



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **The Sprout Fund Issues Anthology of Community Stories from Pittsburgh 250** *Orders now accepted; Book release party set for Friday, April 17, 2009*

PITTSBURGH, April 12, 2009 – The Sprout Fund proudly announces the release of *Making the Connections*, a new book documenting civic innovation across all of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

This regional anthology tells compelling stories about civic leaders and citizen volunteers who constructed public art icons, cut environmental pathways, recorded regional lore, and heightened social responsibility in 2008.

Authored by Pittsburgh writer Justin Hopper and featuring vivid imagery from several local photographers, *Making the Connections* narrates the people, projects, and process of Community Connections over 10 chapters and 177 pages. The book was designed by the award-winning Pittsburgh-based firm Landesberg Design.

- ≡ At the special introductory price of \$20.00, The Sprout Fund is now accepting orders for the book online at [www.sproutfund.org](http://www.sproutfund.org) and via telephone 412.325.0646
- ≡ A five-minute video trailer featuring photos and brief stories from the book has been published online at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7h-Cogf\\_4Q](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7h-Cogf_4Q)
- ≡ Beginning Monday, April 13, 2009, Sprout will podcast interviews with project managers and release text and audio excerpts from the book each day on [www.sproutfund.org](http://www.sproutfund.org), concluding with a conversation with the author, Justin Hopper, on Thursday, April 16, 2009
- ≡ A book release party for participants and supporters will be held on Friday, April 17, 2009 from 4:00-7:00pm at the Shadow Lounge, 5972 Baum Boulevard, in the East Liberty neighborhood of Pittsburgh

*Making the Connections* captures the stories behind the creative and diverse projects Community Connections catalyzed. Through Community Connections, an initiative led by The Sprout Fund over the last 30 months, 275 citizens from across the region participated in a decisionmaking process that vetted more than 500 proposals to determine which best fit their community's goals in celebrating Pittsburgh's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. \$1 million was distributed to 100 projects in all 14 counties of Southwestern Pennsylvania. Throughout 2008, hundreds of local leaders helped launch new initiatives that reached thousands of participants.

This diverse array of efforts ranged from lasting successes such as the Trail Town Public Art Project—which established a series of new iconic public artworks along the Great Allegheny Passage biking trail—to creative community projects such as Fisherman's Tale, an effort to reconnect homebound African-American senior men with the abundant outdoors amenities surrounding Pittsburgh.

"Community Connections took a new approach to seeding regional change. We placed the decisionmaking power in the hands of the communities being served and, by providing resources and assistance, enabled project managers to realize their aspirations," says The Sprout Fund's Executive Director Cathy Lewis Long. "Beyond the successes each project achieved, their captivating tales and vibrant portraits will be a lasting testament to the ingenuity and determination of this region's people at this important moment in our history."