

# Making a Difference: Creating New Gateways to Mental Health and Wellness Ohio State's 2018 Community Engagement Conference E. Fitzgerald, B. Warren, M. Ciehanski, & Callie Buck



## Introduction/Background

- The Mount Vernon commercial area originated in the early 1990s as a safe haven for African-American people segregated from the primarily white community of the time.
- It was a close knit community and the relationships they built were professional, spiritual and personal.
- Community members inspired and mentored one another.
- The construction of interstate I 71 through Columbus injured the community
- Today, Mount Vernon Avenue survives and is undergoing economic and historic revitalization.



## Methods of Community Collaboration

The College of Nursing strengthened a community campus partnership with stakeholders from the Near East Side, including a community leader, Al Edmondson, who owns Al's Cut Above the Rest

Health screenings have been conducted at the barber shop bimonthly since 2013 and to date over 1061 adults have been screened for stress, blood pressure, and/or blood sugar in the Near East side at Barber and Beauty Shops and in community events



Stress emerged as a prevalent issue because there was a paucity of resources and lack of knowledge about the residents' perceived stress

## Aims/Purpose of Current Participatory Action Research Study

Three focus groups were conducted in autumn 2016 to provide an opportunity to listen to the residents' concerns about stress and traumatic life events. The findings from the focus groups are an important means to share what the community members perceive as well as resources, services, and sources of support that were lacking to cope with stress and traumatic events and will be shared with community leaders and stakeholders

## Preliminary Themes from Our Focus Groups

Violence, either experienced or witnessed  
Yearning for discipline of children and adolescents  
Community crime rather than personalized toward individuals

## Lessons Learned

Only through a steady presence in the community is active listening, meaningful conversation, and mutual trust achievable  
Research data is vital to better understanding community outreach; however, immersive engagement and interaction with members of the community is the largest driving force for better collaborative change.

## References

Columbus State Library. *Our Mt. Vernon Neighborhood*. Retrieved from: <http://library.csc.edu/c.php?g=126555&p=827830>