



CASE WESTERN RESERVE  
UNIVERSITY  
Mary Ann Swetland Center  
for Environmental Health

# The Swetland Scoop

**March 2026**

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

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**Check our 2025 Annual Report**



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## 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



**Accelerating Pathways to  
Vibrant and Healthy Environments**

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# News & Announcements

Welcome to our New Core Faculty



### **Andrew Curtis, PhD**

Professor, Department of Population and  
Quantitative Health Sciences, CWRU School of  
Medicine

Professor, Department of Anthropology, CWRU  
College of Arts and Sciences

Core Faculty, Mary Ann Swetland Center for  
Environmental Health

Co-Director, GIS Health & Hazards Lab

Dr. Curtis joined the Core Faculty of the Swetland Center in January 2026 after serving as a faculty affiliate for many years. Trained as a geospatial scientist, Dr. Curtis will contribute to the place-based work of the Swetland Center. His goal is to collect and analyze data at the scale of intervention. This includes the home, street, block and neighborhood; a scale at which problems are not just identified but can also be tackled through policy and action with local collaborators.

## GIS Health and Hazards Lab

The Swetland Center is proud to welcome the **GIS Health and Hazards Lab**. The purpose of the Lab is to use mapping as a tool to solve real world problems. Using advanced AI and machine learning, the team is prepared to analyze spatially-linked datasets in groundbreaking ways. The Lab also uses spatial storytelling as a tool to better understand context shaping lived experiences, which leads to more relevant response mechanisms to environmental threats. The Lab brings experience in almost every type of place and for any subject matter. The team has been working in the Cleveland area for over a decade.

Please contact **Dr. Andrew Curtis** at [ajc321@case.edu](mailto:ajc321@case.edu) or **Dr. Jayakrishnan Ajayakumar** at [jxa421@case.edu](mailto:jxa421@case.edu) for more information.

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## Swetland Center Advisory Council Update



### Congratulations, Crystal Davis!

Crystal Davis, member of our Advisory Council and Senior Midwest Regional Director of National Parks Conversation Association, was recently featured in the **Crain's Cleveland Business** as a **2025 Notable Leader in Sustainability**. Crystal's work focuses on advancing policies that protect natural and cultural resources. She also leads efforts across the Midwest to strengthen national parks, conserve water resources, and uplift community-driven solutions for climate resiliency.

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## Swetland Center Faculty Affiliate Update



### Congratulations, Dr. J. Curtis!

Jacqueline Curtis, PhD, Swetland Center Faculty Affiliate, was awarded a 2026 Rural Health Themed Pilot Award by the Clinical and Translational Science Collaborative of Northern Ohio. Her one-year pilot is focused on: **Integrating Geomarkers to Improve Precision Healthcare for COPD Patients in Rural Communities**.

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## Nourishing Power Network Alumni in the News

## Congratulations, Danie White!



Danie White, graduate of the Nourishing Power Fellowship, was awarded a **Finalist Prize (\$2,000)** at the "2026 Accelerate: Citizens Make Change" civic pitch competition hosted by Cleveland Leadership Center in February. Danie's pitch for the "Neighbors Community Farms" expanded work she developed during the Fellowship to turn underused spaces in Central into mini-farms, offering workforce development and community engagement while promoting local food production.

# Events & Opportunities

## Upcoming Swetland Seminar



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### Join us for the March 2026 Swetland Center Seminar

#### Gaining Consensus on Metrics of Nutrition Equity for Urban Food Systems

**3/18/2026**  
12 - 1 PM  
EST  
Virtual

**REGISTER HERE:**  
[tinyurl.com/Mar18Sem](https://tinyurl.com/Mar18Sem)



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

CASE.EDU/swetland



**Darcy Freedman, PhD, MPH**  
*Director*  
Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health  
Case Western Reserve University



**Owusua Yamoah, PhD, MA**  
*Research Scientist*  
Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health  
Case Western Reserve University

Commonly used measures for assessing local food systems, such as food security or healthy food access, do not provide guidance into the series of actions involved in transforming these outcomes. To address this gap, our community action research project studied implementation mechanisms (i.e., series of linked actions) involved in community-led efforts to transform urban food systems to achieve goals of nutrition equity based on perceptions of 18 community leaders planning to implement food justice initiatives in Cleveland, Ohio, United States.

To begin operationalizing these implementation mechanisms, we conducted an ExpertLens consensus building panel in Fall 2025, bringing together 59 community-based, organizational, and systems-level champions for nutrition equity in urban food systems. Through an iterative process, a national sample of experts rated and commented on the relevance to nutrition equity and feasibility to measure the process or outcomes of 15 implementation mechanisms. We will report study findings and discuss next steps needed to advance this work. [Click here to learn more.](#)

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**

Join Us: Environmental Health Connector Spring Event



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## Environmental Health Connector



**Dr. Angela Odoms-Young**  
Nancy Schlegel Meinig Professor of Maternal  
and Child Nutrition Natural Sciences  
Cornell University

### Location

MidTown Collaboration Center  
1974 E. 66<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cleveland, OH 44130

### SAVE THE DATE

**April 28, 2026**  
**4:30-7:00pm**

**FREE REGISTRATION**

### **National Speaker Event**

Join us for an evening of inspiration from our National Environmental Health Speaker Dr. Odoms-Young on the topic of **"Hope and Resiliency in Communities and Local Food Systems."**

Dr. Odoms-Young is committed to improving community health and wellbeing by examining how intersecting systems of oppression impact food access, food security, dietary patterns, and health outcomes, particularly in historically marginalized communities.

### Program Agenda

- 4:30pm Networking Reception
- 5:00pm Keynote Address
- 5:30pm Interactive Session
- 6:30pm Call to Action

Co-Sponsored by: Sears-Swetland Family Foundation

[Register Here](#)

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# Hot off the Press

Check out our Latest Publications

*Swetland Center Faculty, Staff, and/or Trainees are in Bold.*

MacMurdo, M.G., Dahlberg, V., **Mulloy, K.B.** et al. **Exposure to Air Pollution and the Prevalence of Respiratory Symptoms in Northeast Ohio Farmworkers.** *J Immigrant Minority Health* 27, 751–756 (2025).

McGladrey, M. L., Booty, M., Olvera, R., Balvanz, P., Surratt, H. L., Matthews, S., Stitzer, S., **Yamoah, O.**, et al. (2025). **Using photovoice to define "community" in substance use disorder research engaging service users, providers, and policymakers.** *SSM-Qualitative Research in Health*, 7, 100531.

Balvanz, P., Olvera, R. G., Booty, M., McSwiggan, J., Damato-MacPherson, C., Ellison, S., A. Farmer, K. Klingler, A. Kuntz, N. Lewis, C.B. Oser, L. Sprague Martinez, S. Stitzer, H. Surratt, O. Yamoah, et al. (2025). **A participatory photovoice investigation of community assets, barriers, and opportunities to curb the opioid epidemic.** *Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment*, 176, 209741.

## Listen to our Featured Podcast

Our former postdoctoral scholar, **Dr. Shannon Walker**, was featured in a recent podcast organized by the Clinical and Translational Science Collaborative of Northern Ohio: **Mentorship and Collaboration - From Research to Real Life**.

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# Swetland Spotlight

## New Beginnings for Dr. Nelson

After more than four years as a data scientist at the Swetland Center, Dr. Emily Nelson transitioned to a new position in February 2026. As the Senior Manager of Research and Programs, Dr. Nelson will oversee and lead the research, outcomes, program evaluation, and data analytics functions for the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. Congratulations to Emily on this new opportunity!



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