

FROM THE KITCHEN TABLE, A FOUNDATION IS BORN:

stoneleigh Foundation



MISSION

Stoneleigh Foundation was established to help improve the well-being of children and youth through a unique fellowship program that unites research with policy change and improvement to practice in three critical areas: child welfare, education, and juvenile justice.

HISTORY

The foundation was created in 2006 by John C. and Chara Haas, icons of the Philadelphia philanthropic community. Mr. Haas is the son of Rohm and Haas Company founder Otto Haas who, with his wife Phoebe, endowed the William Penn Foundation. Stoneleigh Foundation is named for the Haas home in Villanova, Pennsylvania, which may be used in the future as a center of activity for the foundation.

LEADERSHIP

John C. Haas, Chairman Emeritus
Carole Haas Gravagno, Chair
David W. Haas, Treasurer
Frederick R. Haas, Secretary
Julia R. Dutton, Ph.D., founding
Executive Director

MORE INFORMATION

www.stoneleighfoundation.org

Carole Haas Gravagno believes that some of the best ideas start at the kitchen table: family members debating issues and swapping stories, often agreeing, occasionally arguing, always fully engaged. That's how some of the most inventive concepts have come to light and sometimes turned into great success stories. Such is the case with the Haas family and Stoneleigh Foundation.



*Carole Haas Gravagno, Julia Dutton
and John Haas*

But the kitchen table talks that led John and Chara Haas to start the foundation weren't limited to family. Carole, now Stoneleigh's board chair, said that friends were later brought into the conversation at dinner gatherings or over coffee. The Haases wanted to hear about innovative ideas for linking all of the good research in the areas of parenting, early childhood development, and vulnerable youth to new and better government policies and services.

"They felt the current systems could be more effective if cutting edge research—research that could guide new policy or fix outdated policies—was being used to its full potential," Carole said.

The conversation expanded and what started as kitchen table talks between a husband and wife years later became a

foundation that would focus on funding some of the most visionary professionals in targeted areas of child welfare and juvenile justice reform—uniting research with innovations in policy change and practice improvement.

Carole said that many of those conversations with family and friends included a discussion about how John and Chara could also use their beloved Stoneleigh home and grounds to support the foundation's mission. She explained that the couple not only wanted to make sure their estate would be used in a meaningful way to benefit others, they also wanted to develop "something" that connected their home and values to a cause that had been central to them throughout their adult lives: helping underserved children and youth become healthy and productive adults.

FAST FACTS

CHILD WELFARE

- Over 500,000 children were in foster care in the United States in 2004.
- 15% = African American children as a percent of all children under 18.
- 34% = African American children as a percent of foster care children.
- More than 80% of children in foster care have developmental, emotional, or behavioral problems.

EDUCATION

- 90% of Philadelphia students who had a juvenile justice placement during high school dropped out.
- African American students are suspended 2.3 times more often than white students.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

- 100,000 = the number of teenagers held in custody in this country on any given day.
- 70% are detained for non-violent offenses.
- 2/3 are youth of color.
- Minority youth are more likely to be detained, receive harsher sentences, and receive fewer services than white youth who commit similar offenses.
- In Philadelphia, African American youth are 55% of the population but make up 80% of the juvenile justice system population.

IDEAS INTO ACTION

It was time to create a foundation; find the right person to develop a model; assemble a board of directors; and hire staff. After a number of candidates were considered, John Haas turned to Julia Dutton, a seasoned professional with experience in all areas where he hoped to focus. Julia was known as a problem solver, a strategic thinker and a leader. John and Chara trusted that Julia could take their ideas, introduce new ones, and launch their new a foundation to help children and youth.

In shaping the foundation's program, Julia considered many views and possible strategies that had already been put on the table during the Haas family conversations. She also spent time talking to people in the field, bearing in mind the family's core ideas: starting a fellowship program to benefit underserved children and youth. She spent her first year in one-on-one conversations with experts in the fields of public policy, advocacy, fellowships and programs that address issues related to at-risk children and youth. She also convened round tables to hear experts discuss and debate the issues in group settings, and formed an advisory committee to determine where the early efforts should be focused.

The model of a fellowship program was key from the start, incorporating the core belief in the power of individuals to affect social change. Julia sought the counsel of others who had taken on similar challenges or had experience in creating fellowship programs. The Independence Foundation's Public Interest Law Fellowship, for example, served as a model for the Stoneleigh Junior Fellowship Program—but this time bringing young leaders to the fields of human services and

education. She also studied the model of the highly regarded Chapin Hall research center at the University of Chicago, which also focuses on underserved youth and children and conducts research to inform public policy

"It was my charge to make all of the years of thinking and planning coherent from a programmatic point of view and to go beyond by doing my own research and planning," said Julia. "We had to find a way

that took the work of individuals—fellows—and some of the best in the field of serving at-risk children and youth and find a way for their work to play a leadership role in effecting change."

"My discovery process provided the information we needed to focus on supporting

improvements to the child welfare and juvenile justice systems and bridging the gaps between them by uniting research with policy change and practice improvement to benefit young people. The process led us to focus specifically on cross-systems efforts," said Julia.

John and Chara Haas take great pride in what's been created thus far. The model has been infused by their vision and philosophies, and the ideas and involvement of colleagues from many different fields.

HAVING AN IMPACT

Many fellowship programs exist, but Julia was determined to use the model to make a real difference for vulnerable children and youth—but how? "As a new foundation, with the vast array of issues faced by vulnerable children and youth, what could we as staff and board do with this model to be most effective?" After five years, Julia believes what sets Stoneleigh apart is both the fellowship model and the process that the staff and board have developed to support successful fellows. There is flexibility to the funding model. It's about being strategic and nimble.

"As a new foundation testing different approaches, we have been able to make

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adjustments to the model and improve our process as we learn—from our good decisions to the ones that aren't working as well," said Julia. "As staff and board members, we aren't afraid to say 'There may be a better way to do this', and then change. Or, here is a window of opportunity opening, let's get involved."

Stoneleigh exemplified this flexibility when they created a partnership with the City of Philadelphia. "We believed that supporting individuals working inside the system—in addition to our fellows working outside (but alongside)—would help us better address the needs of children and families served by public agencies," said Julia. "When a new city administration came in and was open to partnership and collaboration, we jumped in."

Currently there are two Stoneleigh Fellows working within the City—with impressive early results.

Heather Rouse is working with the City to establish a Policy and Analysis Center (PAC) that will improve health, education and social services for Philadelphia youth by analyzing



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data gathered by the City, the School District of Philadelphia and other public agencies. The goal of the PAC is to position quality information at the center of government decision-making.

Julie Cousler Emig is working with the Mayor's Office of Education, the School District of Philadelphia, the Department of Human Services and Family Court on a citywide truancy plan that will help improve graduation rates from the City's public schools.



(Top) Stoneleigh Fellows

(Above) Julia Dutton; Liz Werthan, Stoneleigh Foundation board member; and Cheryl Weiss, early advisor to John and Chara Haas

John and Chara Haas take great pride in what's been created thus far. The model has been infused by their vision and philosophies, and the ideas and involvement of colleagues from many different fields. There is now a solid foundation for the newly-appointed executive director, Cathy Weiss, to continue to innovate and enhance the fellowship model and to keep that flexible, nimble spirit.