

*"The Pittsburgh Promise opened a world of possibilities for us—now, we get to build our lives and give back to the city we love."*

Promise Alumni • **Shawna and Ian Gugliuzza**

## A Promise Fulfilled: A Journey from Middle School Friends to Community Leaders

**Shawna**

Carrick class of  
**2009**

**Program Manager**  
Leadership Pittsburgh Inc.

**Slippery Rock University and  
Penn State Greater Allegheny**  
2013 - Psychology

**Ian**

Carrick class of  
**2008**

**HVAC Technician**  
Phillips Heating & Air Conditioning

**CCAC West Hills Center**  
2012 - HVAC/Science

**Shawna:** In high school, I was a bit of an accidental perfectionist. I didn't start out with the goal of getting straight A's every semester, but once I started, I made it my mission to keep it up. Even though I was doing well academically, college didn't even cross my mind until my senior year. **When my counselor told me about The Promise, a whole new world of possibilities opened up. Suddenly, attending a four-year university was within reach.**

I was the first in my family to go to a four-year university straight out of high school, so I didn't have anyone to guide me through it. But I worked through the difficulties and knowing that I would graduate without a mountain of student loans gave me the freedom to take full advantage of the opportunities that came my way—including studying abroad in London for a summer semester.

During my senior year of college, I applied for an internship at The Promise. Those few months adapting to my first "big girl" job were eye-opening. The team at The Promise saw potential in me and encouraged me to apply for a position at Leadership Pittsburgh Inc., even making an introduction on my behalf. Eleven years later, I'm still with Leadership Pittsburgh Inc. As the Program Manager for our flagship program, Leadership Pittsburgh (LP), I get to work with over 60 executive-level leaders each year, helping them connect with each other and engage with the most pressing challenges and exciting opportunities in our region. It's incredibly fulfilling work.

**Ian:** I was always more hands-on, a visual learner who loved working with tools and building things from scratch. So, when I found out that The Promise would cover my full tuition at trade school, I was thrilled. I enrolled at CCAC West Hills Center to study HVAC, and it was the perfect fit for me.

During the day, I worked in the field as an apprentice, getting hands-on experience. At night, I attended classes where I learned the science behind what I was doing during the day. Now, I'm in the third generation of my family's residential heating and cooling company, and I'm soon to be one of four owners. I love my job. Every day brings new locations and challenges, and I get to educate homeowners on the science behind their systems, which is something I'm passionate about.

**Shawna:** Ian and I actually met in middle school, but we didn't start dating until college. It's funny how life brings people back together. Now, we're married, own our home in West Mifflin, and in 2023, our son Luca was born. We're so grateful to be able to raise our family here, in the city we both love. The Pittsburgh Promise played a big role in helping us get here, and now we have the chance to give back to the community that supported us.

