions in Cuyahoga County

## Assessing the Current PRx Landscape

August 2025

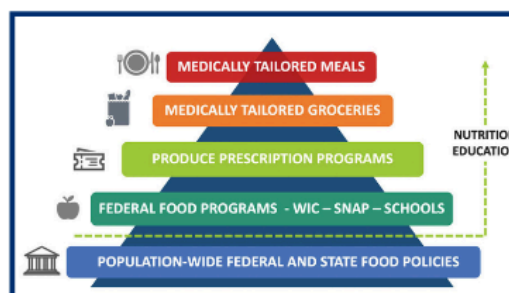
### What are Produce Prescriptions?

Produce Prescriptions (PRx) is a **'food is medicine'** strategy where a healthcare provider prescribes fruits and vegetables to patients using a zero or reduced cost payment model.<sup>1</sup>

### What is the impact of PRx?<sup>2, 3</sup>

- Fruit and vegetable intake
- Food security
- Health status for adults and children
- Clinically relevant improvements in A1C, blood pressure, and BMI for adults.

### Food is Medicine Framework



Source: American College of Cardiology<sup>4</sup>

### Landscape Assessment Methodology

**What was the goal?** Learn from PRx stakeholders about best practices to tailor programs locally to meet the needs and interests of populations at highest risk or burden of chronic disease.

**Who participated?** 16 people: 5 local food leaders (e.g., nutrition educators, farmers, and chefs) and 11 PRx implementers (hospital-based and community-based) in Ohio.

**When were the data collected?** November 2024 - January 2025

### Current PRx Trends in the Region

**50%** of programs surveyed partner with Black and Hispanic food leaders to culturally tailor their programming.

**70%** of programs surveyed offer additional services (e.g., education, deliveries, and equipment for food preparation).

On average, PRx programs in Cuyahoga County serve **82 patients** each week.

Most programs (n=8) see patients for **7-12 months**. Other PRx programs are 1-6 months.



In partnership with Cleveland Fresh, LLC, the Swetland Center conducted a PRx landscape analysis in 2024. We interviewed 16 individuals, including:

- 11 PRx program implementers
- 5 local growers, nutrition educators & food product makers

Our goal was to:

- Assess the current landscape of PRx in the region
- Identify existing practices for PRx approaches designed for populations with high rates of chronic disease

[Download the Report Here](#)

## Celebrating 3 Years of the Nourishing Power Study



Dr. Darcy Freedman presenting at the Research Celebration.



Dr. Emily Nelson presenting at the Research Celebration.

On August 6, 2025, researchers, community partners, and supporters of the Nourishing Neighborhoods Empowering Communities Study gathered at CWRU's Sears[thinkbox] to celebrate the end of this 3-year community research project. Preliminary findings focused on how study findings helped us better understand the following questions.

- What if we could identify accessible power brokers supporting food justice leaders in an urban food system?
- What if we could map perceptions of power and connections within an urban food system?
- What if we could see the steps needed to transform urban food systems for better health and equity?

The event concluded with a "wild card" panel presentation where partners answered provocative questions to explore lessons learned from implementing and evaluating the Nourishing Power Network, a multi-component systems-change intervention. We will continue to share outcomes from this study in the coming months.





Dr. Owusua Yamoah and Ms. Danie White (L-R) serving on the "Wild Card" Panel Presentation.



Raffle winners honored with gifts from members of the Nourishing Power Network.

## Congratulations to Dr. Conrey and Dr. Walker on LRP awards

We are proud of Swetland Center team members recently selected for Loan Repayment Program (LRP) awards by the National Institutes of Health. The LRP was established by Congress to support the recruitment and retention of highly qualified health professionals into health-related research careers.



### **Shannon Conrey, PhD**

**LRP Title:** Assessing Changes in Human Milk Composition and Gut Microbiome Associated with Vertical Transfer of Pb from Mother to Child

Dr. Conrey will use data from the MOM2CHild study (Cincinnati) to estimate a dose of lead (Pb) received by the child using detailed longitudinal breastfeeding history. Additionally, she will assess changes in the composition of human milk, including electrolytes, bone minerals, and inflammatory markers that are altered relative to the the concentration of Pb. The study will also use the calculated dose of Pb to compare the gut microbiome at children at 2 weeks, 2 months and 6 months of age.



### **Shannon Walker, PhD, MPH**

**LRP Title:** A Pilot Study of Medically Supportive Nutrition to Mitigate Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus Risk following Gestational Diabetes Mellitus

Dr. Walker will engage community and clinical stakeholders to co-develop a family-centered Food-is-Medicine intervention for postpartum patients with gestational diabetes. The intervention will incorporate

supplementation. The pilot study will evaluate the feasibility of implementation and measure impacts on clinical, behavioral, and infant outcomes.

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## Statewide Scaling to Pave a Path to Healthy Food Access

From May to August 2025, the Swetland Center's Community Nutrition team, supported by partners from Ohio SNAP-Ed and Produce Perks Midwest, successfully expanded use of the Produce Path Customer Portal at 10 farmers markets in 5 counties in Ohio: Hamilton, Seneca, Marion, Lucas, and Trumbull. Farmers market managers were key players, engaging app users by recipes, inventory updates, upcoming market events, and more.

The [Produce Path Customer Portal](#) is an app created by the Swetland Center team that helps farmers markets managers share real-time information directly with customers, keeping shoppers informed and engaged. The app's primary objective is to support integration of farmers markets and related nutrition incentive programming into individual's food shopping routines. Learn how to download the app [here](#).



Six community champions were a key component of this effort, serving as local educators and trusted advocates across the 5 counties. Community champions conducted tailored outreach in each county by tabling at 15 local events, 10 farmers markets, and 16 community organizations. Learn more about the markets and community champions who supported this initiative [here](#).

Pictured above: Marianne Crockett, Produce Path Community Champion for Hamilton County, at a food pantry sharing about the app with pantry patrons. Ms. Crockett visits farmers markets, community events and sites in areas around Findlay, Northside and Montgomery Farmers Markets each week to provide information about the Produce Path app to community members.

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## Events & Opportunities

Join our first "Fill your Cup" Event in September



TUESDAY  
**23**  
SEPT

TIME

**4:30-6:30 PM**

LOCATION

**Black Frog  
Brewery**



## Fill Your Cup Networking Event



CASE WESTERN RESERVE  
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for Environmental Health

### Environmental Health Connector

Come Connect & Collaborate for  
Environmental Health!

### Limited Seats Available

Contact: [ijjs34@case.edu](mailto:ijjs34@case.edu) for more  
information

**SCAN QR Code To Register**

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Join our next Swetland Center Seminar



Mary Ann Swetland Center  
for Environmental Health

**9/16/2025**

**9 - 10 AM**

**Virtual**

**REGISTER  
HERE:**

[tinyurl.com/Swetland  
Seminar916](https://tinyurl.com/SwetlandSeminar916)



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

[CASE.EDU/swetland](https://CASE.EDU/swetland)

## Join us for the next Swetland Seminar

### Intersections of Redlining, Urban Heat, and Children's Health



**Eun Kyung Lee, PhD, MPH**  
**Assistant Professor**

*State University of New York,  
College of Environmental  
Science & Forestry*  
[Website](#)

Urban heat islands (UHIs)—areas with elevated temperatures due to dense built environments—intensify during extreme heat events, which are the leading cause of summertime morbidity and mortality. These effects disproportionately impact under-resourced communities in the United States (U.S.). A key contributor to this inequity is redlining, a racially discriminatory federal housing policy from the 1930s-40s that denied home loans in neighborhoods with higher proportions of racial and ethnic minorities. This policy institutionalized disinvestment in “red-lined” areas, shaping contemporary disparities in housing quality, green space access, and environmental exposures, all of which are linked to adverse health outcomes such as asthma and heat-related emergency department (ED) visits. In this talk, preliminary findings will be presented on how racialized housing policies and urban heat intersect to shape pediatric asthma patterns in New York State (NYS), with the goal of informing climate adaptation and equity-focused interventions.

This is a free learning opportunity that is open to the public. Visit [youtube.com/@swetlandcenter9524](https://youtube.com/@swetlandcenter9524) for a complete video archive of the series.

[Register Here](#)

## Hot Off the Press

Check out our Latest Publications



Ogland-Hand, C., **Schulte, J., Yamoah, O., Poppe, K., Ciesielski, T.H.**, Gee, R., Zubieta, A., & **Freedman, D.A.** (2025). [Leveraging technology to engage SNAP consumers with children at farmers markets: Qualitative community-engaged approach to app development.](#) *JMIR Formative Research*, 9 (e70104).

**Freedman, D.A.**, Knudsen, H.K., Chanine, R.A., Hunt, T., Oga, E., Aldrich, A.M., **Roberts, S.**, Glasgow, L., Garner, B.R., Tan, S., Holloway, J., Huerta, T., Baden, C., Salsberry, P., & Freisthler, B. (in press). [Examining changes in coalition dynamics to support opioid fatality reduction.](#) *AJPM Focus*.

**Walker SL**, Walker RJ, Williams JS, Dawson AZ, Palatnik A, Egede LE. [Association between social determinants of health and postpartum quality of life in Black women.](#) (in press) *Gen Hosp Psychiatry*.

**Freedman, D.A.**, Taggart, M., Walton, M., **Webb, L.**, Samad, I., Gaddis, D., White, C., Bell-Wheeler, S., Glasco, D., **Yamoah, O.**, & **Nelson, E.** (2025) [Realizing nutrition equity in urban food systems: Insights from food justice leaders about mechanisms of implementation.](#) *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 14(4).

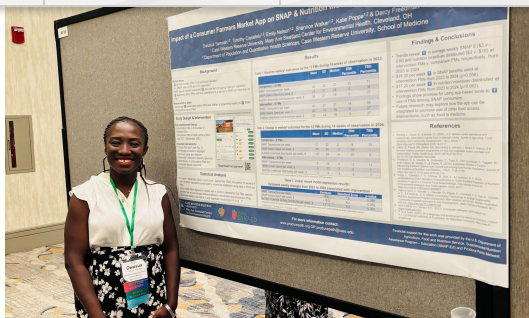
**Ciesielski, T.H.**, Tosto, G., Durodoye, R.O. et al. [Country-level incidence of Alzheimer disease and related dementias is associated with increased omega-6-PUFA consumption.](#) *Commun Med* **5**, 326 (2025).

Singer, L.T., Schumacher, F., Fabisiak, J., Dietz, L.J., & **Ciesielski, T.** [The East Palestine train derailment: A complex environmental disaster.](#) *Neurotoxicology and Teratology*, Volume 110, 2025.

## Conference Highlights

### Society of Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) Annual Conference

**Dr. Owusua Yamoah** and **Eleanor Gillerlane Hinkes** attended the SNEB Conference in Indianapolis where each of them presented a poster on the Swetland center's work in community nutrition. Dr. Yamoah presented on the impact of the [Produce Path app](#) on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and nutrition incentive use at farmers markets in northeast Ohio. Eleanor's poster highlighted the systematic process for updating the content of the Farm-to-school [PSE READI](#) assessment tool. For more information about the Produce Path App and PSE READI, please visit [our website](#).



## Academy of Management (AOM)

[The Academy of Management](#) (AOM) is the leading academic association for management and organization scholars. This July, the 85th Annual Conference of AOM was held in Copenhagen, Denmark. **Dr. Ivory Simms** attended the conference and served as speaker for a highlighted panel topic "Different Career Paths in Academia." Dr. Simms also hosted a doctoral consortium of international students and faculty for the [Management Consulting](#) division of AOM.



## Swetland Spotlight

**Thank You** to the leadership team of the Nourishing Power Network! Tom O'Brien, Shawn Brown, and Dawn Glasco, working alongside Dr. Darcy Freedman, led the Nourishing Power Network over the last 15 months, building on momentum they created in the first 15 months of the project. They dedicated countless hours to

and more. We are grateful for their extraordinary leadership of this community action research project designed to transform urban food systems to achieve the goal of nutrition equity.

**Tom O'Brien**

Executive Director, Neighborhood Connections

Tom worked alongside the Advisory Council to shape the Nutrition Equity Fund and NPN's networking events from 2022 to 2025 as a Co-Principal Investigator, thanks to his community organizing expertise and leadership in community-based grant making. He leveraged Neighborhood Connections's community-based grant making infrastructure to support NPN.

**Shawn Brown**

Executive Vice President, The Humane League

Shawn was a member of the NPN Advisory Council from 2022-2025 serving as Co-Chair during NPN 2.0. He was selected as Community Co-Investigator of the study in 2023. Shawn's policy-making expertise guided NPN's commitment to realizing Nutrition Zones through policy action and informed grant making and campaign building tactics to support this policy goal.





Dawn was a member of the NPN Advisory Council from 2022-2025 serving as Co-Chair for NPN 2.0. She was selected as Community Co-Investigator of the study in 2023. Dawn's collaborative leadership expertise and philanthropic background shaped implementation of the Nutrition Equity Fund and informed strategies to disseminate study findings to reach and engage diverse audiences.



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