2023
ANNUAL REPORT

Center for Community Resilience

Milken Institute School
of Public Health
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

2024 marks our fifth year as a Center here at George Washington University. Our work began as a project that evolved from my dissertation research in 2015. At that time, we had no idea that the Building Community Resilience initiative would grow into a global network of partners.

This past year we harnessed the narratives of communities to build power, weaving stories that are fostering systems change. The Truth & Equity initiative that began in Cincinnati in 2020, yielded an historic apology from the city's mayor for policies that decimated a once thriving Black community. That is just one example of how our research and collaborative partnerships are fostering real world change. With CCR as a partner, community coalitions across the nation are developing Equity Dashboards that can guide strategic investments to repair racial harm, restore economic vitality to disinvested communities, and ultimately foster community resilience.

This annual report shares the progress and success of using innovative approaches in translational research to work alongside community coalitions and across sectors for long-term systems change. It is an approach that we are applying here in the nation's capital and in counties from Maryland to Iowa. Community resilience and the other frameworks developed at CCR are informing governmental efforts to close critical gaps in equity across the globe, including in the Netherlands and countries across Africa. We are translating the science of the resilience movement into curricula that are being presented to students from Taiwan to Rwanda.

CCR's body of work represents a global movement built on translational research, equitable community engagement, and the power of community to repair, restore, and build more just and equitable communities for children and families.

After five years as CCR's Founding Director, I am entering a new era of leadership in equity and resilience. In January 2024, I was appointed as the Inaugural Director of the [Institute for Racial, Ethnic, and Socioeconomic Equity](#) here at George Washington University. This appointment will allow me to continue my role here at CCR while also widening our circle of collaborators across the University to include a larger community of citizens, policymakers, thought leaders, and students to create more just and resilient communities across the globe.

Together we will go far!

Dr. Wendy Ellis, DrPH
Founding Director, Center for Community Resilience
Inaugural Director, Institute for Racial, Ethnic, and Socioeconomic Equity
The George Washington University

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

Narratives are integral to build shared understanding of the root causes of place- and race-based trauma and inequity. The stories of community help explain the process that produces disparities in health, wealth, and wellbeing. Stories told from the perspective of community members help to change harmful narratives that have been used to justify harmful policy or practice perpetuated by structural racism. Paired with quantitative data, narrative change provides a rigorous and comprehensive approach to fostering community-driven solutions and building community resilience. Throughout 2023, CCR expanded this ground-breaking approach to social justice and systems change in communities across the country by using storytelling to create an actionable path forward to reconciliation, repair, and reconstruction.

Cincinnati's Mayor, City Council members, and community leaders look on as Dr. Ellis provides remarks following the apology.

From Truth to Apology and Action: Cincinnati's Road to Repair

Since the 2022 release of the CCR documentary *America's Truth: Cincinnati*, local leaders and community partners have leveraged the stories of systemic inequity to shape the process of repairing harm caused by policy intended to cause race- and place-based inequity through structural violence.

Apology. In June of 2023 – more than 60 years after the Kenyon-Barr Urban Redevelopment Project razed the Lower West End – Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval, Vice-Mayor Jan-Michele Kearney, and Councilmember Scotty Johnson issued a public apology and proclamation expressing regret for the city's role in demolishing the predominantly Black neighborhood. The historic apology acknowledged that practices rooted in institutional racism were used to justify the West End's destruction. As outlined in the proclamation, which CCR helped draft, promises to rehouse the nearly 28,000 displaced residents were broken, resulting in the loss of generational wealth, community, and collective prosperity for a once thriving community.

Action. The film also highlighted the plight of the village of Lincoln Heights. Ohio's first Black-led incorporated enclave suffered from decades of systemic racism that included land theft by the county, restrictions on the ability to build tax revenue, and most egregiously the placement of an open-air gun range used by multiple law enforcement agencies including Cincinnati Police Department. Lincoln Heights was incorporated in 1946 and the police gun range was established in 1947. For decades, residents complained about the placement of the gun range as a form of racial terrorism but to no avail—until last year. After increased advocacy and media attention, Hamilton County officials announced in February of 2023 that the gun range will be moved to a rural location in neighboring Colerain Township in 2025. With the daily barrage of gunfire soon ending, the community is looking forward to redeveloping the space to support economic investments and provide a more peaceful, prosperous, and safe environment for children and families to live, work, and play.

Engaging Community to Co-Create Authentic Narratives in Washington, DC

In 2023, CCR's Fostering Equity Team completed the first phase of Shared Prosperity Catalysts, a multi-year initiative aimed at reducing poverty and inequality in the United States using behavioral science. Funded by Wells Fargo and led by ideas42, phase one focused on understanding and reimagining narratives about poverty. Alongside ideas42, CCR and our partners at Parent Watch, Inc., DC Greens, and Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative conducted community-engaged research with District residents to create a narrative about living in poverty that reflects the perspectives and experiences of residents.

Dr. Ellis and Kimberly Rodgers attended community circles to listen to Ward 8 residents discuss the shared values that make them resilient.

Through surveys and qualitative interviews, the team found that although DC endorses harmful narratives less than the national average, harmful narratives about poverty do exist in the District. In response, we facilitated a series of community circles in Ward 8 – the area with the highest rates of poverty in the city– to co-create a counter-narrative rooted in community values and lived experience. To uplift the new narrative, we worked with a cohort of community members to co-design a community storytelling event called "Our Truth, Our Stories." The storytelling cohort received training on telling their own stories and helped the project team shape the vision for the community event. More than 100 community members attended the event, which featured live storytelling followed by lunch, facilitated discussions to capture reflections, and a live band.

Through our research and community engagement activities, we centered the voices and experience of community members to create a new story that shifted perspectives on what it means to live in poverty. In the next phase of the work, the project team will continue collaborating with District residents to explore opportunities to instill authentic narratives into effective social policy and program design that supports more resilient social and economic outcomes for DC's most marginalized residents.

HARMFUL NARRATIVE

People that live in poverty need to put in the work to get out of their situation, instead of looking for a handout. If others, like me, have worked very hard to pull themselves out, so can you.
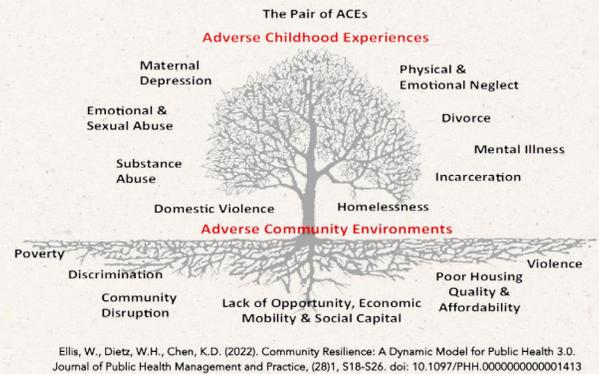
COUNTER-NARRATIVE

Poverty is a universal issue that affects everyone in DC, directly and indirectly. Society designed and maintains systems of oppression that keep people living in poverty; these systems disproportionately affect the Black communities in DC. By working collectively, Black communities in DC can identify, call out, and dismantle the systems of oppression that keep people in poverty.

Seeds of Resilience: The Journey of the CCR Trees

The Pair of ACEs Tree was created by Dr. Ellis to help researchers, community advocates, policymakers, and other leaders come to a shared understanding of the interconnectedness of adverse childhood experiences and adverse community environments. By expanding the focus from the individual experience of adversity to the systemic and structural root causes driving that adversity, the tool has helped shape a powerful narrative that is being translated into policy, practice, and prevention: mitigating and preventing ACEs requires community-level investments and systemic policy interventions. Downloaded more than 45,000 times, cited in more than 350 published research articles and textbooks, and adopted by governmental public health agencies across the globe, the Pair of ACEs tree is helping practitioners, policymakers, academicians, and community activists tell the story of community adversity to create systemic change.

Ellis, W., Dietz, W.H., Chen, K.D. (2022). Community Resilience: A Dynamic Model for Public Health 3.0. Journal of Public Health Management and Practice, (28)1, S18-S26. doi: 10.1097/PHH.0000000000001413

Recognizing the need to define and measure community resilience, a team of translational researchers at CCR created the Resilience Tree. Used in combination with the Pair of ACEs Tree, the Resilience Tree helps communities get specific about the place-based supports, resources, and investments needed to cultivate more equitable community conditions that foster healing and prevention.

In 2023, in communities across the globe, governmental agencies, policymakers, and residents came together to use these tools to inspire place-based actions that initiate systems changes in pursuit of creating collective will to support more equitable social, health, and economic outcomes for children and families.

Resilience Tree Inspires Action Across the State of New Hampshire

At the New Hampshire Children's Trust's 11th Annual Strengthening Families Summit, CCR presented a keynote on "Building Community Resilience" and facilitated a workshop exploring the practical application of the Resilience Tree as a tool for fostering a shared vision of resilience. In collaboration with local art and cultural center Kimball Jenkins, summit organizers created a life-size, 3-D tree with branches. Summit attendees inscribed their vision for community resilience onto individual cards, which were hung on the branches as leaves. A powerful moment unfolded as attendees placed these branches onto the trunk of the Resilience Tree. The resulting tree symbolizes the collective strength within a cross-sector coalition united in pursuit of a shared vision. This collaborative effort visually represented the diversity of perspectives, underscored the shared commitment to advancing resilience within the state's communities, and has been part of a statewide campaign to support efforts to drive systems change and investments in children and families.

RESILIENCE MOVEMENT GROWTH: EXPANDING OUR REACH AND POWER

In 2023, CCR's approach to community engagement, innovative frameworks, measurement tools and policy resources helped community and cross-sector coalitions build collective power toward systems change. CCR's suite of resources is being applied globally to build knowledge, develop research and advocacy skills, and bolster cross-sector relationships. In the more than 100 workshops, webinars, and network convenings that CCR facilitated this year, we generated opportunities to create a shared understanding that is strengthening community cohesion and cultivating common ground collaboration. Using the CCR approach, our partners are establishing a platform to foster collaborative development of opportunities for systems change, including policy and economic investments. The CCR approach continues to advance a tangible resilience movement that is fueled by research, evidence, and collective action and power.

CCR Goes Global

In 2023, CCR strengthened the resilience movement across three continents and established connections that are creating opportunities to expand a global platform of shared learning and collaboration.

Kigali, Rwanda: Training Global Health Leaders in Equity
CCR was invited to develop a curriculum for the Communities First Global Collaborative (CFGC). CFGC is a partnership with Aspen Global Innovators Group at The Aspen Institute, Partners in Health, and the University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) in Kigali, Rwanda. CFGC aims to advance health equity and build resilience. As part of this work CCR will adapt its Community Resilience framework and lessons learned from the Resilience Catalysts in Public Health initiative for the Global Academy for Health Systems Resilience at UGHE. The certificate program will equip students with expertise in implementing coordinated and cross-systems responses to address public health emergencies and chronic adversity at the community level. The curriculum designed by CCR will empower global health leaders across Africa with the necessary tools, resources, and training to act as community resilience experts across the continent. The curriculum will launch in 2024 during a Health Equity Bootcamp at UGHE in Kigali.

> "Since its inception, the Center for Community Resilience has demonstrated its ability to harness the power of community leaders to address long-term adversity. Their approach and practical advocacy tools and measurement frameworks provide local leaders with the resources and training needed to delve into critical topics related to strengthening global and community resilience and health equity."
>
> — Lola Adedokun,
> Executive Director,
> Aspen Global Innovators
> Group, The Aspen Institute

Netherlands: Implementing the Community Resilience Framework
Leiden University Medical Center (LUMC) in the Netherlands is implementing CCR's Community Resilience framework as their innovative approach to counter syndemic vulnerability. "By developing and implementing a community resilience approach, we will examine ways to strengthen the adaptive capacities of communities...This approach fosters collaboration across health systems, community-based agencies, and cross-sector partners to empower citizens living in adverse circumstances," stated the LUMC team. Their study includes a strong community engagement and coalition-building component with neighborhoods in The Hague and Leiden, co-designing solutions alongside cross-sector partners with the goal of creating paradigm shifts and improving population wellbeing outcomes. CCR is supporting LUMC by sharing our implementation approach and lessons learned from the Resilience Catalysts program and the Closing the Racial Wealth Gap initiative. CCR is also sharing information on systems modeling to help LUMC build out the research component of their project. In 2024, CCR will continue to support LUMC by sharing new learnings and exploring opportunities in which LUMC and CCR can learn from each other.

Taiwan: Introductions to Community Resilience and Systems Thinking

Dr. Chen shared CCR's practice-based research methods with students in Taiwan.

In December 2023, CCR Associate Director of Research Dr. Daniel Chen introduced our practice-based research and methods in a grand rounds presentation at the Mackay Medical College (MMC) in Taiwan. Additionally, Dr. Chen led three lectures and held practical demonstration sessions to engage MMC's first-year medical and audiology students to learn about community resilience, the Pair of ACEs, and systems thinking and modeling. One student said, "[Dr. Chen] introduced us to the use of the Pair of ACEs tree. This approach encourages us not to merely observe superficial symptoms but to deeply analyze the underlying factors, akin to examining the soil saturated with systemic dysfunction or racism in which the tree is planted." CCR also engaged in research exchanges with MMC faculty to discuss how to apply a community resilience lens in their University Social Responsibility initiative with the Sanzhi community, where MMC calls home. Sanzhi is a relatively rural region experiencing a rapid increase in retired age population co-occurring with a rapid decline of school-aged children. Understanding the Sanzhi community's vision for a thriving future will help MMC develop strategies for building community resilience. In 2024, CCR will continue to share its insight and experience to help MMC explore its role in local community resilience work.

South Africa: Reflecting on Truth and Reconciliation
In May 2023, CCR conducted a series of interviews in Cape Town and Johannesburg to discuss the opportunities and challenges of facilitating a national process of Truth and Reconciliation. CCR aimed to gather lessons from those who participated in varying levels of civic and government reform following the end of apartheid. The interviews highlight the continued need for redress and investments in minoritized communities across both South Africa and the United States. Our conversations engaged legal experts, former government leaders,

academicians specializing in historical trauma and transformation, and human rights workers who provided insights on the successes, shortcomings, and missed opportunities of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). CCR is using this insight to refine our place-based Truth & Equity process.

In 2024, we will translate these discussions into a video series that can help organizers and coalitions across the globe refine their own truth-centered movements for repair and resilience. Additionally, carrying the lessons from this transnational exchange, CCR's Fostering Equity lead Kimberly Rodgers will return to Cape Town in March 2024 to participate in the Leading for Humanity Programme, sponsored by the Desmond and Leah Tutu Foundation.

The entrance of the Apartheid Museum highlights the racial segregation of the apartheid period, which lasted more than 40 years.

Alongside other young thought leaders working across sectors, Kimberly will participate in a series of activities – including courageous conversations, peer-to-peer exchange, storytelling, and personal reflection – that instill lessons and practices that CCR will leverage as we continue our mission of fostering equity to build community resilience.

Collaborating for Equity: Extending Our Reach

As demand for CCR's cross-sector and multi-disciplinary approach to equity and community-engaged research increased, we announced the formation of the Center's Affiliated Faculty roster. Scholars and practitioners from across the country joined our team to expand the Center's expertise in key areas of research including Indigenous sovereignty, Black and Indigenous child and maternal health, birth justice, public health, economic analysis, early childhood development and child mental health, trauma-informed practice, nutrition, policy analysis, and global health. This network of affiliate faculty brings decades of experience in translating research to action to improve health, social, and economic outcomes for minoritized populations across the globe. Members of the CCR affiliated faculty are currently working on projects aimed at closing the nation's racial wealth gap, addressing systemic drivers of community violence, and developing community-driven solutions to close food equity gaps. Together, this cadre of equity scholars plans to develop a research portfolio using CCR as a global hub to produce scholarly publications and convene thought leaders to inform policy agendas that advance a shared mission of building community resilience and fostering equity through systems change.

> "
> *As an advocate for the health and wellbeing of children and families, I embrace the opportunity to collaborate with cross disciplinary, like minded partners to create a more equitable future. I appreciate the opportunity to translate innovative ideas into practice and purpose with leaders in their field."*
>
> *— Nia Bodrick, MD, MPH, Medical Director, Early Childhood Innovation Network*

SYSTEMS CHANGE IN ACTION

Throughout the year, CCR collaborated with our network of partners to identify and promote policy, practice, and program changes that are producing more equitable outcomes for children and families. By lifting up examples of program and policy innovations that are producing measurable returns in health, social, and economic wellbeing, CCR's national network helped inform program policy and appropriations by engaging and educating policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Child Health

Maternal Health

Education

Childcare

Child Nutrition

Workplace Policy

Foster Care

Health Care

Reproductive Justice

Mobilizing Our Network: National Policy Agenda & Webinar Series

In February 2023, CCR's Policy Lab produced its first ever national policy agenda titled "The Building Blocks of Community Resilience." The agenda aims to outline the essential elements necessary to provide a pathway out of poverty by building opportunity. Through a series of webinars and policy convenings with community leaders, elected officials, and state and federal networks, partners from across the country provided real-world solutions that will help more people in America achieve optimal health, social, and economic wellbeing.

Policy experts, researchers, and community advocates were highlighted in our national webinar series that provided concrete examples of how local agencies and collaboratives are closing crucial gaps in access to trauma-informed practice, the full range of reproductive health services, and economic mobility. The CCR Policy Agenda has shaped critical conversations with federal partners at the Administration for Children and Families, informing the agency's efforts to implement trauma-informed principles in grant programs and training.

Our national network of partners is using the CCR agenda to inform education and advocacy efforts around Congressional bills aimed at addressing social and economic mobility, particularly as it relates to the need to secure affordable, safe, and quality housing for children and families. A report published by the Pew Trust found that roughly 25% of the nation's housing stock is owned by corporate investors. In July 2023, Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown introduced the Stop Predatory Investing Act (*S. 2224*) aimed at eliminating tax breaks for corporate investors who buy up large portions of local housing stock, resulting in higher prices for both homes and rentals. Understanding that access to stable housing is a fundamental social determinant of health and a key factor in promoting community resilience, the national network of CCR communities and partners used the CCR policy webinars and convenings to educate bi-partisan audiences on this issue that negatively affects the ability of many communities to stabilize environments for children and provide parents with the opportunity to build a pathway out of poverty.

2023 National Convening & Hill Day

The [2023 National Convening & Hill Day](#) brought together more than 50 CCR network partners from across the country including local elected leaders, members of local public health departments, community advocates and partners from various social, health and human services agencies. The first in-person convening since the pandemic focused on the timely themes of narrative change and power-building – tactics that have become increasingly important as public health and cross-sector leaders work with communities to build back from the devastating health, economic, and social effects of COVID-19.

Connecting Local Approaches to National Challenges
The convening provides attendees the opportunity to share lessons learned and deepen expertise in community engagement, strategic planning, and messaging to stakeholder audiences. At our community dinner, Aspen Institute's Marjorie Sims facilitated a discussion on changing harmful narratives about mental and behavioral health,

Community partners discuss innovative approaches and lessons learned for centering community voice in the process of building community resilience.

youth disengagement, and parent capabilities. Panelists included Dr. Nia Bodrick and Randall Baylor – two long-time CCR partners from the Early Childhood Innovation Network – along with Jermekkio Holloway, a behavior preventionist and youth advocate with District of Columbia Public Schools, and Fari Ghamina Tumpe, a parent advocate and community fellow at Spaces in Action. The discussion highlighted the innovative and collaborative approaches panelists are using in Washington, DC, to center parent voice, lived experience, and community wisdom in efforts to build power and promote family healing and equity. Attendees plan to use the panel's insights to "inform the work in our community and how we interface with community organizations," and participants from Baltimore indicated an interest in "glean[ing] from the DC team...and visit[ing] in person to learn more and see their work up close and personal."

Our Town Hall explored the national issue of gun violence from the perspective of affected community members, mental and behavioral health providers, and elected officials in Washington, DC. The event shed light on the societal inequity driving gun violence and uplifted the need for solutions–including equitable access to housing, education, and economic opportunity–that address the systemic and structural drivers of violence. Opening panelists – including Jenise "Jo" Patterson, founder of ParentWatch, Inc., Tahir Duckett, executive director of the Center for Innovations in Community Safety, and Salvador Sauceda-Guzman, an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner in DC's Ward 5 – shared perspectives on the root causes of gun violence and the need for new narratives that inform more holistic solutions aimed at addressing systemic and structural drivers of community violence.

CCR's Town Hall on 'Changing the Narrative on Gun Violence' featured (L) to (R): Dr. Wendy Ellis, Brian L. Schwalb, Robert White, Jr., Dr. Corey Williams, and Dr. Cynthia Greer.

The second panel featured elected officials, D.C. Attorney General Brian L. Schwalb and D.C. City Council member Robert White, Jr., along with two mental health experts, Dr. Cynthia Greer of Trinity Washington University and Dr. Corey Williams of the Early Childhood Innovation Network. This panel focused on the need for clinical, legal, and other systems to improve coordination as a tactic to prevent gun violence.

The highlight of the town hall was a moving presentation by teacher Samantha Mahoney and the parents and students of her class at Lorraine H. Whitlock Elementary School. In October 2022, the children frantically ran for cover as gunshots rang out while they were disembarking from the bus; across the street, a 15-year-old had been fatally shot. The next day, Ms. Mahoney provided emotional support and facilitated a discussion that led the students to draft a letter to Mayor Muriel Bowser outlining their concerns and ideas for preventing gun violence in DC. It was both devastating and powerful to hear the young students read that letter and, as one attendee noted, "a reminder

The children and families of the elementary school class stand with Ms. Mahoney to share remarks during the Town Hall.

to continue engaging the voices and ideas of children in the process" of fostering equity.

Bringing Local Issues to Federal Policymakers
A key feature of CCR's national meeting in Washington, D.C. includes a day of advocacy and education with Congressional offices and selected staff from key federal agencies. In June, the CCR Network made its way to Capitol Hill to meet with members of Congress and staff from 35 House and Senate offices, as well as officials from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. For the first time, CCR's 2023 Hill Day bridged inter-governmental connection across federal, county, and local jurisdictions by bringing elected city officials as well as city and county health department officials as part of our delegation.

In the weeks leading up to Hill Day, CCR provided teams with background information on each Congressional office and held virtual learning sessions and office hours to prepare network partners for productive engagement with Congressional offices.

On the morning of Hill Day, CCR network partners were prepped by former Congressional staffers and leaders from the Administration for Children and Families, the National Association of County and City Health Officials, the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs, and GW's School of Public Health. CCR also facilitated planning time, helping teams hone their talking points and practice making specific 'asks' of Congressional offices. To ensure smooth travels, CCR staff escorted teams around the Capitol and supported effective communication between local teams and Congressional offices.

CCR staff and network members with Senator Sherrod Brown's (D-OH) Legislative Director.

CCR Hill Day proved to be successful in educating federal policymakers on key issues in the Resilience Movement, including advocating for gun violence prevention, community-based mental health supports in the wake of gun violence, affordable housing, adequate funding for childcare needs, and support for trauma-informed practice. Armed with the CCR adage, 'no stories without data and no data without stories,' teams delivered relevant, impactful messages in their requests to our nation's leaders.

- "The spirit of Hill Day was highly contagious. There was a synergistic mission to inform legislators of the need for affordable housing."

- "This was my first Congressional Meeting and the process was insightful. As a result of the prep, I can honestly say that I feel better prepared for future encounters of this magnitude."

CCR partners from the St. Louis Housing Authority pose with Rep. Cori Bush (MO-01).

For many members of the CCR network, this was their first time meeting with policymakers. They reported finding the preparation, guidance, and meetings to be energizing, enlightening, and highly valuable for their future education and advocacy endeavors. "We were able to open a door," said Miaisha Mitchell, Minority Health Liaison at the Florida Department of Health in Leon County, and create a relationship with Congressional staffers seeking more community involvement in rural areas. The productive meeting was a pleasant surprise, Mitchell said, as Republicans in Congress had not historically been open to public health causes. Connecting on the importance of healthy children and families was the key, she said, "And we were invited back!"

Momentum from CCR's Hill Day also deepened engagement with non-Congressional offices, including the Administration for Children & Families (ACF) at the Department of Health and Human Services. Strategic discussions with high-level political appointees and career staff at ACF led to the development of a brown bag series of CCR presentations to ACF staff. Topics covered by CCR's Policy Lab team include building community resilience, fostering equity, and using the Community Resilience framework to developing measures of success for grantee programs. In addition to measurement, Dr. Ellis shared with ACF leaders strategies from the CCR national network that may provide tangible examples of how the agency can embed trauma-informed principles into ACF policy, program, and practice.

Congressional Relations: CCR Earmarks Webinar
Following the National Convening, CCR's Senior Government Relations & Policy Advisor Sarah Baldauf coordinated an Advocacy in Action webinar for CCR Network partners across the country. The webinar featured policy experts from the nation's capital who translated wonky Congressional processes into accessible, actionable information. Topics included how and when to engage in the 'earmarks' process, by which members of Congress support the application for federal funding by local groups through the annual budgeting process. The webinar featured guest speaker Chris Dalton, Deputy Chief of Staff to Rep. Greg Landsman (OH-1).

Preparing Government Leaders for Trauma-Informed Policy & Practice

National Trauma-Informed Cities Initiative
Recognizing the urgent need in cities across the country to develop solutions aimed at preventing and addressing the experience of trauma, in 2023 CCR joined with Healing City Baltimore (HCB), the National League of Cities (NLC), and the Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice (CTIPP) to support cities in advancing equitable, trauma-responsive policy and trauma-informed practice to improve individual and community outcomes. Funded in part by the Open Society Foundation, our Trauma-Informed Cities Initiative is forming a cohort of cities – with core teams comprised of elected officials, community organizers, and cross-sector stakeholders in education, health, criminal justice, public safety and faith-based organizations – to create model legislation supporting trauma-informed practice within local government. Based on the success of Baltimore's innovative Healing Cities legislation—the first of its kind to mandate trauma-informed practice in local government—our initiative aims to use legislation with CCR's Community Resilience framework as a model to help leaders address systemic inequities that produce trauma and result in community violence, suicide, mental illness, and substance abuse.

The initiative is working with city leaders in Baltimore, MD; Philadelphia, PA; and Cincinnati, OH as the first cohort. Currently, CCR's Policy Lab, including analyst Purva Trivedi, is working with members of Cincinnati City Council to review city service policies, procedures, and employee training to co-develop an initial framework to support trauma-informed policy and practice.

Translating Research to Inform Federal Agenda-Setting
As part of an ongoing effort to translate best practices and lessons learned from the CCR network, Dr. Ellis was invited to provide insight and expertise at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) "Creating an Agenda for Trauma-Informed Care" meeting in summer 2023. The convening was part of the federal government's Interagency Task Force for Trauma-Informed Care that seeks to spread and scale the adoption of evidence-based practice for prevention and treatment of both community and individual trauma and adversity.

Preparing the Next Generation for Advocacy

As part of the DC Truth & Equity initiative, CCR launched the DC Youth Advocacy Program – a pilot training initiative to teach youth of color (ages 16-25) in the District how to use advocacy to address the consequences of systemic racism and structural violence, including housing affordability, food insecurity, education inequality, and economic mobility. Over the course of six weeks, CCR's Fostering Equity and Policy Lab teams facilitated weekly sessions with five participants. As part of the curriculum, the cohort:

- Discussed the systemic and structural factors underlying inequity;

- Reviewed successful local advocacy efforts of the past and created a shared vision for equity

- Demonstrated how advocacy enables people to have a voice in influencing the policies and practices that impact their lives; and,

- Examined how DC's political landscape operates (e.g., legislative process and city budget) and gained insight into navigating the landscape.

Each member of the cohort received an hourly stipend for their participation and walked away with knowledge, skills, and relationships that will help them use advocacy tactics to create change and foster equity in their communities. As the DC Truth & Equity initiative continues, CCR plans to engage the cohort in advocacy activities such as writing letters to DC Councilmembers and giving testimony at Council hearings. Our hope is to secure additional funding that would allow us to expand the program and support the development of youth-led campaigns addressing advocacy issues that matter to young people in the District.

Cohort member Ola Zubairu (R) talks with Lauren Grimes, founder and director of The Community Enrichment Project.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD

In addition to supporting our national network and partners, CCR develops field-wide resources and training, along with academic courses, that equip broader audiences with tools and innovative approaches to foster equity in their own work and communities.

Scholarly Contributions

As a translational research and technical assistance center, it is important that CCR continue to share evidence of what works with our peers in the field through scholarly articles and in the classroom. This past fall, Dr. Ellis provided commentary to a special issue of the journal, *Health Services Research*, focused on aligning systems for health, community leadership within health collaboratives, and equitable practices and outcomes attained through cross-sector collaboratives. In this commentary, Dr. Ellis shared insights gained from nearly 10 years of working across systems in cross-sector collaboratives to achieve equity in health and social wellbeing. The commentary and selected articles provide researchers and practitioners a practical reframing of social and structural determinants of health that are helping collaboratives across the country drive practice and policy change to achieve health and racial equity.

In addition to contributing to journal publications, CCR continually seeks opportunities to share our multi-disciplinary approach to social justice and systems change with national research partners, including the National Academy of Medicine (NAM). As a member of NAM's Culture of Health committee, Dr. Ellis co-authored a paper that will be included in a forthcoming NAM special publication titled, "Systems' Impact on Historically and Currently Marginalized Populations." The publication will explore the role that various systems play in driving inequity in health and wellbeing by race and identify opportunities to dismantle structural racism. In a NAM first, authors representing each racial group examine the effects of structural racism across multiple population groups here in the United States including:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian American
- Black or African American
- Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White

Look for the release of this special publication on the NAM Culture of Health site in July 2024.

Training the Next Generation of Public Health Leaders

In recognition of the impactful work of translating CCR lessons learned into curriculum here at the Milken Institute School of Public Health, Dr. Ellis was selected for the school's Master Teacher Academy (MTA) Fellowship. MTA is designed to support innovative teaching projects aimed at improving and expanding teaching practice and/or capabilities within the School of Public Health. Recognized for her continued contributions to increasing the school's capacity to design and teach courses that articulate the role of structural racism in driving health and social outcomes to graduate students, Dr. Ellis is using the fellowship to develop coursework

for undergraduate students interested in learning more about the role of public health in social justice. The new course will be introduced in the 2024-2025 academic year.

Transforming Public Health Practice

Resilience Catalysts Evaluation: Lessons for Local Public Health
The Resilience Catalysts in Public Health (RC) team, led by [Kristen Hayes,](#) partnered with Population Health Innovation Lab to evaluate the RC process and initial outcomes of the multi-year initiative with local public health departments. We found that the RC process helps LHDs operationalize the Chief Health Strategist (CHS) role in three key areas.

- *Community Engagement.* Community engagement, specifically including diverse perspectives from individuals with lived experience and facilitating shared decision making, is crucial to public health. The RC process helped sites expand their community engagement practices by convening partners across sectors, creating health equity plans co-created with community partners, and creating pathways for community-driven leadership in LHD programs and activities.

- *Systems Thinking.* Public health training should include systems thinking as a way to foster equity, improve community health outcomes, and build community resilience. The RC process helped sites grow their capacity and use of systems thinking by developing a shared understanding of the root causes of inequities within LHDs and with community partners, and recognizing the specific systems of power that perpetuate racism and health inequity in their communities.

- *Sustainability.* Root cause, systems-level work requires dedicated staffing and funding, LHD leadership support, political will, and community buy-in. The RC process encouraged LHDs to explore funding models that support community participation by convening partners across sectors, co-creating health equity plans with community partners, and establishing avenues for sharing power across political officials, health department and city agencies, and community.

The RC evaluation also provides insight to the operationalization of Public Health 3.0 and the CHS role. Based on the way RC sites have embodied the CHS role, a more appropriate name would be Community Health Strategist. The Community Health Strategist works alongside community to align with community needs and assets, convene partners, and prioritize the health of the community in its systems and structures rather than direct community interests and isolate decision-making power as the term "Chief Health Strategist" suggests.

Resilience Catalysts

Leading the Way at APHA

The CCR team led multiple discussions at the American Public Health Association's (APHA) Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. Kicking off the Inaugural Women's Leadership Institute, Dr. Wendy Ellis shared her own experience building a community of mentors, partners, and collaborators to shape and sustain her leadership journey. The two-day institute is designed to help early and mid-career women uncover new strengths, learn leadership and management concepts, and connect with peers in public health.

Rebuilding trust with community following the COVID-19 pandemic, and in the context of the nation's continued reckoning with the effects of structural racism, was a topic of great interest at this year's APHA meeting. CCR partner Tia Bell, founder of the T.R.I.G.G.E.R. Project, joined Dr. Ellis on the mainstage to share insight that can help local public health leaders mend relationships and rebuild trust in communities that have been devastated by the effects of systemic violence including broken promises, discrimination, and disinvestment. Bell's perspective on prevention is particularly relevant as the nation grapples with increasing

(R) to (L): Dr. Ellis and Tia Bell discuss the importance of building community trust.

gun violence in the midst of a national mental health crisis. CCR and the T.R.I.G.G.E.R. Project are currently partnered with ideas42 on a novel project aimed at "Changing the Narrative on Gun Violence" by working with survivors in Washington, DC. The project aims to help policymakers address the root cause of gun violence—or "The Reasons I Grabbed the Gun Evolved from Risk" (T.R.I.G.G.E.R.).

In another session, the CCR Research Team led a conversation highlighting the role of public health in dismantling structural racism. Several partners joined us for a panel discussion unpacking how structural racism manifests in their communities and how they apply CCR tools, such as the Pair of ACEs Tree and Group Model Building, to foster equity. Panelists touched on the historical and current roots of structural racism, including the role of government entities and resource diversion. Panelists affirmed the unique position of local public health leaders to convene government, healthcare, and community leadership as Community Health Strategists. However, they also noted that public health institutions may not be best situated for this role in every context, thus underscoring the critical need for cross-sectoral collaboration.

(L) to (R): Tahlia Gousse, MPH, CHES, NACCHO; Maribel Campos-Rivera, MD, MSc, MBA, University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus; Michelle Taylor, MD, DrPH, MPA, Shelby County Health Department; and session moderator Daniel Chen. DrPH, CCR

Our partners explained how CCR tools have helped them determine root causes of adversity, convene stakeholders with divergent perspectives, center community voice, identify community narratives, and take a systems-level approach to fostering equity. The session was completely full with participants deeply invested in sharing lessons learned in confronting the challenges of addressing structural racism. Attendees expressed interest in applying CCR's work to state-level policy-making and sharing insights on working in challenging political and social environments, particularly rural communities.

LOOKING AHEAD

As CCR advances our efforts to build a global resilience movement, we will continue to bridge our diverse capabilities in narrative change, community engagement and power-building, and evidence-informed systems transformation. Here's a sampling of what to expect from the Center in 2024.

The Equity Dashboard: A Decision-Making Tool to Close the Racial Wealth Gap

CCR is experimenting with a local application of the Equity Dashboard that could inform national efforts to address the economic impact of structural racism on marginalized communities. The "Closing the Racial Wealth Gap" action-oriented research project follows a multi-year effort to address the roots of structural racism in Cincinnati, Ohio. The research team at CCR, including Dr. Daniel Chen and senior research associate Rachel Freer, is developing an Equity Dashboard to generate interactive models of projected outcomes based on varying policy levers at the neighborhood level. The Dashboard allows local policymakers and community partners to test an array of policy and investment strategies while tracking the rate and effectiveness of closing critical health, social, and economic gaps affecting wellbeing within a community.

Throughout 2023, our team worked with two marginalized neighborhoods—Avondale, the city's largest Black neighborhood, and Riverside, an enclave of lower-income White residents who can trace their family histories to Appalachia. Working with residents in these contrasting but similarly marginalized neighborhoods, we conducted group model building sessions to generate causal loop diagrams that help illustrate the policies and practices that contribute to generational poverty, lower educational attainment and higher rates of community instability, desirability, and crime. Our policy analysis and contextual research is leading to the development of the Cincinnati Equity Dashboard—a new level of geographic specificity for CCR's system dynamics modeling work. The ability to highlight neighborhood-level outcomes makes the Equity Dashboard a tool that could inform decisions to strategically reinvest in neighborhoods that have been systematically disinvested, shedding light on pathways for fostering equity. The Equity Dashboard will be released to Cincinnati leaders in 2024.

Equitable Community Partnerships: A Pilot Study

At CCR, partners in public health, policy, research and the non-profit sphere voice a continued need to center community voice and power as a fundamental strategy to fostering equity. In May 2023, the CCR Research Team was granted the Milken Institute School of Public Health Innovation Award to implement the Equitable Community Partnerships Pilot study (ECPP). Led by Christina Reinke and Alyssa Luisi, the ECPP is an action research study that aims to support community members, academic institutions, public sector agencies and/or non-profit organizations pursuing efforts to equalize power dynamics in new or existing collaborative projects. Study activities will engage participants with lived experience and expertise in community-partnered initiatives to develop a tool for reflecting upon and promoting equitable partnership practices. We also anticipate that this initiative will catalyze broader impact as collaborators throughout our network use the tool to communicate about equitable practices with their own teams and external stakeholders.

Changing Narratives to Address Community Violence in Washington, DC

As rates of violence increase in Washington, DC, it is more important than ever to respond with investments and interventions that address the root cause: structural violence (e.g., poverty, gentrification, food deserts, education inequality) perpetuated by systemic racism. To build political will to address the trauma and adversity that precede violence, we must change the current narratives influencing public discourse and local action. In collaboration with the T.R.I.G.G.E.R. Project and ideas42, CCR will collaborate with a Community Advisory Board to develop a narrative change campaign that centers the voices and stories of community members to: 1) communicate about community violence as a symptom of long-standing systemic and structural violence; 2) develop authentic narratives that challenge harmful perceptions about community violence and how to respond; and 3) advocate for policies and investments that address the disparate and inequitable conditions contributing to community violence.

HONORING THE LESSONS OF
BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

While the Center for Community Resilience has existed for five years, Dr. Ellis' work of researching and translating what it means to build community resilience spans more than a decade. At the 2023 Children's Trust Fund Alliance National Meeting, Dr. Ellis shared learnings from along the journey, delivering a keynote on how CCR's Community Resilience framework is being used to foster supportive environments for children and families. During the presentation, she shared concrete examples of how multiple sectors including housing, public education, law enforcement and criminal justice are collaborating to address many of the antecedents of ACEs to promote cycles of healing, and positive social and health outcomes. In the interactive workshop that followed, attendees learned how to identify key community assets and resources, promote upstream efforts to address social determinants and build community resilience using CCR's Pair of ACEs and Resilience trees as a method to facilitate community engagement and cross-sector collaboration. This beautiful graphic, created by Colibri Facilitation, encapsulates more than a decade of lessons from CCR's collaborations with community partners across the globe. We are grateful for the opportunity to continue guiding the CCR network and partners across sectors on the pathway to fostering equity, and look forward to what we will accomplish together in the coming years!

THE CCR TEAM

Below is CCR's team of staff and consultants. Special thanks to the following for their contributions in 2023: former staffers Conner Hounshell and Dylan Vargas, consultants Chris Gallagher and Jaylin D. McClinton, and student assistants Shreya Agarwal, Srey Biswal, Ellis Davis, Miles Davis, Kristiann Koris, Ian Lee, Anna Martin, and Uvie Omo-Sowho.

Wendy Ellis, DrPH
Founding Director

Daniel Chen, DrPH
Associate Director, Research

Kimberly Rodgers, MA
Program Manager,
Fostering Equity

Kristen Hayes, MA
Program Manager,
Resilience Catalysts

Alyssa Luisi, MA
Sr. Research Associate

Christina Reinke, MPH
Sr. Research Associate

Rachel Freer, MPH
Sr. Research Associate

Purva Trivedi, MPH
Policy Analyst

Sarah Baldauf, MSJ
Sr. Policy Advisor

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Center for Community Resilience

Milken Institute School
of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY