



Call for Proposals

Break the Cycle of Children's Environmental Health Disparities: Promoting Health Equity for All Children 20th Annual Program

Hosted by

**Southeast Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit at Emory University and
Break the Cycle of Health Disparities, Inc.**



EXPLORING
SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL
DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

BREAK THE CYCLE FACULTY

I. Leslie Rubin, MD
Abby Mutic, PhD, MSN, CNM
Victoria Green, MD, JD, MBA
Melissa Gittinger DO
Wayne Garfinkel BSCE
Henry Falk MD MPH
Stacie Schmidt MD
Martha Berger MPA
FreAsia Young MPH
Nse Obot Witherspoon MPH
Kristie Trousdale MPH
Benjamin Gitterman, MD
Joav Merrick, MD, DMSc.

ADMINISTRATION

Ximena Guillen BS
Jahmisha Octalien

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Health and Health Disparities

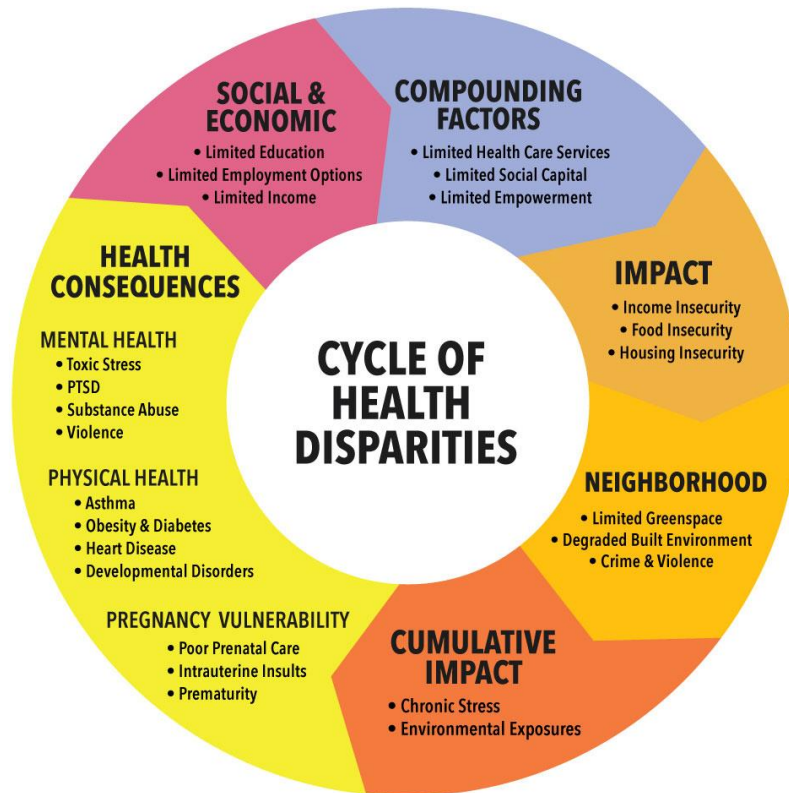
Children are uniquely sensitive to their environment because their organ systems and physiology are in the process of maturation, and their minds and emotions are in the process of evolution and development, so they can be readily influenced and directed by their experiences and encounters, with potential lifelong consequences on their health, growth and development.

When children have positive experiences, the outcome is likely to result in sound physical, mental and social well-being, however, if they have negative experiences, they are more likely to have adverse physical, developmental and mental health outcomes.

Children who grow up in an environment with loving and caring parents, in a safe setting with clean air, clean water, green space and nutritious food, and with opportunities for a good education and good health care in a supportive and nurturing community, are more likely to grow up healthy with the promise of a positive future for themselves and their children.

In contrast, children who grow up in an environment where their parents are stressed by job insecurity, income insecurity, housing insecurity, and food insecurity, and live in a space where the air they breathe is polluted, the food they eat is not nutritious, and the houses and neighborhoods where they live are likely to be neglected, crowded and with limited access to greenspace, and their schools are old and their teachers are tired, so their education is less than optimal, and they have limited access to quality healthcare, are more likely to suffer from stress, which cumulatively adversely affects their physical and mental health and well-being, and dims their aspirations for a promising future for themselves and for their children. This latter scenario can be conceptualized in an intergenerational *Cycle of Health Disparities* (see diagram below).

Cycle of Health Disparities



Break the Cycle of Health Disparities

Although, the challenge to correct and reverse the negative elements that result in adverse physical, developmental and mental health consequences at a social and community level requires a major political and societal commitment, it is incumbent on each of us to do what we can to Break this Cycle at any point. Our operating principle is that, if we make a positive difference in the life of one child, it will have substantial positive intergenerational social repercussions. So, if we engage in multiple efforts to Break the Cycle, we can collectively make a significant difference in the lives of many children and generate a momentum towards improving the health of as many children as possible and look forward to a healthier and more productive society for all.

Our strategy is to invite young people in university settings from a variety of academic disciplines, to develop projects to *Break the Cycle* at any point, and, through this process, not only are we building the momentum towards improving health and opportunities for vulnerable children, we are also cultivating our future leaders!



Break the Cycle Program:

Our Annual *Break the Cycle of Children's Environmental Health Disparities Program* supports an interdisciplinary set of student-driven research projects that explore the social, economic, and environmental factors that adversely affect children's health and well-being and generate creative strategies to mitigate or reverse those adverse factors and provide the children with greater opportunities for a healthier, more secure, and brighter future for themselves and for their children.

Since its inception in 2004, *Break the Cycle (BTC)* has partnered with over 80 university departments across 21 States in the US, as well as from 6 countries in Latin America and 2 countries in Africa, and has supported research for over 200 trainees. Annual BTC trainee projects are published in international journals and a book series on public health. Alumni of the BTC program rate their mentored research experiences highly and many pursue careers related to their *Break the Cycle* projects.

We invite university and college students in the US and around the world from a variety of academic disciplines to participate in our **20th Annual *Break the Cycle of Children's Environmental Health Disparities* program** for 2024-2025 and present their work at our Annual *Break the Cycle* conference will be held in Atlanta, Georgia on **April 27-29, 2025**.

Application for 20th Annual Break the Cycle Program

Interested students should submit a proposal by Friday **October 11, 2024**, the application forms and program details can be found on our website:

<https://www.breakthecycleprogram.org/btc20>. Proposals are competitive and are reviewed and scored by the *Break the Cycle* faculty; decisions on selection of students for participation will be communicated by Monday **October 21, 2024**. Questions on project ideas or program details can be directed to our *Break the Cycle* Coordinator, Ximena Guillen at contact@breakthecycleprogram.org or to *Break the Cycle* Director, Leslie Rubin MD at lrubi01@emory.edu. Also, see below for more details on the projects and program.

Leslie Rubin

Leslie Rubin, MD

Director, Break the Cycle Program, Southeast PEHSU, Emory University

Founder, Break the Cycle of Health Disparities, Inc.

Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Morehouse School of Medicine

Adjunct Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Emory University

Project Guidelines

- University students from all disciplines are invited to develop projects that creatively address **social, economic, and environmental factors that adversely affect the health of vulnerable children.**
- Students must identify a mentor within their University to supervise, guide and monitor their research and project outputs.
- Candidates and mentors must have their own funding to conduct their project. BTC awardees are provided a \$200 stipend to offset project expenses.
- Team projects are permitted and encouraged.
- All applications are evaluated based on relevance to the *Cycle of Health Disparities*, the quality of the proposal, novelty, feasibility, potential for sustainability, and ability to complete the project in the allotted time.
- Projects that do not have a clear focus on the impact of the environment on the health of children (or during pregnancy) will not be reviewed.
- There are a limited number of projects selected for the full program, however, there is an option to participate in a poster session.
- During the project period, trainees will participate in monthly conference calls with *Break the Cycle* faculty to monitor and support their progress, share ideas, and enhance their learning consistent with the spirit of *Break the Cycle*.
- Students will then present their projects at the Annual National Conference in Atlanta, Georgia April 27-29, 2025, which will be open to the public.
- After their presentations at the conference, students are required to submit manuscripts of their projects for publication in an international journal.
- Applications and more details are available on our website:
<https://www.breakthecycleprogram.org/btc20>

Desired Outcomes

- To inspire students from a variety of academic disciplines to explore the impact of adverse social, economic, and environmental factors on the health and wellbeing of vulnerable children and to generate creative strategies to *Break the Cycle of Children's Environmental Health Disparities*.
- To collaborate with an interdisciplinary team of academic leaders from around the country in examining the broader landscape of children's environmental health disparities.
- To promote leadership among University students in addressing *Children's Environmental Health Disparities*.
- To encourage faculty at our university partners to promote awareness and academic interest in *Children's Environmental Health Disparities*.