Leading The Future of Community Health

Community champions accomplishing positive change

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PUBLICATION AWARDS
Platinum Award, Hermes Creative Awards, 2016; Gold Award, 2015
Gold Award of Excellence, 21st Annual Communicator Awards, 2015
Gold Award, Aster Awards, 2015
Silver Award, 32nd Annual Healthcare Advertising Awards, 2015

ON THE COVER
Independence Blue Cross Foundation recognizes individuals who are leading the future of community health in the Philadelphia region.
As Philadelphia shines in the national spotlight, an infusion of new ideas is transforming the region. Innovative models and cross-sector collaboration are being championed by established leaders and those who follow in their footsteps. Inspiring, diverse, and determined, the next generation of influencers is hard at work building connections and competencies to lead positive change in the community.

With a mission to lead sustainable solutions to improve the health and well-being of the community, the Independence Blue Cross Foundation recognizes the importance of community champions. The future of community health depends on leaders who understand complex issues, can activate broad networks, and partner to implement effective programming. We have a responsibility to our partners and the community to ensure that our work together is carried on by the future leaders in community health.

In this issue, we profile exceptional individuals who are rising stars in organizations across our region — future leaders of community health. They are the next generation of leaders who are pursuing their passion and making a difference in the community. From advocating for quality health care, to mentoring those in need of guidance, to exploring new models and partnerships, these individuals are committed to improving the places where we live, work, and play.

We congratulate these future leaders on their achievements and recognize their potential to change our community for the better. We hope you enjoy reading about their accomplishments and aspirations, and join us in supporting their journey of success.

With warm regards,

Daniel J. Hilferty
President and CEO,
Independence Health Group

Lorina Marshall-Blake
President,
Independence Blue Cross Foundation
Felicia D. Harris
DEMONSTRATING THE VALUE OF MENTORS AND MENTORING

BY SHARMAIN MATLOCK-TURNER, PRESIDENT AND CEO, URBAN AFFAIRS COALITION

Felicia D. Harris is an innovative, take-charge individual. I first met her when she started working at the Urban Affairs Coalition (UAC) as my executive assistant. She worked full time at UAC for five years. It was plain to see that she was smart, talented, and committed to excellence. Recently, after leaving to start her newly formed company, HiTouch Enterprises, she earned a contract with UAC.

In the age of doing more with less, I noted that her skills and talents could support UAC in many different ways. Felicia developed effective work plans with clear goals and deadlines. She understood how to collaborate with the entire team to get things done. Beyond that, Felicia was always open to new suggestions and approaches. She proved to be ready for any challenge I could throw her way.

We asked her to lead our fundraising events, including our Annual Anniversary Breakfast and Thanksgiving Basket Program. With her help, the breakfast grew from 600 attendees and $350,000 raised to 900 attendees and $450,000 raised. Our Thanksgiving Basket Program doubled in size, raising in excess of $45,000 and feeding more than 12,000 individuals through a network of 100 community-based organizations.

HELPING GROW INITIATIVES
Felicia led the effort to pull together UAC’s five-year strategic marketing plan. With senior staff and the board marketing committee, she developed the road map to create greater visibility and opportunities for growth. Out of that effort, she helped us reimagine and grow Coalition U and our communication strategy.

Coalition U is a set of professional development seminars for nonprofit leaders. The audience includes organizations within the UAC family of nonprofits and those in the broader community. She created a digital media campaign and redesigned the curriculum. This expanded our database of nonprofit influencers in the region by 65 percent.

Felicia revamped and standardized UAC’s internal and external communications. First, she gave structure and consistency to these efforts. Then, she led initiatives to

Why Philadelphia? What is it about the region that motivates you to work here?
I’m a Philadelphian, born and raised. I’ve worked in both DC and NYC but always ended up back in Philadelphia. I was so concerned about being in a “cool” city to live where there was opportunity to grow, and I found through my experiences that Philadelphia was that place once I gave it a real chance. The people are great and there are so many opportunities for professionals to pave their own way.

— Felicia D. Harris
expand our digital media campaigns using Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and weekly e-newsletters. Her work increased our online following by 40 percent and doubled the number of campaign impressions.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITY
Her impact extends beyond her work at UAC. Shortly before joining the UAC staff, she developed Influencing Action Movement, Inc. (IAM). IAM is a peer-mentoring collaborative for professionals and students, including high school students. She also cofounded Philadelphia Voter Education Week to mobilize, empower, and educate city residents about the election process. She created a digital media campaign to reach more than 50,000 registered voters.

Felicia is a clear voice for women and millennials. She was recently elected as the third vice chair of the Philadelphia NAACP; she chairs the organization’s Millennials and Young Adults Committee, which aims to bridge the age gap in the organization.

Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney appointed Felicia to serve as chair of the Philadelphia Commission for Women. In this role, she distinguished herself by holding public officials accountable when they treated women poorly. She is also vice president of governance for the Spruce Foundation.

Academics and practice go hand in hand for Felicia. She holds a bachelor’s degree in marketing from Howard University and graduated in May 2017 from Temple University with a master’s degree in adult and organizational development. She attended Temple in the evenings while working full time and leading her nonprofit.

Though Felicia is active with many organizations, one of the roles dearest to her is that of deacon at Salem Baptist Church of Jenkintown. She is the youngest deacon at her church and one of a handful of female deacons in the region’s African-American Baptist church community. Her spiritual development and ability to empathize with others shines through her work at Salem and in the community.

**HUMBLE, GIVING, AND LOYAL**
In her mentoring collaborative, she extols the value of mentoring and sponsorship. She has chosen terrific mentors to support her work; I am proud to be one of them. She values not only what I share with her, but she values my time — she is always prepared. She gives great feedback and lets you know what worked and what did not. Felicia is a star, yet she is humble, giving, and loyal.

Felicia reminds me every day why we must reach out to mentor and support young people. To paraphrase Maya Angelou, because of them, we will all rise.

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**Still I Rise**

— Maya Angelou

Out of the huts of history’s shame

*I rise*

Up from the past that’s rooted in pain

*I rise*

I’m a black ocean, leaping and wide,

Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear

*I rise*

Into a daybreak that’s wondrously clear

*I rise*

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,

I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

*I rise*
Tarik S. Khan is an exceptional clinician as a family nurse practitioner at the Family Practice and Counseling Network, and for the past decade has been a tireless advocate for issues that impact the community. This spring, Tarik was recognized both by Billy Penn with its Who’s Next: Community Leader Award and by Sigma Theta Tau’s Kappa Delta Chapter with its Nursing Leadership Award. I have no doubt that Tarik is one of our future leaders of community health!

Tarik has been a family nurse practitioner for the past six years and at the Family Practice and Counseling Network for the past two years. In addition to his great bedside manner and well-refined clinical skills, Tarik is a consummate patient advocate and champion. I have often been touched by the manner in which I hear him relating to his patients. He engenders so much compassion, wisdom, and patience as he takes his time to listen, educate, and understand his patients’ needs.

Advocacy and Activism
He devotes much of his free time lobbying his members of Congress, writing op-eds, canvassing for nurse- and patient-friendly candidates, and working with various community groups to improve the world around him. Tarik also spends one day a week at the University of Pennsylvania teaching family nurse practitioner students and uses another day to precept a graduate student from the university. Twice a year, Tarik lobbies for funding for our health centers in Washington and Harrisburg, and is on the phone every day with the offices of lawmakers talking about issues that affect providers, caregivers, and patients.

Tarik also lobbies for nurses through the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association (PSNA) and the American Nurses Association, and he chairs the Government Relations PAC for PSNA. As PAC chair, Tarik works with the committee to support and lobby for legislation in our commonwealth to benefit nurses and the patients we serve. Tarik serves as a local committeeperson in Philadelphia, and during the last election led a multifaith effort to amplify the voice of Philadelphia’s Muslim population by increasing voter registrations in his community.

Recently, Tarik helped to plan a rally to support quality and affordable health care with his state representative’s office, which featured

We often assume that all advice is good advice, but that’s not always true. What is the worst piece of advice you’ve ever received?

After I graduated from college, I returned to the ER at Einstein to volunteer. Someone told me that would be a waste of time and that I should be looking at actual jobs, not volunteer positions. I ignored their advice, and the brief time I spent in the ER at Einstein confirmed I was on the right track by going into nursing, and I learned about Roxborough Memorial Hospital School of Nursing’s accelerated nursing diploma program — just in time to apply before the deadline. I attribute a lot of my success as a nurse to Roxborough’s excellent program!

— Tarik S. Khan
Mayor Jim Kenney and representatives from the local, state, and national levels. It was the third major rally that Tarik has spoken at this year and one of several events where he spoke since our last national election to advocate on behalf of our patients. Tarik has also published several recent op-eds about fighting for equitable access to health care and in support of the sweetened drink tax to fund pre-K and community schools in Philadelphia.

‘ENABLING MINDS’
Tarik has a passion for the community of people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. He helped create and currently chairs a 501c3 organization, Enabling Minds. This group spearheaded the creation of special education classrooms for students in Haiti with developmental disabilities. The project has raised more than $50,000 to support the education and nutritional and spiritual well-being of more than 70 students.

Tarik has brought his passion for people with developmental disabilities to our practice. He maintains a large panel of people with intellectual disabilities and will be leading a presentation for our clinicians and staff to optimize our care to other persons with intellectual disabilities. He is also working on an effort to help expand our practice to care for even more of these individuals. Tarik previously served as a mayoral appointee for the District of Columbia Commission on Persons with Disabilities and was a volunteer coach for the Special Olympics and the Holy Terror STARS group that served children with autism. He was also vice chair of Project Affinity, a group that serves people experiencing homelessness.

STUDYING HEALTH DISPARITIES
Given Tarik’s interest in health policy, this fall, he will be begin work toward a Ph.D. in nursing at the University of Pennsylvania. He will study health disparities in older adults under Mary Naylor and Julie Hirschman at the NewCourtland Center for Transitions and Health. It is his hope that he can add to the research on how to best optimize health outcomes for individuals at greatest risk for health disparities.

I should also mention that this is not the first time Tarik is being honored by Independence Blue Cross (IBC). Tarik was an IBC Nurse Scholar both in his diploma and graduate program. He has also served as a mentor for the IBC Nurse Scholar program and was profiled in the Journal of Change by his mentee Blake Beckwith in 2016.

Tarik’s tenacity serves as a model for all of us who seek justice and social change. I am certain he has a very exciting future ahead of him, and we are fortunate to have him at the Family Practice and Counseling Network! ■

Philadelphians are genuine people and they appreciate passion and effort, and don’t tolerate artificiality or pretense. Philadelphians embrace beauty and greatness in their many forms: art, music, athleticism, history. Our diverse array of neighborhoods has more in common than we know, and we don’t get enough chances to come together as a city to explore and celebrate this bond. And we are led by a man in Mayor Kenney who is the quintessential Philadelphian: blue collar, passionate, practical; a bit laconic but who celebrates and champions diversity in all forms.

— Tarik S. Khan
I met Cathryn Sanderson when she joined the staff of the Philadelphia chapter of Back On My Feet (BoMF) as director of special events and communications in August 2010. But before that time, she was a hard-working intern placed with the organization for the leadership practicum component of the master’s program in nonprofit management at the University of Pennsylvania.

Whether an intern or organizational leader, she is someone who gets right to work and excels in all she does. As I got to know Cathryn personally and professionally over the years, I was impressed by her drive and passion for healthy living and how she wanted to translate that passion into improving health outcomes of the vulnerable populations in the community by working with the homeless.

PRODUCING RESULTS
The BoMF leadership recognized Cathryn’s hard work and dedication and she was quickly promoted to director of communications and corporate relations, and then to senior director of marketing and development. She was able to produce results and show impact while being nimble. She remained committed more than ever to the mission during leadership changes that occurred in the office, including a new chief executive officer and executive director. Between 2009 and 2015, BoMF added nine chapters across the country, and all the while the Philadelphia chapter was leading the way nationally to do more and help more individuals transition into housing and employment.

Cathryn is a doer with big ideas. Using her background in communications, she is an effective advocate for BoMF and ending homelessness. She is a great collaborator and has a talent for building bridges between companies and individuals, as demonstrated by BoMF’s partnership with the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, which provides a location for the annual Back On My Feet Bash.

How do you stay connected to the community?
Often, I love walking home in silence. That’s actually how I work through problems, brainstorm ideas, write speeches, and more. I get an incredible amount of creativity from live talks, meetings with new people, and visual art — seeing and hearing the way people view the world allows me to better understand the way I can position the work of Back On My Feet and bridge an understanding with populations around the issue of homelessness. Most importantly, the stories in our community make me feel more alive, grateful, and simply aware. While they absolutely remind me why I love every day of my work at Back On My Feet, they also give me perspective on my life and my place in the world. — Cathryn Sanderson
What was an experience that changed the way you see yourself as a leader?

Blind baking. For anyone who has never tried this team-building activity, you’re in for something possibly delicious (or not), possibly dangerous, but impactful.

Why Philadelphia?

What is it about the region that motivates you to work here?

Philly feels connected. You can walk around and bump into anyone you know, at any given time. You can’t ignore it. This is also true of working in human services. There are very visible populations in need — and an incredible amount of interconnected ideas, people, and services to find solutions. — Cathryn Sanderson
### Thoughts from Future Leaders

**Felicia D. Harris**
Principal, HiTouch Enterprises

**Tarik S. Kahn**
Family nurse practitioner, Family Practice and Counseling Network

**Cathryn Sanderson**
Executive director, Back On My Feet Philadelphia Chapter

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<td>1</td>
<td>Oprah Winfrey, media proprietor, actress, producer, and philanthropist, is the ultimate black woman entrepreneur role model.</td>
<td>Former first lady Michelle Obama for her intelligence, her goodness, and her simple elegance and moderation.</td>
<td>Im' keeping all of my staff. They are brilliant and care so much about not just those we serve but people in general. They teach me to be generous and think differently about the world around me.</td>
<td>Sharmain Matlock-Turner, president and CEO, Urban Affairs Coalition, is the godmother always whispering, “They will remember how you make them feel!”</td>
<td>Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk for his sense of possibility and his audacity to dream up a better future and then create it.</td>
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<td>Michelle Obama, former first lady, is an example of how to support your partner and family while still fulfilling your own passions.</td>
<td>MSNBC host Rachel Maddow for her analytical power, her ability to get to the heart of the matter, and her steadfast attention to detail.</td>
<td>Sheila Hess, city representative, has seen me through my journey at Back On My Feet and has been one of my greatest supporters. I aspire to have her positivity and energy to (literally) do it all!</td>
<td>The Rev. Marshall Mitchell, pastor of the Salem Baptist Church of Jenkintown, always pushes me to do better because he sees better, and you need that on your team.</td>
<td>Investor and philanthropist Warren Buffett for his well-grounded (and time-tested) vision, willingness to stick to his principles, and eternal optimism</td>
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<td>Sharmain Matlock-Turner, president and CEO, Urban Affairs Coalition, is the godmother always whispering, “They will remember how you make them feel!”</td>
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<td>Cathy Hughes, Radio One founder, is the ultimate powerhouse! If you don’t know her story, Google her and you’ll know why I choose her (smile).</td>
<td>Pope Francis for his humanity, willingness to be an iconoclast, inclusiveness, and oath of poverty.</td>
<td>Jane Golden, founder of Mural Arts, is one of the most passionate, spirited, and simply alive individuals I have ever seen. I admire her ability to change the landscape and culture of a city through art and community.</td>
<td>Diana Sanderson, my sister! She is my outlet and the person I go to for my most honest and uncensored advice.</td>
<td>Jane Golden, founder of Mural Arts, is one of the most passionate, spirited, and simply alive individuals I have ever seen. I admire her ability to change the landscape and culture of a city through art and community.</td>
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### Devin Reaves
Recovery Advocate; Executive Director, Life of Purpose NJ


### Esther Morales
Managing Director, Puentes de Salud

Since this is a dream list, my first pick would have to be Barack Obama. There are many obvious reasons, but most attractive is his tendency toward practicality and level-headedness.

### Melanie Mariano
B.S.N., R.N., Penn Nursing Alumna and Penn President’s Engagement Prize Winner

Cynthia Sarmiento Mariano, my mother and CMO (Chief Matriarch Officer), is self-explanatory, but she really was the matriarch of my family. She made all the family decisions and was key in the functioning of my family.

### John Kirby, Jr.
Director of Community Wellness, Stephen and Sandra Sheller 11th Street Family Health Services of Drexel University

My coworkers at Stephen and Sandra Sheller 11th Street Family Health Services of Drexel University. With them, I’ve learned to be more mindful, confident in my leadership, and compassionate to others’ needs.

### My Wife
Lorin Clay-Kirby. She is my partner in life and will be there to support me through any challenge. She also encourages me to be open to new ideas and to critique long-held beliefs.

### Michael Botticelli
Former Director, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, in recovery for more than 25 years, oversaw the reversal of decades of poor drug policy.

My mother, Eva Morales. She is a fearless entrepreneur and businesswoman who exemplifies grace, courage, strength, and balance.

### Cassandra Quave
Medical Ethnobotanist, who represents my ultimate goal of exploring traditional plant medicine through research.

Cynthia Sarmiento Mariano, my mother and CMO (Chief Matriarch Officer), is self-explanatory, but she really was the matriarch of my family. She made all the family decisions and was key in the functioning of my family.

### Loretta Sweet Jemmott
Expert in HIV/AIDS Prevention and COO (Chief of Outreach Opportunities), is unparalleled in her commitment to community nursing outreach work.

My mother, Eva Morales. She is a fearless entrepreneur and businesswoman who exemplifies grace, courage, strength, and balance.

### Rigoberta Menchú Tum
Advocate for Guatemala’s indigenous feminists and 1992 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, for her radiant strength and unwavering vision.

My coworkers at Stephen and Sandra Sheller 11th Street Family Health Services of Drexel University. With them, I’ve learned to be more mindful, confident in my leadership, and compassionate to others’ needs.

### Mariel Madrid
Choreographer, dancer, and CFO (Chief Free-Spirited Officer), is my favorite dancer. Her movement and words are always very liberating for me.

Jerry Rice, former wide receiver for the San Francisco 49ers and one of my favorite all-time athletes, was known for his tireless work ethic on and off the field. He will help to keep me motivated and in great shape.

### Anthony Bourdain
Renowned chef and food traveler, will help me to explore the world. This will of course be fun but will also allow me to be more worldly, understanding perspectives outside my own.

Ma Yun, of the Alibaba Group, failed many times before becoming one of the richest people in the world. I strive to emulate his business acumen and tenacity.

My mother, Eva Morales. She is a fearless entrepreneur and businesswoman who exemplifies grace, courage, strength, and balance.

### Ma Yun
Of the Alibaba Group, failed many times before becoming one of the richest people in the world. I strive to emulate his business acumen and tenacity.

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### Leana S. Wen
Health Commissioner, City of Baltimore, is an immigrant born in China. At just 34 years old, she has become one of the leading advocates for overdose prevention.

Cynthia Sarmiento Mariano, my mother and CMO (Chief Matriarch Officer), is self-explanatory, but she really was the matriarch of my family. She made all the family decisions and was key in the functioning of my family.

### Steven Furtick
Pastor, Elevation Church, one of the fastest-growing churches in the nation at age 26. His lessons on leadership and faith resonate deeply with me.

My mother, Eva Morales. She is a fearless entrepreneur and businesswoman who exemplifies grace, courage, strength, and balance.

### Alice Walker
Author of *The Color Purple* and CTO (Chief Talking-Out Officer), is an activist in the most powerful, yet subtle of ways — through writing. Her steadfastness in fighting for human rights is astounding.

My wife Lorin Clay-Kirby. She is my partner in life and will be there to support me through any challenge. She also encourages me to be open to new ideas and to critique long-held beliefs.

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Devin Reaves
BRINGING A COALITION-BUILDING APPROACH TO RECOVERY ADVOCACY

BY ANDREW BURKI, M.S.W., FOUNDER AND CEO, LIFE OF PURPOSE

Devin Reaves is an inspirational example of what it means to live a life in recovery and as a leader within the recovery advocacy movement.

Devin has overcome tremendous adversity, both as a minority and an individual suffering from a substance use disorder. Part of what makes Devin so amazing is that he has always come back from his challenges stronger than when he went into them. He was kicked out of Drexel University for his substance use disorder and graduated with an advanced degree from the University of Pennsylvania in his recovery. He experienced institutionalized racism as a young person of color and is now on advisory boards for police chiefs and mayors. He experienced conflict in his earlier career with supervisors for making referrals based on clinical necessity rather than the company’s bottom line. He is now being promoted from his clinical outreach position to the executive director of Life of Purpose NJ project.

MAKING A MEANINGFUL IMPACT
I first met Devin in 2013 at an Association of Recovery in Higher Education conference in Minneapolis. I was immediately drawn to his enthusiasm for both education and recovery. At that time, Life of Purpose was a fledgling organization, helping clients achieve recovery, matriculate into higher education, and find meaning and purpose in life. The idea of utilizing higher education as a means of achieving sustainable recovery was not yet particularly well-received in the treatment community, but Devin immediately saw its merit and started championing the model.

Devin has a passion for learning, education, and bettering himself, as well as making a meaningful impact on the world around him. For this reason, I was honored to hire him to work in clinical outreach with Life of Purpose. His passion for advocacy and helping others has only continued to flourish. Devin is the outreach

How do you stay connected to the community?

What do you read, listen to, or where do you go?

My work keeps me in the community often. Every day I am working with an individual or family struggling with substance use. My volunteer work brings me across the city and the region. Every day I read Philly.com, The Hill, Politico, and The Root. Those outlets keep me up-to-date on what’s happening in my backyard and across the nation.

— Devin Reaves
Why Philadelphia? What is it about the region that motivates you to work here?

The Philadelphia area is home. I went to high school in South Jersey and then college and graduate school in Philadelphia. I currently live in South Jersey. I don’t think there is any other place where I could imagine myself living. — Devin Reaves

professional who will answer a parent’s phone call at midnight and go do an intervention in the middle of the night in a bad neighborhood. He gets kids into the best treatment facilities for their individualized needs, even when that facility is not his employer. Devin listens with compassion and genuine care; he cares about the families with whom he works and keeps them well apprised of their children’s progress. For Devin, recovery is not just his profession — it is his passion and life’s devotion.

NEW ROLE FOR A NATURAL LEADER

When our executive leadership team discussed the plan to expand our operations to open a facility in the Delaware Valley area, Devin was first on our list of potential executive directors. Thankfully, Devin was excited about this opportunity and will begin his new position with Life of Purpose this summer, with its location serving colleges in the South Jersey and Philadelphia area.

We have no doubt he will excel in his new role. He is a natural leader who consistently exhibits his integrity through his actions and open communication with clients, families, and treatment professionals.

It is this characteristic of Devin’s, the ability to articulately state where systemic change is necessary, above all others, that makes him such a phenomenal leader. He is particularly effective in this regard because he takes personal ownership of a system’s failures when seeking to reform it. Very few professionals make statements like: “We are failing an entire generation of young people with substance use disorders by not providing a means to obtain the recovery capital necessary to achieve sustainable recovery.” Devin makes those statements even when nobody else in the room wants to hear them.

WORKING TOWARD JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

Through his we-all-succeed-or-all-fail-together coalition-building approach to advocacy, he has been able to move his fellow treatment professionals from even the most entrenched of positions. For example, I have always taken a less direct approach to racial discrimination within the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems for individuals with substance use disorders. I have very much had the deck stacked in my favor for the best possible outcome for an individual needing to enter recovery. I am a white heterosexual male from an affluent background, which, as Devin pointed out, is why I got to go to the American prison-industrial complex.

While well aware of this inequity, I would never have publicly spoken about it without Devin’s leadership and encouragement. Devin speaks the truth to work toward justice and equality, and he encourages everyone to do the same. He is an amazing leader in his own right, but what truly makes him exceptional is the fact that he pushes everyone around him, from the greatest leaders in the recovery space to the kid who just walked in off the street, to do more, to be more, and strive for a better world.

We often assume that all advice is good advice, but that’s not always true. What is the worst piece of advice you’ve ever received?

The worst advice I ever got was from some of my peers regarding attending graduate school. I had just worked so hard for several years as a nontraditional student and some of my friends told me it would be a waste of time to go to school for two more years to get a master’s degree. Luckily, I had a few great mentors who encouraged me to pursue higher education. It was one of the best decisions of my life. — Devin Reaves
I consider Esther Morales a close friend and colleague with whom I have had the great opportunity to work alongside and mentor. She is currently the managing director of Puentes de Salud and has been tasked with the expansion and integration of health care services with the educational and community development programs we provide.

RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT
Esther’s work essentially embodies the creation of a model focused on “social determinants of health.” Prior to assuming her current role, she began working at Puentes de Salud in 2011, overseeing educational services at Southwark Elementary School.

During her tenure in this position, Esther:

1. Expanded Puentes’ after-school program to a full five-day week
2. Formalized relationships with numerous academic institutions in the Philadelphia region (Bryn Mawr College, Haverford College, Temple University, St. Joseph’s University,

What was an experience that changed the way you see yourself as a leader?
In 2015, I was very fortunate to participate in the Metropolis Conference on World Migration in Mexico City, Mexico, where I met leaders at many levels of the community, business, and government sectors from around the world. Seeing the many different styles of leadership and the common thread of adaptability changed my perception of what can define effective leadership. — Esther Morales
University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University

3. Standardized the service-based learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students

4. Strengthened the leadership capability within the program

5. Maximized organizational efficiency and diminished overhead costs for program operations

6. Formalized partnerships with numerous nonprofits aligned with Puentes’ goals (Mighty Writers, School District of Philadelphia, Archdiocese, etc.)

7. Created Puentes’ summer reading initiative

8. Wrote grants and developed a STEM program for Southwark Elementary School

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

After demonstrating an innate ability for organizational management and leadership, Esther was asked to assume her current role as managing director, shepherding the growth of Puentes as it transitioned into its newly renovated center at 1700 South Street.

When I think of Esther, the following words come to mind: quiet poise and grace, intellect, strength and honor, discipline, natural intuition, passion, dedication, and vision.

When you first meet Esther, she has a natural poise and a grace that is entirely unassuming and immediately endearing. Within minutes of conversation, it becomes apparent that she possesses a keen intellect that complements the passion and dedication she brings to the job. Her personal life and work experience enable her to speak eloquently about the mission of Puentes and its vital role in the immigrant community.

As you engage Esther in deeper conversation, it becomes quite apparent that she possesses a natural intuition for the work that is driven by vision. From the minute you first meet Esther, you realize that you are in the presence of someone who is disciplined and operates with clear core values that highlight inner personal strength and honor. She is no-nonsense.

DISCIPLINED, THOUGHTFUL APPROACH

Several years ago, Puentes received the 2015 Hispanic Choice Award. I was out of the country and unable to attend the formal event. Esther led a group from Puentes to receive the award. I watched the event from afar and was mesmerized by her presence on stage and her speech. It was like watching Audrey Hepburn receiving an Academy Award. I was so proud!

Esther is an observer. When she takes on a leadership role, she spends significant time learning about the process that she oversees. Initially, she allows the junior leadership to operate without intervention. As she processes information and develops a clear understanding of the program, she begins to formulate a plan focused on growth and development. She is able to ferret out inefficiency and consistently applies a disciplined, thoughtful approach to improve productivity. Perhaps what makes her most successful as a leader is her ability to implement change in a quiet, goal-directed, disciplined fashion.

The Texas Rangers have a motto that goes something like this: “A little man’ll whip a big man every time … provided they’re in the right and always keep a-comin’.” Esther is the embodiment of this statement. As a leader, Esther’s passionate commitment to the dignity that all human beings deserve forms the moral compass that drives her actions to improve the community’s health and wellness.

How do you stay connected to the community?

What do you read, listen to, or where do you go?

For me, the best way to stay connected to the community is by being in the community. While I do read about major trends in population health, particularly in urban ethnic communities, I like reading the blogs and newsletters from groups that live in South Philly, which is my area of focus. I listen to local radio stations and to the community members who gather at our health and wellness center. — Esther Morales

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At Penn Nursing, we pride ourselves on preparing all of our students to be leaders in their chosen careers, but every so often, an individual student’s leadership skills really stand out. Last year, it was Melanie Mariano, a Penn Nursing alumna who graduated with a B.S.N. in 2016. “She is a quiet fire,” as her mentor, faculty member Monica Harmon says. “Melanie listens first and approaches situations informed by multiple perspectives. She looks at both sides, and the people who can do that are the real trailblazers.”

Monica is absolutely right. In the fall semester of her senior year, Melanie enrolled in Monica’s course, NURS 380, Nursing in the Community, and spent time in a Southwest Philadelphia library doing health programming and health education. It was there that she first conceived of her project, Reaching HEALthy, which won a 2016 President’s Engagement Prize — a prestigious award of $100,000 that empowers Penn seniors to design and undertake engagement projects during the first year after they graduate.

FINDING INSPIRATION
The way Melanie tells it, one day she and a group of library patrons were playing HIV Jeopardy, a game designed to provide HIV education. However, she had an interaction with one of the players that extended beyond the game. Melanie really connected with him and they had a lengthy conversation about HIV, contraceptive methods, and some personal challenges. This, and other similar exchanges, inspired her and got her thinking that libraries should

We often assume that all advice is good advice, but that’s not always true. What is the worst piece of advice you’ve ever received?

It lies somewhere along the lines of “If you work hard enough, you can ... XYZ.” It is something that many people tell each other to motivate them, an easily accessible adage. I realize now that the platitude bolsters the idea of a meritocracy and invalidates those who find themselves unable to “pull themselves up by their bootstraps.” It further assumes that equity of opportunity exists for everyone, when in fact it does not. However, I do believe that if there is a will, there is a way. This adage invites more creativity, flexibility, buoyancy, and reflection of alternatives in the attainment of goals. — Melanie Mariano
always have a nurse to answer health questions, help with health counseling, and guide those who otherwise do not have anywhere else to go for answers or assistance.

Engagement and health literacy are essential in nursing’s efforts to improve health outcomes in vulnerable populations, and Melanie excels in both of these areas. She has an open and naturally empathetic personality, and is so respectful of the people she works with. When she talks about patrons at the library, she speaks about them with compassion, and almost reverence. She reminds us all what a privilege it is to gain people’s trust as we help to move them toward better health. She sums it up nicely: “Vulnerable populations can be mistrustful of the medical system, and the point of my project is to show patrons that medical care doesn’t have to be as scary as they think it is.”

‘A NATURAL FIT’
Since a key component of community health is being able to meet people where they are and understand their environments and resources, it became even more apparent to Melanie that bringing a stable health literacy program to a local library was a major need. She has said, “It seemed like a natural fit within the role of nursing to stay connected to the health of not just those in the hospital but those outside the hospital as well. I thought about what it would be like to have a nurse in the library all the time, and from there it really took off.”

This is one of the fundamental reasons that Melanie is such a natural leader — she recognizes need and also recognizes opportunity. And she is thoughtful but acts fast! In less than two months, she put together the President’s Engagement Prize grant application and then finalized it with Monica over winter break last year. Beyond that, Melanie is an excellent communicator — not just with her patients but with the multiple stakeholders that one often needs to build consensus with to get things done. She critically analyzes possibilities and then works to implement them.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS
With Melanie, the proof is in the pudding. In less than one year, Reaching HEALthy has served 221 individuals at the Free Library of Philadelphia with one-on-one engagement and has referred 25 percent for additional health services. Impressively, more than 60 percent of those referrals were completed. She has built partnerships with 41 local community health organizations, established collaborative relationships with the library’s existing social worker program, and has run many health-based programs, such as flu shot clinics and health fairs — not to mention the trusting relationships she has nurtured with the library’s many patrons.

Melanie has accomplished all of this because of her courage. Community and public health nursing are untraditional and uncharted paths that we as nurses are learning more about every day. That she created and delivered such an impactful program right out of school speaks volumes to her belief in herself, her abilities, and the commitment she has to the patrons. My hope for Melanie is that she will continue on this course and that she will have success in growing Reaching HEALthy and any other community health project she sets her mind to. — Melanie Mariano
John Kirby, Jr.

CREATING A CULTURE OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN THE COMMUNITY

BY PATRICIA GERRITY, PH.D., R.N., F.A.A.N., DIRECTOR, STEPHEN AND SANDRA SHELLER 11TH STREET FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES OF DREXEL UNIVERSITY; ASSOCIATE DEAN, COMMUNITY PROGRAMS, DREXEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

John Kirby, Jr., M.P.H., E.P.-C., gets it. As director of community wellness at the Stephen and Sandra Sheller 11th Street Family Health Services of Drexel University, he consistently gives his all. John steps up and has ultimately become the leader who patients, community leaders, and colleagues look to because of his ability to understand the broader picture of his efforts and the benefits to which they lead.

As associate dean of community programs at Drexel University’s College of Nursing and Health Professions, and founder and director at Sheller 11th Street, I take great comfort in this as I look to retirement. I have total faith in John’s abilities to carry on our mission of providing an integrative, trauma-informed model of care that creates a seamless engagement for patients, most of whom represent a vulnerable population and are residents of public housing and caregivers in the full range of physical, psychological, social, preventive, and therapeutic factors known to be effective and necessary for the achievement of optimal health throughout the life span. The center is a nationally recognized model of nurse-managed, community-based care for the education of health professions students and for faculty practice.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND ACCOMPLISHMENT
John has grown in his roles and responsibilities at Sheller 11th Street. He initially joined our team in 2012 as a fitness and wellness trainer, and used his exercise science training and certification as an American College of Sports Medicine physiologist while working with patients and staff to create care plans that worked toward the patients’ goals. He was promoted and assumed his current role in 2015. In his time with us, John took advantage of tuition remission at Drexel and earned a master’s degree in public health. He also participated in Drexel’s Employee Home Purchase Assistance Program and purchased a lovely home. John became engaged and married his beautiful bride, Lorin, last fall.

John’s experiences prior to joining Drexel serve him well at Sheller 11th Street. He previously worked as a care manager at a community health center in the city, collaborating with other health professionals in the Pennsylvania governor’s Chronic Care Initiative to identify ways to reduce costs and improve access and quality of care in the commonwealth’s patient-centered medical homes.

His experience in and around mental health makes him a go-to. John is often called on by political representatives to coordinate events as well as speak to attendees. Most recently, he served as the face of calm when tragedy struck in the form of a shooting in the neighborhood. John not only spoke at the vigil but also called upon his colleagues to provide support for those grieving.

How do you stay connected to the community?
I stay connected by attending community events, reading emails and flyers I see posted, and most important, taking time to talk with people and share information. I receive e-newsletters from organizations such as South Kensington Community Partners and Drexel’s Dornsife Center, and from local political offices. I sit on the community advisory committees of the Simpson Mid-Town senior residences; the EAT (Everyone At the Table) Café, a pay-what-you-can restaurant; and the People’s Emergency Center. This engagement helps me stay up-to-date and to partner in leading community progress. — John Kirby, Jr.
BUILDING BRIDGES AND PARTNERSHIPS
John developed a leadership style of open communication. He works diligently to develop trust and one could say he earned that trust. He has been extended invitations from the community and now serves on several community boards and committees that led to valuable connections. Identifying community partners, and strategizing with them on how best to promote our services and theirs, has led to win-win opportunities for promotion of the health center and our community partners. John’s efforts have resulted in improved access for our patients and the community we serve.

John is real and people sense his genuine passion for leading change. As a young black man, John serves as an excellent role model and mentor to community youth. He takes his job seriously and does not do what he does simply because it is his job. He believes strongly in creating a culture of health and wellness. John lives and breathes it.

He even continues involvement with his fraternity, serving as chairman of the Health and Wellness Committee of the Philadelphia Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi. Last year, his committee led the chapter in its facilitation of the second annual Dr. Leonard W. Johnson Memorial Men’s Health and Wellness Fair, which provided men with health screenings, health information, and group discussion about prostate and mental health.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION RESEARCH
I see a lot of myself in John — his persistence, perceptiveness, and acute awareness of how and why community members must be involved in shaping their care. John is so competent that I introduced him to my sabbatical work supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation at the Technical Assistance and Research Center in Oxford, England. We are looking at how social participation helps shape health in countries like Brazil, Kenya, New Zealand, Scotland, and Slovenia. John will accompany me to Scotland when we meet with representatives from those countries.

On behalf of our colleagues at the Stephen and Sandra Sheller 11th Street Family Health Services, Drexel University, and its College of Nursing and Health Professions, I am proud and pleased to support John Kirby, Jr. as a future leader of community health. John’s efforts continue to enhance ours and he will, no doubt, be among those who have the capability to change the shape of health care moving forward.

Why Philadelphia?
From the time I began to consider the type of career I would have, I knew it would be health related. My life has brought me to the public health field by way of exercise science. While I love working with people one on one to help them achieve their personal health goals, I find it ever more rewarding to bring to reality ideas that will help to get communities on the path to lifelong health. Philadelphia is the hub of many great public health and health care institutions whose work is imaginative and daring as they strive to meet the large-scale challenges of today and the future. There are plenty of opportunities to grow as a practitioner and leader, and to work with other professionals who have similar goals. Philly has a certain grit to it, a “don’t quit” attitude that likes long odds and hard battles. Health care has many of these, so what better place to be? — John Kirby, Jr.