



Human Impacts Institute Announces “Pittsburgh Stories of a Just Transition” Exhibit and Salons

*Stories from inspiring climate leaders in the Pittsburgh area
who are redefining what it means to transform their community*

PITTSBURGH - Nov 13, 2021--Human Impacts Institute (HII), a nonprofit that uses arts and culture to inspire environmental action for social good, has announced the launch of “Pittsburgh Stories of a Just Transition,” a series of free events featuring storytelling from inspiring climate leaders in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area who are redefining what it means to transform their community. The exhibit kicks off Saturday, November 13, 5pmET-8:30pmET as a part of the window displays stroll portion of [The Terminal Strip District holiday market and tree lighting](#). Virtual salon discussions with the climate leaders are planned for Mondays, November 22, 29, and December 3, 12pmET-1pmET. Visit humanimpactsinstitute.org/just-transition to register or learn more.

Each of the 11 climate leaders in the “Pittsburgh Stories of a Just Transition” storefront window display installations will have a poster featuring their story with their portrait by [Abby Winkler](#), a member of the Pittsburgh Society of Illustrators. The leaders are:

- Alyssa Lyon, director, Black Environmental Collective, UrbanKind
- Charles Yhap, CEO and founder, CleanRobotics
- David Heayn-Menendez, executive director, Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light Network
- Gina Winstead, assistant vice president, Vibrant Pittsburgh; vice president, Womxn in Tech PGH
- Jerome Jackson, executive director, Operation Better Block
- Leandra Mira, GenZ Visionary Collective, Fridays for Future Pittsburgh
- Lois Bower-Bjornson, Southwestern Pennsylvania field organizer, Clean Air Council
- Sarah Yeager, first climate and energy planner, Office of Sustainability for the City of Pittsburgh
- Sharon Pillar, founder, and executive director, Pennsylvania Solar Center
- Shawn Dalton, community volunteer
- Young Grguras, campaign director, Post-Landfill Action Network (PLAN)

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is a city known as one of the centers of U.S. manufacturing and one that is at the intersection of conservative *and* progressive America. “Pittsburgh Stories of a Just Transition”, shares on-the-ground examples of how community members are addressing the needs for an equitable shift to safe and healthy jobs, community preparedness, and sustainable infrastructure.

“By focusing on the idea of Just Transition, we are highlighting the need for a major shift from practices and industries that harm our communities and our environment, while also acknowledging that too many are being left behind by these changes—including those who have cultural, economic, and personal ties to polluting industries,” Tara DePorte, executive director and founder, Human Impacts Institute, said.

She continued, “We’re showcasing leadership that is more reflective of these communities, and we hope to create more space for a diverse climate movement on a local level, with avenues for greater buy-in to much-needed climate solutions.”

“Pittsburgh Stories of a Just Transition” programming includes three mini roundtable virtual salon conversations. They are:

Monday, November 22, 12pmET-1pmET: *Jobs for the New Economy- Pittsburgh Just Transition Salon*

Free with [registration](#). Featured speakers are:

- Charles Yhap, CEO and co-founder, CleanRobotics.** This company creates robots to improve waste management and the efficiency of recycling in Pittsburgh and worldwide.
- Gina Winstead, assistant vice president, Vibrant Pittsburgh; vice president, Womxn in Tech PGH.** She advocates for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the business and tech sector, while also creating local leadership and community development opportunities as the Assistant Vice President of Vibrant Pittsburgh.
- Jerome Jackson, executive director, Operation Better Block.** He creates opportunities for BIPOC community members to be at the forefront of envisioning and deciding upon the future of their neighborhoods.
- Young Grguras, campaign director, Post-Landfill Action Network (PLAN).** She educates students about the waste crisis and equips them with the necessary skills and resources to implement solutions to waste in their campus communities.

Monday, November 29, 12pmET-1pmET: *Infrastructure for Good Growth- Pittsburgh Just Transition Salon*

Free with [registration](#). This salon will address the need for green infrastructure in urban centers that have a history in polluting industries. Featured speakers are:

- Leandra Mira, GenZ Visionary Collective, Fridays for Future Pittsburgh.** She has mobilized hundreds of people for climate strikes in the City of Pittsburgh, and currently works to uplift the stories of the people in her region through her Web-Series “Heating Up” and her work with building community gardens around the city.
- Sarah Yeager, first climate and energy planner, Office of Sustainability for the City of Pittsburgh.** She developed the City of Pittsburgh’s Climate Action Plan and facilitates the collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, universities, and large corporations to ensure its implementation and to integrate sustainability into local neighborhood plans.
- Sharon Pillar, founder, and executive director, Pennsylvania Solar Center.** She helps Pennsylvania realize its full potential for clean energy. Sharon sees solar energy as a major contributor to the new energy economy because it creates tens of thousands of jobs in Pennsylvania, brings billions of dollars of investment to local communities, and plays an important role in decreasing carbon and air pollution.

Monday, December 6, 12pmET-1pmET: *Securing Equity in Our Communities Salon-- Pittsburgh Just Transition Salon*

Free with [registration](#). How do we come back from the global pandemic? This salon will address the need for community resiliency in our cities. Featured speakers are:

-Alyssa Lyon, director, Black Environmental Collective, UrbanKind. She inspires Black and Brown communities to know that they have the power to drive change and re-write the narrative on sustainability and environmental justice.

-David Heayn-Menendez, executive director, Pennsylvania Interfaith Power & Light Network. Through this position, he realizes his deep passion for community organizing, social justice, and environmental stewardship. Through their work, they are bringing important voices of faith communities to the climate conversation, while acknowledging how the work of creation and tending the garden of Earth is deeply entangled with living a life of faith.

-Lois Bower-Bjornson, Southwestern Pennsylvania field organizer, Clean Air Council. She amplifies the voices of people in her community affected by the harmful impacts of fracking and influences important policies that contribute to a healthier and more sustainable use of energy in Pennsylvania.

-Shawn Dalton, community volunteer. She is a retired accountant who volunteers her time for many projects to support her community in issues of social and environmental justice and equity, using her powers to improve the lives of others.

Funding for these programs was provided from the Transatlantic Climate Bridge program of Federal Foreign Office Funds in partnership with the German Consulate of New York. Co-sponsors are the Pennsylvania Solar Center and PittSustainability from the University of Pittsburgh.

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About Human Impacts Institute: The [Human Impacts Institute](#) (HII) is a creative, action-oriented community of arts, policy, science, communications, and business experts committed to creating and sharing innovative approaches to tackling social and environmental challenges. Founded in 2010 by Executive Director Tara DePorte, the Human Impacts Institute sees individuals and communities as active agents of social and environmental change and leverages art, culture, and community to make environmental issues and solutions beautiful, personal, practical, and actionable. To learn more, visit www.HumanImpactsInstitute.org. Follow the conversation on Twitter [@HumanImpacts](#), Facebook [@HumanImpactsInstitute](#), Instagram [@HumanImpactsInstitute](#).

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