



SOJOURNER HOUSE

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

Family Fun N'At

An Introduction to Family-Friendly Fun in Allegheny County

Summer 2022

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About Sojourner House

1991

Sojourner House founded:
Offering compassionate, faith-based recovery services to women and their children.

2004

Sojourner MOMS added:
Sheltering people in recovery and their children to confidently transition into the community





Maternal Substance Use Disorder and Treatment

People who can become pregnant are **most at risk** of developing a substance use disorder **during their reproductive years** (ages 18-44 years)

Policymakers have responded to the opioid crisis with **punitive laws**, but **criminalization can drive fear** in pregnant people, resulting in fewer parents seeking prenatal care and SUD treatment

In 2018, **only 23%** of SUD **treatment facilities** offered programs designed **for pregnant and parenting women**

Finding treatment and support for a SUD is **more challenging for Black, Indigenous, and other people of color**

Information comes from the National Partnership for Women and Families' fact sheet, "Substance Use Disorder Hurts Moms & Babies," published June 2021.

EAST LIBERTY. PITTSBURGH.



In 2020-2021, MOMS' permanent housing program served **50 adults and 75 children**, and transitional housing served **20 adults and 18 children**.



Sojourner House is in **East Liberty**, while the Sojourner MOMS sites are in **East Liberty and Homewood**.



However, **many clients** come from Western Pennsylvania counties **outside of Allegheny County**.

The
Sojourner
House
Community



Recognizing Needs

We developed the idea for our project through:

- **Observation** of groups and daily activities of MOMS residents
- **Daily interactions** with program staff
- **Discussions** with MOMS residents about needs within the program

Since many MOMS residents are **not from Pittsburgh**, are parenting while **newly sober**, and are operating on a **limited budget**, we offered the idea of a **guide to low-cost, family-friendly activities** in the immediate neighborhood and around the city

Family Fun N'At

An Introduction to Family-Friendly
Fun in Allegheny County



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Developed in partnership with
Sojourner House and Bridging the Gaps-Pittsburgh
by Michaela Avino and Nicole McCaffrey
July 2022



Family Fun N'At!

Guide Includes:

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Left: Age 2, playing with trains at the library

Right: Age 6 months, chewing on a toy at the library



Making It Personal

- Developed guide through **ongoing conversations** with program residents and staff
- Tested the **reading level** and made adjustments accordingly
- Communicated with administration about creating a **digital copy** that could be accessed on a smartphone
- Included **kids' drawings** of their favorite activities
- Went to **Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP)-East Liberty** to sign up for library cards and get a tour

Museums and Attractions

Children's Museum of Pittsburgh (North Side)

10 Children's Way, Pittsburgh, PA 15212
<https://pittsburghkids.org/> / 412-322-5058

- Fun, highly interactive children's museum including exhibits with water play, gardening, creating art, using tools, climbing, and even a "kindness gallery" to help kids understand emotions and empathy
- Admission: \$18 adults / \$16 age 2-18 / free to children under age 2
- Discounted tickets available for up to four people for \$2 each with EBT/ACCESS card
- Public transportation: The 54C bus stops at the Children's Museum. The museum is a short walk from the North Side Station on Pittsburgh Regional Transit's light rail system, AKA the T, which operates a free fare zone from Downtown Pittsburgh to the North Side. Many PRT buses go downtown, but double-check before getting on!

Carnegie Science Center (North Side)

1 Allegheny Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15212
<https://carnegiesciencecenter.org/> / 412-237-3400

- Interactive and exciting science exhibits that allow kids and families to learn about space, biology, engineering, and nature
- Admission: \$20 adults / \$12 age 3-12 / free to children age 2 and under
- Discounted tickets available for up to four people for \$3 each with EBT/ACCESS card (children under three receive free admission)
- Public transportation: The Science Center is next door to the Allegheny Station on Pittsburgh Regional Transit's light rail system, AKA the T, which operates a free fare zone from Downtown Pittsburgh to Allegheny. Many PRT buses go downtown, but double-check before getting on!

Carnegie Museum of Art (Oakland)

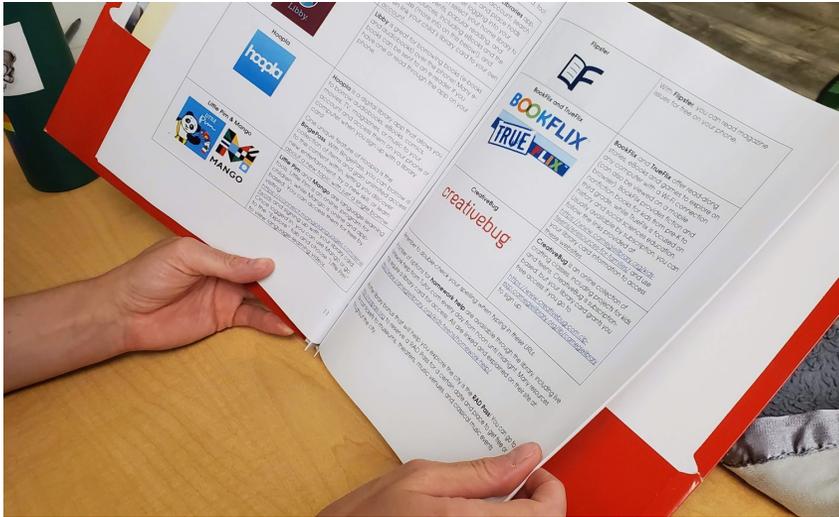
4400 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
<https://cmoa.org/> / 412-622-3131

- Showcases classic and contemporary art as well as architectural exhibits
- Admission: \$20 adult / \$12 age 3-18 / Free to children 2 and under
- Discounted tickets available for up to four people for \$1 each with EBT/ACCESS card (children under two receive free admission)
- Public transportation: CMoA is located near the intersection of Fifth Ave and South Craig St, close to stops on the 67, 69, 71A, 71B, 71C, 71D, 75, and P3.

There are many great apps and resources that you can access with a library card, too!

<p>Allegheny County Libraries</p> 	<p>Through the Allegheny County Libraries app, you can access your library account, search the catalog for materials, and place holds from your phone. After logging into your account, you can select your home library to find links to events, popular reading, and media resources, including eBooks and the RAD Pass (more info on this below!), and even link your child's library card to your own account.</p>
<p>Libby</p> 	<p>Libby is great for borrowing books (e-books and audiobooks) over the phone! Many e-books can be sent to an e-reader if you have one or read through the app on your phone.</p>
<p>Hoopla</p> 	<p>Hoopla is a digital library app that allows you to borrow audiobooks, eBooks, comics, movies, TV, magazines, or music to your account and access them on your phone or computer when you sign up with a library card</p> <p>One unique feature of Hoopla is the BingePass. With BingePass, you can borrow a collection of items and gain unlimited access to the content within, letting you discover new entertainment, try a new skill, or learn about a new topic with just a single borrow.</p>
<p>Little Pim & Mango</p> 	<p>Little Pim and Mango are language-learning tools. Little Pim is an online, program for children, while Mango is online and app-based. You can access them for free by visiting https://connect.mangolanguages.com/einework and signing up with your library card. Once logged in, you can use Mango or go to the "Explore" tab and choose "Little Pim" to view language-learning videos.</p>

Example Guide Content



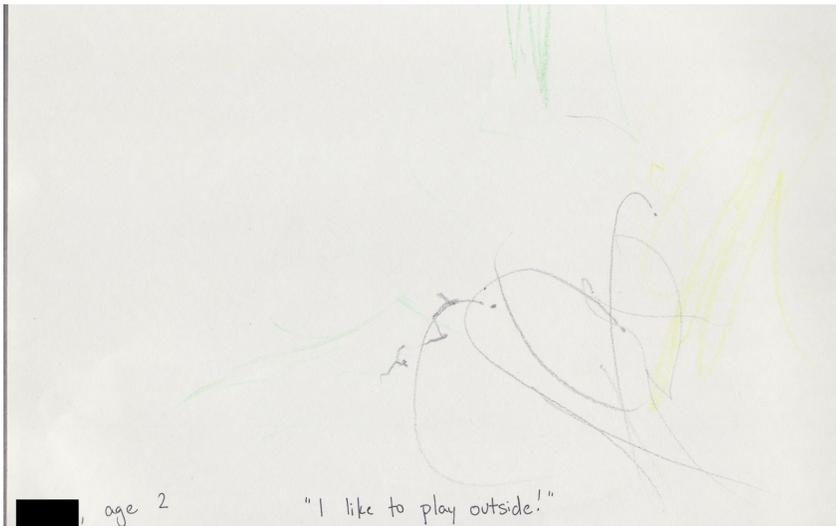
Participant Responses

“I found it really helpful, especially since I’m not from here. I want to continue using it.”

“I liked the different resources. I found it very helpful. Different activities and things for all ages and things that don’t cost anything.”

“The library, I really enjoyed.”

“It’s stuff I’ve been trying to find since I came here and didn’t know where to look. It’s awesome.”



Evaluating Our Project and Future Use

- Do residents and staff find the guide to be **easy to access and read**? Is this true for both physical and online versions?
- How many residents are **receiving and using** the guide?
- How many times has the guide been **accessed on the website**?
- Are residents and staff **talking about and referring to** the guide for ideas?
- After 3 months of living in Sojourner House, **how many things on the guide have the residents experienced**?
After 6 months?





Healthy People 2030

Individual Health and Wellness

Reduce misuse of drugs and alcohol.

Reduce drug and alcohol addiction.

Improve mental health.

Promote health and well-being for women.

Promote healthy development for children and adolescents.

Social and Community Support

Increase social and community support.

Create neighborhoods and environments that promote health and safety.

Increase educational opportunities and help children and adolescents do well in school.

Recommendations for the Site Going Forward

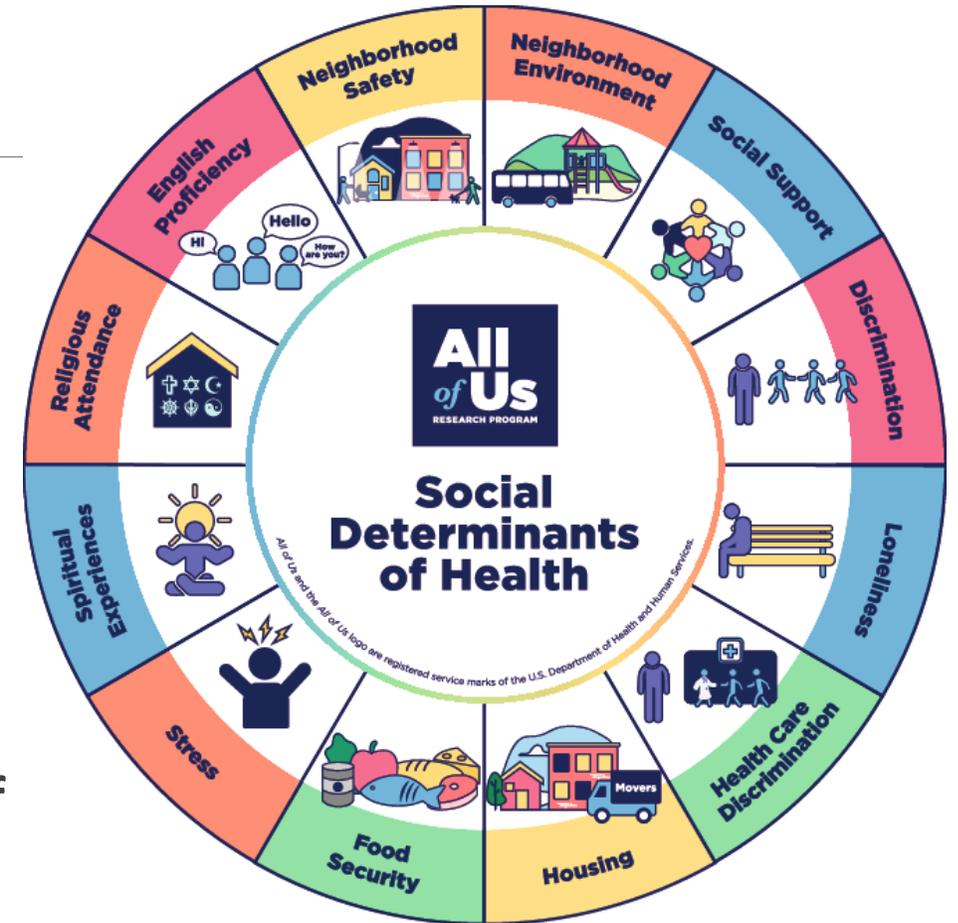


- Appoint a staff member or volunteer as the **“Keeper of the Guide”**
 - Keep the guide updated as needed
 - Ensure the guide is in an easy-to-access location online
 - Remind staff and residents to use the guide
- **Additional sections** to add to the guide
 - Community gardens
 - Diverse places of worship
 - Local clubs
 - Local free or low-cost sports teams for the kids and adults
- A **“Moving-Out Guide”** for residents with resources like the Blessing Board and Off the Floor

What We Learned

The importance of:

- **Individualized** care at an individualized pace
- **Knowing the population** and their unique needs
- **Knowing the resources** available in the community and **communicating them effectively** to the population
- Understanding all levels of **social determinants of health** when approaching an issue
- **Forming partnerships** with other local organizations



Reflections

“I am **immensely grateful to have learned from the residents and staff at Sojourner House just how complex it can be to achieve security and stability after experiencing homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, and often single parenting all at once.** I have a much better understanding of the social services and resources available in Allegheny County and how to navigate those systems. This was a **much-needed addition to the book learning** that I am so enmeshed in during the school year, which couldn’t possibly match the real, lived experiences of the people I intend to serve once I graduate.” -Michaela

Reflections

“I've learned so much from the staff and residents at Sojourner MOMS about the **intricacies of housing programs for low-income families**. It's **uniquely difficult to navigate these systems as a single parent who is newly sober**, and the support offered by Sojourner House, with its treatment and housing programs, is significant and needed in so many places. I'm grateful for the opportunity I had through Bridging the Gaps to **learn from residents' experiences** and help welcome these parents into the Pittsburgh community.” -Nicole



We extend our
thanks to...

- All the **families of Sojourner House/MOMS** who graciously allowed us into their space and lives
- Our community mentor, **Karen Upsher**, and all the staff at Sojourner House/MOMS
- Our faculty mentor, **Dr. Betty Braxter**
- The Bridging the Gaps leadership team: **Thistle, Brandi, and Antonio**
- All of our fellow **BTG interns**, who helped us shape this project and supported us along the way!