

# Public Health Innovation Fund: Creating Public Health Social Enterprises

Anne Callan, Public Health Fund 29 November 2015

The Public Health Fund (PHF), a private foundation and support organization to Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC), has developed an internal process to recognize and fund new business models, strategic partnerships, entrepreneurship and other innovative ideas that leverage the PHMC's work. This year, the Innovation Fund partnered with PHMC's Organizational Development and Learning (ODL) division to create the Social Innovation and Public Health Enterprise Workshop, a lab environment focused on business thinking and critical development skills needed to evaluate the feasibility of, and launch, a scalable social enterprise. In addition to public grantmaking, PHF makes a set of internal investments annually to support key initiatives at PHMC, one of which is the Innovation Fund. The Innovation Fund reflects the principles that give direction and vision to PHF, like entrepreneurship, strategic partnerships and new models of revenue with the goal of building new business or leveraging the work PHMC is already doing.

In years past, the Innovation Fund has invited applications from throughout PHMC's network of programs, affiliates

and shared services like HR, Finance and IT followed by a traditional process of committee review. Awards of up to \$25,000 (from a total pot of \$100,000) have been made for ideas such as: a tech-forward tool for facilitating statewide health insurance enrollment; a medical-legal partnership model on site at primary care clinics to support patients in related/simultaneous legal challenges; a workforce development pipeline through Out of School Time programming; and connecting geo-mapping technology with data innovation in public health.

In 2015, to lend critical support to those developing new innovations, PHF partnered with PHMC's Organizational Development and Learning (ODL) division, which is responsible for training, professional development and centralized staff initiatives geared toward cultivating PHMC's workforce, enterprise-wide. This PHF-ODL partnership focused on creating a unique learning opportunity for any staff poised to develop, pilot, seed and scale a social innovation at PHMC through a curriculum developed by Tine Hansen-Turton, PHMC's Chief Operating Officer. As a prerequisite for competing for Innovation Fund support, participants in the Social Innovation and Public Health Enterprise Workshop, as it was named, attended a five-part seminar lab comprised of teaching, practice and peer review, with particular emphasis on effective pitches and presentations.

Hansen-Turton's curriculum was adapted from the Philadelphia Social Innovations Lab (PSIL) that she and

colleague Nick Torres have developed as a regional incubator to turn ideas into scalable enterprises. Building on principles of social entrepreneurship across private and public sectors, and how disruptive ideology always questions if we can change what we do for the better, the curriculum followed a logic around Idea Exploration > Idea Experimentation and Testing > Idea Execution. A conceptual framework drawing on theory by Clayton Christensen and Simon Sinek, and "The Social Entrepreneur's Playbook" by Ian C. MacMillan and James D. Thompson, helped shape the discussions among participants and gave them new dimensions through which to explore the feasibility of their ideas. To supplement this learning, ODL provided technical assistance on best practices in PowerPoint presentations and instructional design.

A key component of this process was the selection of awards. PHF engaged PHMC's senior management team to form a committee of evaluators who joined the final session to listen to each participant present the final pitch for their innovation and to celebrate the culmination of the lab. Evaluators used a scoring rubric reflective of the guiding principles exemplified in the workshop and Innovation Fund investment criteria. Engaging a core team of PHMC leaders in this way marked a new direction for PHF decision-making and was a strong demonstration of the symbiotic relationship between PHF and PHMC. The final awards went to:

**The Advocacy Institute:** Steven Jackson, Amanda Irizarry

The Advocacy Institute (AI) is a peer empowerment model focused on addressing Philadelphia's silent epidemic of youth homelessness. Through the institutionalization of peer mentorship within the AI alumni network and a blended curriculum of learning and professional development, AI strives to change the face of youth empowerment.

**PHMC Policy Collaborative:** Jennifer Keith, Sarah Hexem, Rachel Greenberg

The Policy Collaborative will work to build systems-level change throughout PHMC by establishing a committed group of staff across PHMC who can learn from and share direct experiences to identify and prioritize policy solutions.

**PHMC Explore:** Hamzeh Abuyounis, Emily Wyner, Jack Knauer, Caitlin Lam, Krista LaNoce

PHMC Explore is committed to engaging PHMC's entry- and mid-level employees in implementing the organization's high-level strategic priorities. By providing professional development, networking and skill-building opportunities for its members, PHMC Explore will cultivate "intrapreneurs" to lead tomorrow's public health innovations.

## **Turning Points for Children Pivot Program:** Dawn Holden

The Pivot Program is dedicated to bridging the gap in supportive services available for youth who have aged out or are aging out of the foster care and residential treatment system. The program will employ a trauma-informed, four step curriculum which harnesses participants' strengths and equips them with the "age appropriate" life skills needed to become self-sufficient and to successfully transition into adulthood.

## **Foster Parent Support Center:** Laura Knightly

The Foster Parent Support Center has a mission of educating, connecting and empowering foster parents through education, mentorship and advocacy to increase foster parent recruitment and retention in Philadelphia.

## **Healthy, Wealthy and Wise Program:** Megan Kiesel, Markita Morris-Louis

Clarifi will be integrating text messaging innovations to pilot a project focused on supporting individuals enrolling in health insurance. By employing a diligent communications approach to those who receive financial counseling during the enrollment process, Clarifi will help reduce incidence of nonpayment and will help ensure that participants maintain their health insurance for longer periods of time.