NEWS RELEASE

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2012-13 Pittsburgh Schweitzer Fellows Named
Perpetuating Famed Physician-Humanitarian’s Legacy, 23 Graduate Student Fellows
Will Spend Next Year Improving Community Health & Developing Lifelong Leadership Skills

[Pittsburgh, PA – May 14, 2012] The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship (ASF) is thrilled to announce the selection of its 2012-13 class of Pittsburgh Schweitzer Fellows—23 graduate students who will spend the next year delivering service that addresses the social and environmental factors that impact health, developing lifelong leadership skills, and living famed physician-humanitarian Albert Schweitzer’s message of service.

Joining 220 other 2012-13 Schweitzer Fellows at 12 program sites throughout the U.S., the newly selected Pittsburgh Schweitzer Fellows will partner with local community-based organizations to develop and implement yearlong, mentored service projects that improve the health and well-being of underserved people—all on top of their regular academic responsibilities.

“The Schweitzer Fellowship simultaneously promotes Schweitzer’s legacy and addresses a critical gap in today’s health care landscape by equipping emerging professionals with the tools to address not only clinical health issues, but also the social determinants of health,” says ASF President Lachlan Forrow, MD, Director of Ethics and Palliative Care at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

Earlier this year, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation reported that although 85 percent of primary care physicians and pediatrics say their patients have health concerns caused by unmet social factors, only 20 percent of health professionals feel equipped to help their underserved patients actually address those social factors—including low incomes, environmentally unsafe housing, and lack of access to healthy foods, mental health care services, and educational opportunities.

“Established in 1992, our U.S. Schweitzer Fellows Program is a two-pronged means of addressing that gap,” Forrow says. “Fellows deliver immediate impact on the root causes of health inequities by partnering with area community-based organizations to carry out mentored, entrepreneurial, yearlong service projects on issues like early childhood literacy, obesity, and access to health care. But the Fellowship’s leadership development programming also helps them to contextualize this experience—delivering lasting impact by developing health professionals with the capacity and cultural competence to address social factors on an ongoing and effective basis throughout their careers.”

Upon completion of their initial year, the 2012-13 Pittsburgh Schweitzer Fellows will become Schweitzer Fellows for Life—and join a vibrant network of nearly 2,500 Schweitzer alumni who are skilled in, and committed to, addressing the health needs of underserved people throughout their careers as professionals. Ninety-nine percent of Fellows for Life say that ASF is integral to sustaining their commitment to serving people in need.

Since 1997, the Pittsburgh Schweitzer Fellows Program has supported more than 250 Schweitzer Fellows in delivering nearly 50,000 hours of service. The program is funded entirely through charitable donations and grants. Sponsors include the Allegheny County Medical Society; Chatham University; Cornerstone Care, Inc.; Dialysis Clinic, Inc.; the Fine Foundation; The Helen M. Sakraida and Clara M. Sakraida Charitable Trust Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation; The Heinz Endowments; PNC Charitable Trust (Virginia A McKee for Poor Fund); PNC Bank Foundation; Richard King Mellon Foundation; Southwest Area Health Education Center; The Grable Foundation; the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine, School of Medicine, School of Nursing, and School of Pharmacy; and many generous individual donors.
A full listing of 2012-13 Pittsburgh Fellows follows.  
Please visit www.schweitzerfellowship.org/pittsburgh for more information.

2012-13 Pittsburgh Schweitzer Fellows

Peter Asante, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Jacquelyn Collura, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Resident in Pediatrics, Adult & Child Psychiatry

Environmental Fellows

Asante and Collura will implement a program called "Singing and Coping" with medically underserved youth in Hazelwood who are living with asthma. Through this program, they will teach youth with asthma to sing, culminating in an a capella performance. Their overarching goal is to teach breath control and skills to assist with understanding and coping with asthma; allow an outlet for emotional expression; and form a sustainable mentorship group within the community.
Community Site: Center of Life in Homewood

Heather Bernard and Judy-April Oparaji, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Environmental Fellows

Bernard and Oparaji will conduct a program focusing on nutrition education and physical activity for elementary school children and parents living in the Homewood area. Through educational sessions, physical activity, and a community garden, they hope to prevent long-term chronic diseases.
Community Site: TBD

Lauren Cirrincione, University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy

Cirrincione will focus on the management of latent tuberculosis within refugee populations receiving treatment at the Squirrel Hill Health Center.
Community Site: Squirrel Hill Health Center

Monique Constance-Huggins, University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work

Constance-Huggins will provide cognitive-behavioral therapy-based classes to low income mothers at a welfare-to-work agency. Her project seeks to improve the well-being of these mothers by addressing negative affect, empowering them to make better decisions, and helping them to improve their employment outcomes.
Community Site: Re-Employment Transition Center

Bradley End and Babak Shahrak, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Environmental Fellows

End and Shaharak will implement an education and mentoring program for middle and high school students in Braddock focused on promoting nutrition, physical fitness, and college aspirations. In partnership with both the PAL mentoring service and the Gathered People's Movement, the project seeks to present college and a career in health sciences as exciting and achievable goals.
Community Site: Community Center and Carnegie Library of Braddock

fAe gibson, Chatham University, Physical Therapy

gibson will work to improve the health and well-being of greater Pittsburgh’s LGBT population, focusing on stress reduction and preventative wellness with breathing and rhythmic movements (Qigong) as an adjunct to receiving mental health care.
Community Site: Persad Center

Sandra Goldring, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine

Goldring will work to help Spanish speakers overcome barriers to using free health care services like SALUD and SALUD Para Ninos through group sessions. These sessions will address the importance of health maintenance.
Community Site: Birmingham Free Clinic
Rachel Goode, University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work  
**Environmental Fellow**  
Goode will work with African American women who value spirituality in the Northside and East Liberty communities of Pittsburgh, focusing on serving individuals who struggle with recurrent weight and obesity concerns. Her project will involve focus groups, individual support, and a support/psychoeducational group offering instruction on emotional coping skills, stress management, and appetite awareness.  
**Community Site:** Mount Ararat Baptist Church; The Pittsburgh Project

Arthur Hawkins, University of Pittsburgh School of Law  
**Environmental Fellow**  
Since the incidence of obesity in autistic children is 2-3 times that in the general populations, Hawkins will address the importance of daily exercise with autistic children through team sports. Through basketball, football, and baseball, Hawkins hopes to teach healthy exercise habits as well as responsibility, communication, persistence, and passion. He hopes the children will carry these skills and their team sport experiences with them through out the course of their lives.  
**Community Site:** Abroad; Autism Speaks; Ringgold School District; YMCA in Charleroi, PA

Stephanie Johnson, Duquesne University School of Law  
**Environmental Fellow**  
Johnson will work in the Penn Hills, Homewood, and Wilkinsburg areas on developing knowledge of the effects of foreclosures and short sales on affected communities. Her project will include seminars and counseling on the the financial and health effects of financial defaults.  
**Community Site:** TBD

Jeffrey Kiser, West Virginia University School of Medicine  
Kiser will establish a depression and anxiety prevention program for international students who attend West Virginia University in Morgantown. His program will focus on building a sense of community among the school’s diverse international student population through cultural expression and communication skills development.  
**Community Site:** Bridges International

Jessa Koch and Alicia Lichvar, University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy  
Koch and Lichvar are creating and conducting a life skills group for male inpatient residents with substance abuse disorder at the The Salvation Army Harbor Light Center in Pittsburgh's Northside. This group will have several core components, including job preparation, healthy stress management, and conducive expression through art. It is aimed at helping this population develop positive emotional responses and self-confidence in their social, physical, and mental health that will lead them to a safe and prolonged recovery.  
**Community Site:** Harbor Light Center

Beth Koh, Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine  
**Environmental Fellow**  
Koh will work to improve the overall health and academic achievement levels of special education students at Pressley Ridge Day School in Greensburg. Her project will involve a healthy fruits and veggies school garden, yoga in the classroom, and the Railyard physical fitness program, which will represent the osteopathic notion that being healthy constitutes a total well-being of the body, mind, and spirit.  
**Community Site:** Pressley Ridge Day School –Greensburg

Hilary Michel and Emily Rosenberger, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine  
Michel and Rosenberger will work to improve the physical and mental well-being of adolescent girls who are victims of homelessness and/or abuse and neglect. They plan to implement a curriculum that focuses on sexual health, anger management, self-efficacy, and health literacy.  
**Community Site:** Dithridge Shelter
Gabrielle Paoletti, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Environmental Fellow
Paoletti will provide an exercise and empowerment program for underserved adolescent girls in the Pittsburgh area. The program will focus on exercise, healthy eating, and building confidence. Through bike rides and hikes in local parks, as well as to areas surrounding Pittsburgh, the program aims to help participants overcome physical and psychological challenges and develop an appreciation for the environment, positive relationships with adults and mentors, and enhanced confidence and self-esteem.
Community Site: Pittsburgh Youth Leadership

Ritika Parris and Michelle Sarin, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
Parris and Sarin will work with adolescent girls who have behavioral and/or emotional challenges. Their program will involve interactive sessions on nutrition and wellness; counseling and education on sexual health and health care system navigation; and the promotion of self esteem and self expression in the form of a final creative project.
Community Site: Friendship Academy – East Liberty

Alicia Roberts, University of Pittsburgh School of Law
Environmental Fellow
Roberts will work to empower female high school students in East Liberty through a series of discussions on topics including college preparation, environmental concerns, self-esteem, and peer pressure and high school challenges, career development.
Community Site: Mt. Ararat Baptist Church; Propel Charter School

About The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship

Originally founded in 1940 to support Dr. Albert Schweitzer’s medical work in Africa, ASF is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop Leaders in Service: individuals who are dedicated and skilled in meeting the health needs of underserved communities, and whose example influences and inspires others.

These Fellows — primarily university graduate students — partner with community-based organizations to identify an unmet health need, design a yearlong 200-hour service project with a demonstrable impact on that need, and bring that project from idea to implementation and impact. Rooted in a holistic understanding of health, Schweitzer projects address not only clinical issues, but also the social determinants of health. Annually, approximately 250 Schweitzer Fellows deliver more than 40,000 hours of health-related community service at thirteen locations across the U.S. A number of Schweitzer Fellows also work at the Schweitzer Hospital in Lambaréné, Africa, collaborating with hospital staff to help provide skilled care through over 35,000 outpatient visits and more than 6,000 hospitalizations annually for patients from all parts of Gabon.

When Fellows’ initial year ends, they carry their commitment to meeting the health needs of underserved people forward as members of the Schweitzer Fellows for Life alumni network, a pipeline of Leaders in Service now nearly 2,500 strong.

ASF’s national office is located in Boston, MA and hosted by Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.