

# IT TAKES A



members of the Care team, (from left) Jeannette Ickovics, Care founder; alycia santilli, Care director; and sandra Bulmer, dean of the school of health and human services, have joined forces to better serve new haven.



*The New Haven community, Yale School of Public Health, and now Southern have joined forces through the Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE) — a partnership designed to improve the health of residents in the city's lowest-income neighborhoods.*

# VILLAGE



## NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF A WELL-THOUGHT-OUT PARTNERSHIP.

The Community Alliance for Research and Engagement, aptly known by the acronym CARE, is a telling example.

Founded at the Yale School of Public Health in 2007, CARE is committed to improving the health of residents in New Haven's lowest-income neighborhoods — which, like many urban centers, are plagued by a host of chronic diseases, including obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and asthma. CARE works to find solutions to these and other health challenges, using community-based research and projects that focus on social, environmental, and behavioral risk factors.

In step with conducting highly regarded research, CARE has led initiatives to create community and school gardens, mark miles of urban trails, screen hundreds of families for food-assistance programs, and much more. Enter Southern Connecticut State University, which is partnering with CARE to enhance its ongoing efforts to support the community. During the next three years, CARE will transition from Yale to SCSU's campus — with SCSU becoming responsible for CARE's community engagement work. Yale will continue to manage and finance CARE's

research agenda while gradually shifting that work to Southern.

"This partnership with SCSU represents a powerful next step in the evolution of CARE by engaging with a local state university to drive deeper change into our neighborhoods," says CARE founder Jeannette Ickovics. "This is an opportunity of mutual benefit: a way to extend CARE's work in New Haven, provide continuity and new energy to the work, and provide a platform to launch a center at Southern."

The new SCSU Center for Community Engagement will help foster student service learning, advance community-engaged scholarship, and benefit CARE's community partners, says Sandy Bulmer, dean of SCSU's School of Health and Human Services. With Alycia Santilli as director and Ickovics serving in an advisory capacity, CARE has already begun transitioning to Southern.

Southern is uniquely suited for the role, its School of Health and Human Services combining seven disciplines under a single umbrella — communication disorders; exercise science; marriage and family therapy; nursing; public health; social work; and recreation, tourism, and sport management. As a

result, academic opportunities are highly interdisciplinary and students are active in the community through numerous internship opportunities while earning their degrees.

"SCSU's students and faculty are tremendous assets that will bring CARE expanded opportunities in community-based research, programming, and policy change — leading to further improvement in the health of New Haven residents," says Bulmer.

During the transitional period, Yale's School of Public Health will remain the central hub of CARE's research, with a focus on data analysis from its New Haven Public Schools and neighborhood health surveys, according to Santilli, who has been with CARE since 2007. In September she joined Southern as a special appointment faculty member in the Department of Public Health.

"I am excited about the capacity and resources that this expanded partnership can bring to the Southern campus community and the greater New Haven area," says Santilli. "As I become familiar with Southern, two things stand out: the drive to best serve students and the commitment to social justice. These are simultaneously familiar and fresh perspectives from which CARE can begin to refine our focus on improving health in the New Haven community." ■