



COMMUNITY ENGAGED UHC

Vol. 2 (Spring 2025)

About

The Community Engaged UHC Newsletter aims to facilitate and nurture partnerships between academic researchers and community leaders and organizations. Twice per year, we will share research projects and partners, events, actions, and resources related to community-engaged research. Similarly, community members and organizations are encouraged to share their data and research needs with us so that we can connect people. The UHC's Community Engagement Core welcomes feedback on this initiative [here](#) and you may subscribe below:

Subscribe to this newsletter so you don't miss future editions!

Who We Are

The [Urban Health Collaborative \(UHC\)](#) at Drexel University's Dornsife School of Public Health aims to improve health in cities by increasing scientific knowledge and public awareness of urban health challenges and opportunities, identifying and promoting actions and policies that improve population health, and reducing health inequities.

[UHC's Community Engagement \(CE\) Core](#) aims to facilitate and strengthen engagement between the UHC and surrounding communities, with the goal of fostering health equity and addressing local needs. Meet the team below!



Mariana Lazo, MD, PhD, ScM
CE CORE
CO-LEAD



Erika Gilliam, MS, MPH
CE CORE
CO-LEAD



Maggie Beverly, MPH
PROJECT
MANAGER



Claire Moore
RESEARCH
ASSISTANT

This Edition: At a Glance

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Community-Engaged Research Spotlight

Evaluating Philly Joy Bank (PJB)



Community partners and researchers are a vital part of the Philly Joy Bank (PJB), a current public health initiative in Philadelphia. PJB's goal is to improve birth outcomes across the city since Philadelphia has one of the highest rates of infant mortality in the first year of life among the most populated U.S. cities. Black infants are also three times more likely to die before their first birthday than white infants in Philadelphia. To address these disparities,

PJB provides monthly cash assistance (sometimes called “guaranteed income”) to expectant parents in their second trimester of pregnancy in three Philly neighborhoods: Nicetown-Tioga, Strawberry Mansion, and Cobbs Creek.



Philly Joy Bank staff members (L to R): Ariel Presley (Community Action Network Lived Experience Expert), Nia Coaxum (PJB Program Manager and Steering Committee Co-Chair), and Chaquita Calloway (PJB Navigator)

Since this is a pilot program (i.e., it has never been done before in Philly for birthing parents), the project team must gather evidence to show whether or not it is effective. This process is called **evaluation**. The evaluation team, led by Ali Groves and Libby Valdez, Drexel University Dornsife School of Public Health faculty and Urban Health Collaborative affiliates, will help identify whether a guaranteed income program like the PJB helps to improve parental mental health and improve birth outcomes in Philly. The evaluation team will also help shed light on if and how the program should be expanded so that more pregnant Philadelphians can receive assistance in the future. Some key members of the evaluation team include **Community Evaluators** and **Lived Experience Experts**. Lived Experience Experts (LEEs) will ensure that any materials provided to participants are culturally responsive, understandable, and respectful. Community Evaluators are long-time community members of Philadelphia who have special skills in relationship-building, and they are collecting data from participants in a manner that is friendly, relatable, appropriate, and professional. All of these community partners, in collaboration with the entire PJB team, are working hard to make the PJB project an initiative that is beneficial to communities.



Philly Joy Bank Evaluation Team members (L to R): Christina Brown (Community Evaluator), Erikka Gilliam (Senior Data Manager), Rita Nelson (Community Evaluator), Hyden Terrell (Community Evaluator), Libby Valdez (Co-Principal Investigator), and Ali Groves (Co-Principal Investigator).

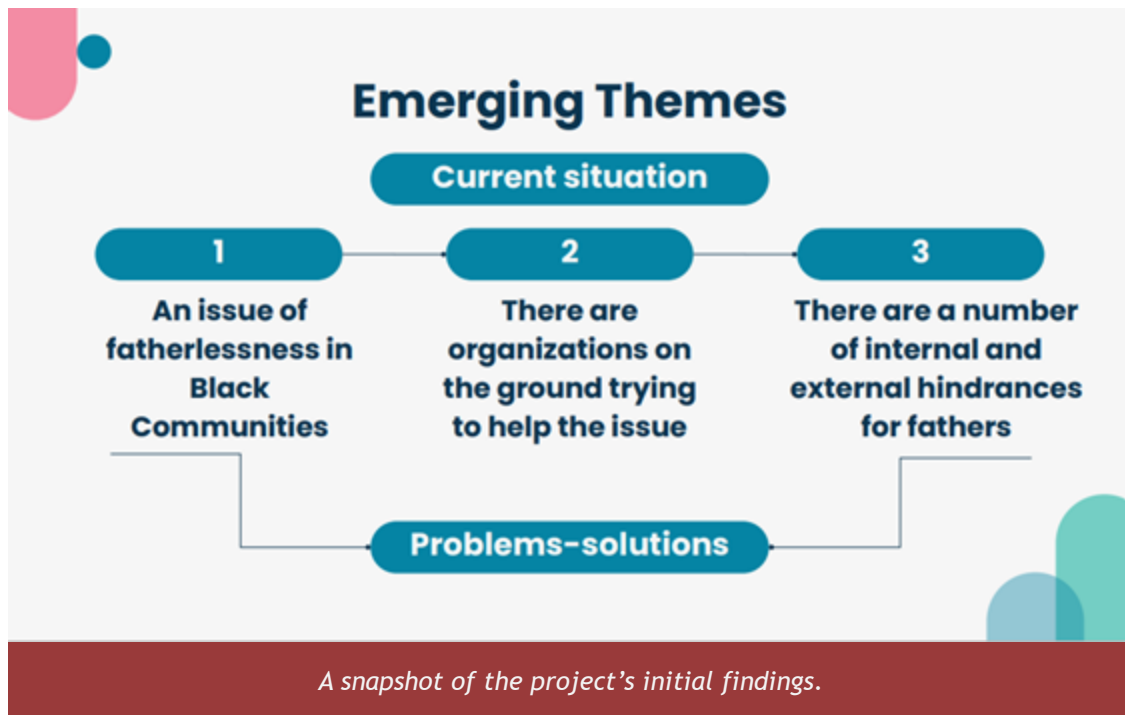
Visit their website to learn more about the Philly Joy Bank [here](#).

Student Spotlight

Caleb Adeoye '25 and Understanding Black Men's Transition to Fatherhood



In Summer 2024, the Drexel UHC Community Engagement Core funded Drexel MPH student Caleb Adeoye's Applied Practical Experience (APE) with Dornsife School of Public Health faculty member Adaobi Anakwe, PhD, MPH on a project entitled "Black men's health and fatherhood transition: An exploration of low-income emerging adult experiences and health behaviors." The project is an ongoing qualitative research study focused on understanding the experiences of low-income Black male adults (ages 18-29 years) within the Philadelphia area during their transition to fatherhood. Caleb worked closely with **community leaders** on this project and completed valuable research on the **needs of, barriers faced by, and solutions for Black men transitioning to fatherhood.**



For more information on the project, please reach out to lead researcher, Dr. Anakwe, at aga56@drexel.edu.

Partnership Spotlight

CRiSOL Mente: A Collaboration between Drexel University Dornsife School of Public Health, Esperanza Health Center, and The Philadelphia AIDS Consortium



Comunidades Resilientes, Sostenibles y Organizadas por Líderes

CRiSOL Mente is an ongoing public health program focused on improving the mental health of Latinos in Philadelphia. *CRiSOL Mente* is led by Dr. Ana Martinez-Donate and Dr. Mariana Lazo, faculty at the Urban Health Collaborative, Drexel School of Public Health, and in partnership with two local organizations that serve Latino communities in North and South Philadelphia: **Esperanza Health Center (EHC)** and **The Philadelphia AIDS Consortium (TPAC)**. *CRiSOL Mente* addresses mental health disparities at multiple levels. At the individual-level, *CRiSOL Mente* trains and mobilizes lay health workers (LHW) to identify individuals with mental health care needs and connect them to culturally-appropriate treatment. At the community-level, LHW conduct large health campaigns to increase demand for, acceptability of, and engagement in mental health services. LHW directly engage their communities through radio shows, social media, and tables at community events. The goal of the campaign is to reduce some of the harmful stigmas surrounding having a mental health condition. It also tries to increase awareness of mental health services that are available in Philadelphia and increase access to these services.



CRiSOL Mente team members tabling at a community event.

At the local-organizational-level, *CRiSOL Mente* focuses on strengthening networks of local Latino-serving organizations through the Latino Health Collective. Community partners deliver monthly presentations at town hall meetings and share helpful information and resources related to mental health and other important issues. Without collaborating with community partners like Esperanza Health Centers and TPAC, a project like *CRiSOL Mente* would not be possible.



Participants at a CRiSOL Mente-sponsored community-wide self care event.

Everyone is invited to join monthly Latino Health Collective Town Halls on the first Thursday of each month where different organizations that serve the Latino community in Philadelphia meet online to share resources, improvements and come up with solutions to better serve the community. Follow [this link](#) to learn more about how to join. And don't forget to check out CRiSOL Mente on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and their [website](#) for more information, and sign up for the Latino Health Collective weekly newsletter [here](#) and read past issues [here](#)!

To learn more about *CRiSOL Mente*, connect with Mariana Lazo at ml3629@drexel.edu.

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

- West Philadelphia Research Day, Thursday, April 3, 2025
The [Promise Zone Research Connection \(PZRC\)](#), a community-led nonprofit in

West Philadelphia, is dedicated to ensuring that research benefits and uplifts the community rather than just studying it. As part of this mission, they are hosting the first annual West Philly Research Day on Thursday, April 3rd—a space designed specifically for community-based organizations (CBOs) to connect with researchers, share knowledge, and explore opportunities for meaningful collaboration. This event is an opportunity for CBOs to voice their priorities, shape research that impacts their communities, and build partnerships that drive real change in West Philadelphia. Register [here](#)!



Community residents and researchers are welcome to join, learn from each other, and network.

COMMUNITY RESEARCH SHOWCASE

NETWORKING

PRESENTATIONS & PANELS

You will be introduced to the Promise Zone Research Connection and their Community Research Review Board and better understand the impacts of research on the community.

Our goal is to form connections between researchers and community research priorities.

REGISTER HERE: bit.ly/

| Website: pzrc.org | Email: info@pzrc.org | Instagram: [@pzrc_westphl](https://www.instagram.com/pzrc_westphl)

- **Need support for a short-term project?**
Consider hosting an MPH student for their Applied Practical Experience (APE) now through September! Students can design or complete evaluations for community programs, create health education curriculums or communication campaigns, and other activities to support community organizations' operations and goals. For more information, check out [this website](#) or connect with Tariem Burroughs at tab54@drexel.edu.
- **Webinars and speakers**
Check out our [webinars & speakers series](#) to hear more about exciting new urban health research!
- **Did we miss anything?**
Do you have an event or opportunity (job opening, request for applications, grant funding announcement, request for a student assistant or volunteer, etc.) that you would like posted in this newsletter? Please submit it [here](#).

Resources and Recent Work

- **Read the UHC Community Engagement Core's latest Community Brief**
Read more about one example of a successful community-academic partnership, the West Philadelphia Promise Neighborhood project, [here](#).
- **Need data?**
Do you need access to data that is relevant to your community or study population of interest? Check out these data dashboards: [UHC Data Portal](#) and [Big Cities Health Coalition Data Portal](#). You may also request West Philly Promise Neighborhood data with [this form](#).
- **Did we miss anything?**
Do you have a resource (e.g. data portal, fact sheet, brief, announcement, etc.) that you would like posted in this newsletter? Please submit it [here](#).

Stay Connected with Us!

- Get in touch with the UHC by email at UHC@drexel.edu.
- To contact the UHC Community Engagement Core directly, please email: communityengagedUHC@drexel.edu.
- Follow the UHC on social media:



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Request for Feedback

Please let us know how we're doing! We encourage everyone who reads this to share their feedback [here](#) as we hone this new initiative.

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