

AUDACIOUS THINKING

AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER
FROM OSI-BALTIMORE

WINTER 2010

DONE. AMERICANS BELIEVE
ADDICTION TREATMENT
SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE.

NOW.

LET'S MAKE SURE (See page 8 for feature
article and statistics)
THOSE WHO NEED IT, GET IT.

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OSI-BALTIMORE WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER: OTIS ROLLEY, III

Otis Rolley, President and CEO of the Central Maryland Transportation Alliance, joined the OSI-Baltimore Board of Directors in November 2009. Rolley served as Chief of Staff in the Office of the Mayor from December 2006-2007. Prior to that, he served as the city's Director of Planning and was responsible for the development and adoption of the first citywide comprehensive master plan in over 39 years.

HELP US MAKE LASTING CHANGE.

Your financial gift to OSI-Baltimore helps create opportunity, justice, and economic stability for those in our city who need it most. We tackle Baltimore's most challenging issues.

No gift is too small or too large. Every dollar given is matched 1:2 by our founder, George Soros. Our donors share a common goal: to revitalize Baltimore. They realize that, by investing in OSI-Baltimore, they play a vital role in improving our city's future.



CONTRIBUTE ONLINE AT WWW.OSI-BALTIMORE.ORG
OR CALL US AT 410-234-1091.



ACT LOCALLY, LEVERAGE NATIONALLY

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The premise behind the OSI-Baltimore office is a “two-fer” – we help vulnerable Baltimoreans directly by addressing the root causes of the tough problems they face and we can take what we learn in Baltimore to other cities around the country. Our work to combat drug addiction is a case in point.

Our Baltimore-based Tackling Drug Addiction initiative seeks to ensure that all Baltimoreans – including those without adequate insurance – can have easy access to high quality addiction treatment if they need it. Over the years our work has focused on improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of treatment and on ensuring that a variety of treatment options are available, so that Baltimoreans can find treatment that is appropriate for their needs. We have also concentrated on developing an advocacy community that is equipped to educate the public and policymakers about the nature of addiction and the effectiveness of treatment.

These advocates engage an ever increasing number of community, business and political leaders who now recognize that addiction, like other chronic diseases, responds well to treatment, that it is costly and destructive to make treatment inaccessible, and that there is an

alarming gap in the availability of treatment. (See page 8.) They have fought hard – and successfully – to increase the amount of state funds Baltimore receives for addiction treatment and, most recently, they have advocated for the inclusion of addiction treatment in Maryland’s Primary Adult Care insurance and expanded Medicaid.

Building on the momentum in Baltimore to make treatment readily available, OSI established a national initiative, Closing the Addiction Treatment Gap, to develop parallel campaigns across the country. OSI-Baltimore oversees this program that now includes eight sites in addition to our own here. All of these programs are engaged in advocacy and communications campaigns to alert local residents about the high and unnecessary costs of untreated addiction and specific funding mechanisms to close the treatment gap. At the same time, the program has worked at the national level, taking full advantage of the ongoing national healthcare debate to underscore the importance of addiction treatment. The encouraging result is that when the legislation was agreed upon by congress, it included a meaningful addiction treatment benefit, which would help the millions of uninsured individuals who suffer from untreated addiction.

The Baltimore advocacy work, which played a key role in leveraging the work in eight other states and a national “close the treatment gap” campaign, continues and, while we have much to do, it is worthwhile to take a moment to reflect on the important national advocacy campaign that Baltimore helped to ignite and shape.

The three big problems OSI-Baltimore targets – over-reliance on incarceration, high school suspension and drop-out rates, and untreated drug addiction – all plague Baltimore, but they are also characteristic of cities across the country. While we continuously track research and programs outside of Baltimore to identify effective solutions to our local problems, we also know that the economic and social dynamics at play in Baltimore are found in most other urban centers – and that the **solutions we find can therefore pave the way to national efforts to combat policies and practices that are wrong-headed, costly and damaging.**

DIANA MORRIS, Director of OSI-Baltimore

ALLEVIATING POVERTY:



LÓPEZ

\$6 MILLION PROVIDES RECESSION RELIEF FOR BALTIMORE'S MOST NEEDY



Fresh Start Farm is a living classroom where students from economically disadvantaged neighborhoods learn about healthy diets by growing their own plants. And now, thanks to a new grant from OSI-Baltimore, about 50 young people aging out of foster care – a population with historically poor outcomes – will receive job training, agro-hospitality job certification and paid employment at the farm.

This agricultural youth employment project is one of three being created by the Family League of Baltimore, thanks to a new \$1 million grant from OSI-Baltimore.

The Family League will improve the economic situation of 110 youth by providing paid jobs for them, including converting summer jobs to year-round part-time employment. In addition, 40 court-involved youth will be trained in construction trades. These grants acknowledge the economic responsibilities that many youth have in their families. They also acknowledge how critical it is

“This grant is a belief in the possibilities of human beings” - RAFAEL LÓPEZ

to have interesting workplace experiences, which are known to help keep youth engaged in school and excited about their future careers.

“This grant is a belief in the possibilities of human beings,” says Rafael López, executive director of the Family League. “This direct investment says to young people, ‘We believe you are more capable and you have talent and skills that haven’t been tapped and you have a future that matters to us.’ It’s a belief in the possibilities.”

The \$1 million grant to the Family League is the largest of ten grants OSI-Baltimore recently made to provide services to the city’s most vulnerable residents who have been particularly hurt by the recession. The services include jobs and employment training for needy youth, urgent dental care for homeless people, drug addiction treatment for the indigent, and housing, counseling and job training for formerly-incarcerated people.

The recession relief initiative is being underwritten by \$6 million from philanthropist George Soros who created a new national fund called the Special Fund for Poverty Alleviation to respond to the economic downturn. The Open Society Institute is making grants to programs across the country, including in Baltimore, to provide assistance for low-income people.

What is especially significant for Baltimore is that the OSI grants require each organization to secure a 1-to-1 match, so that the grants will leverage even more money towards poverty reduction. The Family League, for instance, has already secured an additional \$1 million. López believes the momentum from the OSI grant will enable it to



JANE SUNDIUS, Director of Education and Youth Development

WHY WE FUND IT

“We have a lot of children in Baltimore who need to make money because their families are economically fragile. The grant to the Family League will give them an opportunity to work, get job training, and re-engage in school.”

secure as much as an additional \$9 million in state and federal funds over the next two years.

Since founding OSI-Baltimore in 1998, Soros has invested more than \$60 million in the city. This new \$6 million investment is separate from the challenge Soros issued to Baltimore in 2006, which resulted in a campaign to raise \$20 million from regional investors to be matched by \$10 million. To date, OSI-Baltimore has raised more than \$13.6 million, and that fundraising campaign continues. All of the \$20 million raised from the Baltimore community will go directly to OSI-Baltimore program areas.



THE BENEFIT OF BEING PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION NETWORK

“Being part of a national foundation enables us to tap special funds and resources periodically for the greater benefit of Baltimore. This support from George Soros is particularly meaningful when other donors have been hit by the recession while the need continues to be very high. All of these new grants support our intertwined local goals of tackling drug addiction, reducing over-reliance on incarceration, and helping youth stay connected to school and on the road to success.”

DIANA MORRIS, DIRECTOR OF OSI-BALTIMORE



SPECIAL FUND FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION GRANTEEES

In addition to the Family League (see page 2-3), other organizations receiving funds are:

Associated Black Charities

To create and administer a small grants fund for community-based non-profit organizations that addresses the health and economic needs of the most vulnerable Baltimoreans.

Baltimore City Health Department

To provide more treatment slots and to enable a case worker to enroll more transgender clients in public health care benefits.

Baltimore Health Care Access

To encourage and support eligible clients to enroll in homeless services, addiction treatment, and public health care benefits, which are now available because of changes in legislation as of January 2010.

BELL Foundation

To prevent further layoffs and retain its staff who offer nationally-recognized, highly-effective after-school and summer learning programs for 1,600 disadvantaged students.

CASA de Maryland

To support its legal department's activities to prevent and address the violation of workers' and tenants' rights, especially in Baltimore City.

Chesapeake Center for Youth Development

To provide employment training and placement services for 80 court-involved youth.

Community Conferencing Center

To support the salaries of facilitators who will use community conferencing to divert up to 360 youth from the juvenile justice systems.

Downtown Partnership of Baltimore

To support the salaries, health benefits, uniforms and supplies for three Clean Sweep Ambassador employees who are formerly incarcerated and/or recovering from a substance addiction.

Family League of Baltimore City

To support employment readiness, mental health, educational and food services for youth who are on community detention and enrolled in the Pre-Adjudication Coordination & Training Center.

Fund for Educational Excellence

To hire youth outreach workers to calm chaotic schools by mediating disputes and teaching new ways of resolving conflicts.

Health Care for the Homeless

To support the organization's successful Housing First initiative, which embraces the idea that the best way to end homelessness – especially for those suffering from addiction and mental illness – is rapid access to housing with extensive support services.

Homeless Persons Representation Project

To provide general support.

Living Classrooms Foundation

To enable 30 court-involved youth to enroll in technical schools, community colleges and training programs.

Marian House

To provide transitional housing and job readiness training for up to 55 women, all of whom were incarcerated and are currently homeless.

National Women's Prison Project

To support a pilot project that will provide services for 125 women returning to Baltimore from prison.

Public Justice Center

To secure access to public benefits and enforce legal protections relating to employment, health, housing and income support for low-income Baltimore residents.

Total Health Care

To provide dental care for its clients receiving HIV and addiction services.



In addition to the poverty alleviation grants, Open Society Institute-Baltimore awarded \$500,000 to create the Recovery Watch Maryland Alliance. The Alliance is comprised of Progressive Maryland, the Maryland Association of Nonprofits, CASA de Maryland, Job Opportunities Task Force and the Safe and Sound Campaign. The alliance will develop a set of criteria to evaluate the state's application for and use of Reinvestment and Recovery Act funding with an eye toward advancing opportunity across the state for those who are most vulnerable.

This grant is part of another recently established national program by the Open Society Institute and is yet another example of OSI-Baltimore tapping national funds to create a more inclusive, opportunity-rich community in Maryland and, in particular, in Baltimore.

FELLOW'S GREEN DREAM BECOMES A REALITY

OSI-Baltimore Community Fellow Miriam Avins and her neighbors in Better Waverly toiled for years to turn a vacant plot of land near her home into a lush garden.



But when the long-absent property owner unexpectedly agreed to sell the land to a developer, Avins saw that Baltimore needed a land trust that would own community-managed open lands. Thus, the seed was planted for Baltimore Green Space, a nonprofit Avins developed during her recent fellowship to create a land trust for community-managed open space.

Finally, Avins's seed has borne fruit.

Under a plan approved last month by the city Board of Estimates, the city will sell vacant land that has been managed by community groups for at least five years – at the price of only \$1. The policy lays out several benchmarks that the sites must meet. Community groups can go to Baltimore Green Space, which will do all the bureaucratic leg work and red tape for them.

"This is a really big deal," says Avins, who was a 2007 Community Fellow, "Now you don't have to start from scratch for every negotiation."

At the same Board of Estimates meeting, the 44-lot Duncan Street Miracle Garden and the Pigtown Horseshoe Pit were sold to Baltimore Green Space, which will now protect three community-managed open spaces.

Avins spent her fellowship raising awareness of the social, environmental and health benefits of community gardening. She also worked to promote the value of preserving community-managed spaces among city officials from the mayor's office and the departments of public works, planning and housing and community development. Because of her work, the land trust is now a part of the city's Sustainability Plan and will benefit individuals, neighborhoods and the city as a whole.

Avins says realizing her dream of a working land trust is a "real thrill."

But now that her effort has paid off, Avins says she will continue to work to make Baltimore Green Space the go-to place for residents who are managing community open spaces.

"I'm not going anywhere," she says.

A CONVERSATION WITH AN
OSI-BALTIMORE BOARD MEMBER:

DEBORAH WINSTON CALLARD

*This city is too good to suffer
from chronic, life-sapping
social and economic injustice.*





DEBORAH WINSTON CALLARD grew up on a dairy farm in northern, rural New Jersey and migrated to New York where she graduated from Sarah Lawrence College. In 1972, she moved to Baltimore from Manhattan's Upper West Side. A mother of five, Callard entered the workforce in 1979 at almost age 40 in an entry-level development job at The Johns Hopkins Hospital and worked her way up to become executive director of the Fund for Johns Hopkins Medicine, where philanthropic giving increased 60 percent. After retiring in 1994, she worked as a fundraising consultant for a range of educational, cultural and environmental clients. In 1997, she moved to Boston to become director of stewardship at Trinity Church in Boston's Copley Square, where she successfully led a \$53 million capital campaign. In addition to OSI-Baltimore's board of directors, Callard chairs the board of WYPR-FM and serves on the boards of Parks and People Foundation and the Institute of Christian and Jewish Studies. She has nine 'precious' grandchildren.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN OSI-BALTIMORE?

Sometimes, you have to go away to come home. When I returned to Baltimore after six years in Boston, I found how much I really loved the city and appreciated its quirkiness, its grittiness, its charm and its cost of living. This city has such a vibrant, grassroots, artistic, entrepreneurial fabric. I also had more time to get involved in extracurricular activities. And that's when I met Diana Morris.

Listening to Diana describe OSI's strategic approach to the city's problems, I thought something has to be done. This city is too good to suffer from chronic, life-sapping social and economic injustice. At first, I volunteered to help pro bono, and then Diana asked me to serve on the board.

FUNDRAISING SEEMS LIKE SUCH A HARD PROFESSION.

WHAT DRAWS YOU TO IT?

Fundraising is so mischaracterized and misunderstood. People always say, 'I can't do what you do. I never could ask for money.'

What I like about fundraising is finding out someone's real interest and figuring out what you represent that captures this person's heart or mind and playing to that strength.

I love to fly fish. Fundraising is just like fly fishing. In fishing, you try to select the fly that will make the trout come out of the water. Fundraising is not dissimilar. You are unlocking the combination of what would make this person give.

HOW DO YOU CONVINCe SOMEONE TO GIVE?

Trust is a huge factor. People need to know that you aren't after them, but you want to make something possible and that you won't push so hard so as to spook them or have them lose interest. You listen and try to figure out what motivates them.

With individual donors, it's a subtle reading of the person and how ready they are and what would really intrigue them.

HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR BACKGROUND HELPING OSI?

My proudest achievement was my involvement in last year's Silo Point event to celebrate OSI's 10th anniversary. Going forward, I think I can be very helpful with advice, advocacy, and example. I know a lot of folks in town and am happy to invite them into the OSI sphere. The carrot is one approach to fundraising; the stick is another. I prefer the carrot because it has the best chance of a lasting relationship.

The recession has made fundraising more challenging. But what is incredibly heartening is that people have continued to step up.

WHAT PROGRESS HAVE YOU SEEN IN BALTIMORE?

It is the emergence of this grassroots fabric of smart, gifted young people across the city. OSI has focused on that with the Baltimore Community Fellows. They are part of this grassroots talent pool.

OSI is a major player in Baltimore's progress. The partnerships, the alliances, the coordination function that OSI plays is not well enough understood. OSI builds private/public bridges and makes unusual alliances possible that foster this progress. OSI is results-oriented and sets measurements to assess effectiveness in its grantmaking.

I do see progress, and I do see hope. The city is too good not to keep at it.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT FLY-FISHING?

I watched my grandfather fly fish and thought, 'That looks cool.' Then, a friend taught me in the '80s. I love it. It takes you to the most beautiful places on earth. When you are fishing, you are so focused. You are in this bubble, trying to think like a trout.

ADDICTION TREATMENT + HEALTH CARE REFORM:



AMERICAN PUBLIC UNDERSTANDS + SUPPORTS TREATMENT

In 2007, the Open Society Institute launched a national initiative – Closing the Addiction Treatment Gap (CATG) – based in the OSI-Baltimore office. The goal of this initiative is to close an alarming alcohol and drug addiction treatment gap that exists in the United States. Currently, four in five Americans – 2.3 million individuals – who need addiction treatment are unable to get it. Government data has consistently found that the top barrier to treatment is lack of health insurance or inability to pay for treatment.



MARYLANDERS AGREE

- 76%** Agree that addiction should be treated as a chronic health condition, like diabetes and other diseases.
- 77%** Agree that addiction treatment is effective in helping people get better.
- 73%** Agree that alcohol and drug addiction treatment should be more accessible and affordable and part of national health care reform.
- 62%** Would pay \$2 more per month in health care premiums to make treatment more accessible and affordable.



(These results are based on polling from a survey conducted in Maryland by Lake Research Partners on August 12, 2009. Respondents self-identified as 23% Republican, 25% Independent, 46% Democrat; 59% White, 27% Black or African American; 7% Hispanic/Latino; 48% Male, 52% Female.)

When President Barack Obama took office in January 2009, he stated that one of his top priorities was to work with Congress to pass comprehensive health reform and make health care accessible to all Americans. The CATG initiative recognized that the debate over health care reform provided the perfect confluence of events to help close the treatment gap.

CATG took advantage of this historic opportunity. Working with Lake Research Partners, OSI commissioned polls across the country. The results found extensive support for including treatment in national health care reform. They also showed that support for treatment was often based on the fact that many Americans know someone who has been addicted. The results were highlighted by national and local outlets, from USA Today to The White House Bulletin.

“As Congress works toward expanding health insurance to all Americans, it should make sure that coverage includes substance abuse treatment,” concluded a Baltimore Sun editorial based on the CATG polling.

“The results are not especially surprising – Maryland residents unfortunately know, firsthand, that addiction can be a life or death health issue,” said Diana Morris, director of OSI-Baltimore. “We must do more to close the treatment gap nationwide and certainly here in Maryland.”

CATG’s research found that more than three-quarters of Americans know someone personally who has been addicted to alcohol or drugs. Half of Americans polled did not think they would

be able to afford treatment if they or a family member needed it. And three-quarters of Americans supported including alcohol and drug addiction treatment as part of national health care reform.

Former Rep. Jim Ramstad, who served as co-chair of the House Caucus on Addiction, Treatment and Recovery when he was in Congress, commented on CATG’s polling. “Addiction treatment is a gaping hole in our current health care system,” said Ramstad. **“If we fail to treat alcohol and drug addictions, we are not only failing those in need, but are adding to the already heavy burden on our communities, our emergency rooms, our prisons, and our families.** Americans across the country and the political spectrum have spoken loud and clear: treatment for alcohol and drug addiction should be fully covered in health care reform.”

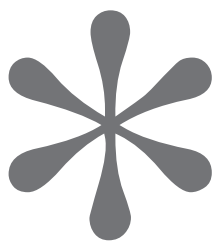
The research also found that, despite tough economic times, nearly 70 percent of Americans were willing to pay more out of their own pockets to make addiction treatment more accessible and affordable for people who need it.

Throughout the summer, CATG and its allies worked to educate and inform members of the Administration, advocacy groups, and friends about the results of the polling.

As 2009 came to a close, CATG and its allies scored a huge success when the House and Senate separately passed health reform bills that included addiction and mental health benefits in their essential packages.

CONTINUING TO TALK ABOUT RACE

Can we talk about a subject that continues to be provocative and uncomfortable?



We began our year-long conversation in April 2009, partnering with Enoch Pratt Library to deliver programs and speakers that could lead all of us in Baltimore to explore the subject of race and racism. We enter 2010 with five standing-room-only forums behind us. What has become clear is that Baltimore needs and wants such a dialogue and is eager to openly participate in this difficult, but necessary, conversation.

Both in written comments after the forums and on our web site, www.storiesaboutrace.org, people have been offering their own personal and candid thoughts about race. And in many cases, they have credited the smart, thoughtful speakers at the forums for encouraging them to think more deeply or differently about the difficult topic.

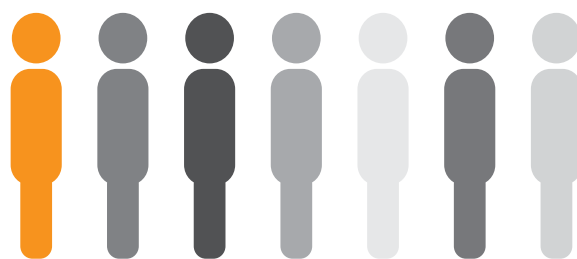
Consider:

One woman wrote on our site that on the first day of kindergarten in a diverse, liberal, city neighborhood, a white mother wrote a private e-mail saying that she was concerned about all the “black boys” in her daughter’s

class. Apparently, “when she saw her little girl surrounded by five black boys she freaked out a bit.”

Then: “I run into the mother at a party a couple of months later,” the author of the post continues. “She is wearing an Obama t-shirt.”

Another writer who is Native American recalled a scene from her childhood when a group of African-American youth assumed she was a foreign-born Latina and hassled her to “Go home!” Standing with her friends, who were Latinas, the writer was astounded to hear her so-called friends come to her defense by saying, “Ella es Americana, pero no mera Americana,” or “She is American, but not really American.”



HOW TO KEEP TALKING ABOUT RACE

After the public forums

"I've been digesting that one for about 6 or 7 years now," the writer says.

Such posts make us think more fearlessly about race and racial issues, and how we can all help our city, state and society move past racism and be more accepting, just and open.

The most frequent question on survey cards is, "How can we continue the conversation after the program?" Audience members also want to know how they can bring this subject to small groups, for a more intimate experience. Others want to begin a conversation at their workplace and wonder how to begin. One audience member said, "I would love to hear more about exactly what conversations we should have after these events. What should we ask? How far can we go?" Another stated, "I truly hope that the series encourages people to challenge themselves, to remove their own blinders and open their hearts and minds."

- Start a book group and invite people of different races to join your discussion. (A list of recommended books, listed in the Summer 2009 issue of Audacious Thinking, can be found at www.osi-baltimore.org.)
- Next time you attend one of the "Talking About Race" events, ask someone in your work place to join you. Make a commitment with that person that you'll bring some of the questions asked during the session to discuss the following day with other colleagues.
- If you belong to a church, synagogue, or mosque, host small discussion groups among yourselves about your race memories. Afterwards, invite members from a different faith or spiritual community to expand the discussion.
- Host a pot-luck dinner in your neighborhood and be sure to invite people who you haven't shared a meal with before and "mix" things up!



TALKING ABOUT RACE: SPRING SERIES

Across the Divide: Stories about Race in Baltimore, Stoop Storytelling Series

See nine Baltimore residents tell their personal stories about race in the city. Going fast – buy tickets now at www.stoopstorytelling.com. Use code OSI in the promotional code box.

February 22, 2010, Center Stage, 7 PM
SOLD OUT

Is America Really Post-Racial? Screening of 'New Muslim Cool'

Co-sponsored by MICA

A film screening, interactive spoken word performance, and panel discussion, this event introduces audiences to filmmaker Jennifer Taylor and independent hip-hop artist MC Hamza – the subject of Taylor's important new film. Panel discussion follows the screening, moderated by journalist-activist Bakari Kitwana (author of 'The Hip-Hop Generation').

March 2, 2010, Brown Center at MICA, 7 PM

Is Justice Possible in a Race Biased Society?

Bryan Stevenson, founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative and professor at New York University School of Law, and Renée Hutchins, professor at the University of Maryland Law School, will discuss how race affects attitudes and outcomes in the criminal justice system.

April 20, 2010, Enoch Pratt Free Library, 7 PM

PROFILE OF AN OSI-BALTIMORE INVESTOR:

CHIP WENDLER



CHIP WENDLER has made the Baltimore region his home for more than 44 years. After graduating from college in 1984, he moved from Baltimore County to Fells Point and subsequently lived in neighborhoods throughout the city such as Barre Circle, Govans, Federal Hill and Guilford. After the birth of their second child, Chip and his wife of 15 years, Rhona, moved to Lutherville – but are committed to becoming city residents again at some point. He has worked at T. Rowe Price since graduating from college and has held several positions over the last 26 years – most recently as the director of consultant relations within the firm’s institutional division, T. Rowe Price Global Investment Services. In the past, he has volunteered for both the United Way and Habitat for Humanity. Today, Chip serves on the board of the Center for Urban Families in West Baltimore – a nonprofit focused on work-readiness and responsible parenting. He is also a T. Rowe Price Foundation trustee. Chip and his wife also sponsor several Teach for America teachers, and Rhona serves on their local board.



WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO TRY TO HELP SOLVE BALTIMORE'S PROBLEMS?

I have to give a lot of credit to the Greater Baltimore Committee's LEADERShip Program and its passionate director, Jan Houbolt. He's done more for the city than you can possibly imagine by creating a network of enthusiastic and informed disciples – all of whom now carry a vision of how great Baltimore can be along with a pragmatic understanding of the challenges that we must overcome to get there. I learned more about the city from Jan and my classmates over that nine months back in 2001 than I had over the previous nine years.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHICH ORGANIZATIONS TO GIVE TO AND GET INVOLVED IN?

There are a lot of terrific organizations in Baltimore trying to help the city prosper. It makes it very difficult to choose just one or two. That said, I tend to gravitate toward organizations that have a focus on human services and are trying to help people who are either under contributing to Baltimore's future relative to their potential or, even worse, are holding the city back. The Center for Urban Families, for instance, helps the unemployed or under-employed become more productive members of society and also tries to repair fragmented families. We have to make significant progress on both fronts if Baltimore is going to thrive. Teach for America is trying to help close the yawning achievement gap that we often see in the inner city schools and introduces a steady stream of bright, enthusiastic young teachers to the region.

WHAT WAS THE PIVOTAL THING THAT CONVINCED YOU TO INVEST IN OSI-BALTIMORE'S WORK?

One day I looked out my office window and imagined the city on fire – with that “fire” being all of the social ills that threaten to erase the great progress that Baltimore has made over the last few decades. Imagine if we were fighting a real forest fire, like they do in the California foothills. It is so critical that the efforts of the various fire companies are coordinated and, more importantly, that their efforts are focused on activities that will make a difference in ending the blaze. It struck me that Baltimore needed a fire chief of sorts – an

organization that could thoughtfully identify a handful of key issues and could focus its attention – and hopefully the attention of policymakers, the donor community, and social service providers – on efforts to promote meaningful change. To me, OSI-Baltimore has the potential to play that sort of role in Baltimore.

Moreover, when I heard about the Soros challenge – George Soros's commitment to provide OSI-Baltimore with an additional \$10 million if the citizens of Baltimore stepped up and contributed \$20 million – it was a pretty easy decision to pull out my checkbook. **Mr. Soros has channeled more than \$60 million to helping Baltimore understand and address its challenges over the past decade.** How many U.S. cities would love to have a benevolent godfather like him? How can we not rise to the occasion?

DO YOU HAVE A PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY ABOUT PHILANTHROPY?

I guess my philosophy is “don't just invest in the easy stuff.” In my experience, many donors tend to gravitate toward easy-to-love causes such as the arts, education and helping the helpless. Please don't get me wrong: It's great that folks give to those organizations. That said, I hope donors are becoming more sensitive to the fact that it can be difficult for certain types of organizations, particularly those committed to solving less “sexy” yet vitally important problems, to raise money. **Everyone knows that it is more fun to paint the room than it is to put up the drywall, but the drywall is really important.**

HOW DO YOU SEE THE CITY'S FUTURE?

I think the city's future is very bright, but we can't afford for one minute to rest on our laurels. So many positive things are happening in Baltimore, and we have to keep that momentum going. Harkening back to the forest fire metaphor, it will be easier to put the “fire” out sooner if we can focus our donor dollars and programmatic efforts on addressing the key challenges holding Baltimore back from being all that it can be.

I look forward to the day when instead of seeing “Charm City” or “The City that Reads” painted on our park benches, I see “Baltimore: As Nice as Boston, with Better Weather!”

WELCOMING A NEW CLASS OF FELLOWS



OSI-Baltimore welcomes its 12th class of Baltimore Community Fellows, bringing the total number of social entrepreneurs to 109 – most of whom still are working in the city, bringing their dreams, new ideas and energy to create social change.

From their projects to their personal stories, the 2009 Class is extremely diverse. Projects include a garden and nutrition education program for city students, a support group for youth with sickle cell anemia, a collection of seniors' stories and recipes, and a program to help abused women who have been in prison or who have drug addiction or mental health issues.

Each of this year's fellows will receive \$48,750 to work full-time for 18 months in and for Baltimore's most underserved communities. Here's an overview of their projects:



Efa Ahmed Williams

Through her organization *Destiny Despite Sickle Cell Disease*, Ahmed-Williams will raise awareness about sickle cell disease while encouraging and empowering adolescents and young adults to become capable of managing their chronic illness by using coping strategies and life skills.

Melissa Ruof

Ruof will establish *Jubilee Arts*, a community arts program serving the west Baltimore communities of Sandtown-Winchester and Upton. The project will counter the frequently chaotic street life experienced by adults and children in the community by offering arts classes in visual arts and dance.



ELSEY-JONES

Rhonda Elsey-Jones

Elsey-Jones will establish the Women Healing Our Lives Entirely Intervention Project to break the cycles of abuse, trauma, addiction and incarceration for at-risk women.

Jill Wrigley

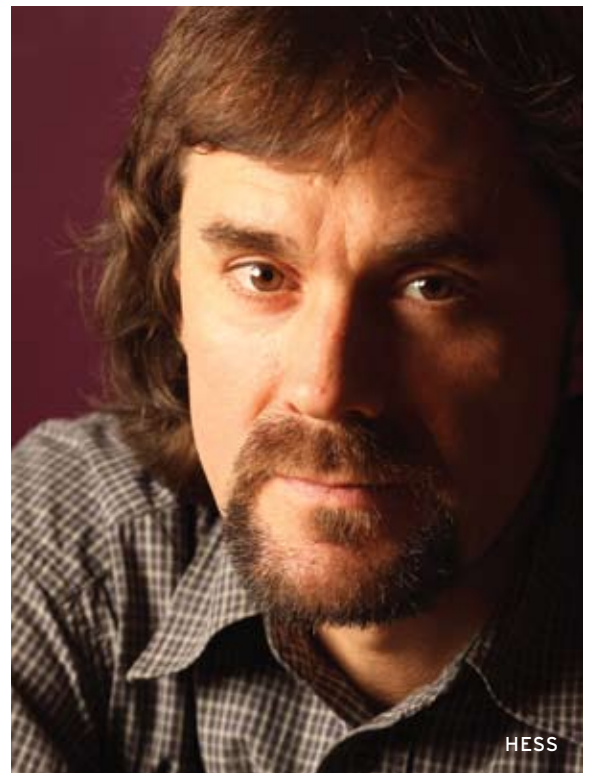
Wrigley will create a toolkit and resource guide that will help Baltimore City Schools bring healthy and sustainable food and garden initiatives into their school communities. Focusing initially on Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School, she will partner with local and international organizations to give more city schools resources to create gardens and access training programs.

Dwayne Hess

Hess will establish the Neighborhood Spiritual Center to promote personal growth and healing for west Baltimore residents. The center will offer adult literacy classes, holistic health and wellness services, and other workshops and events.



WRIGLEY



HESS



WHY WE FUND IT

“Our new Community Fellows are dynamic and committed social activists, each with an innovative vision for bringing opportunity and greater justice to Baltimore’s neighborhoods so that all residents can participate fully in community life. Working across issues and neighborhoods, these Fellows are bringing hope, new approaches, resources and advocacy skills to residents throughout the city.”

PAMELA KING, Director of Community Fellowships and Initiatives



WELCOMING A NEW CLASS OF FELLOWS



WHITLOW



HEMMINGER

Sarah Hemminger

Through The Incentive Mentoring Program, Hemminger will empower struggling high school students by surrounding them with a family of mentors to form a comprehensive and dependable social network. Students will become self-motivated, resourceful, socially aware leaders who are committed to service.



JOHNSON

Tresubira Whitlow

Whitlow will establish The Griot's Eye, a unique youth leadership and community development program that fuses media technology with cultural awareness. The youth will produce compelling video programs that encourage dialogue and action on social issues.

Herbert Johnson

Johnson will launch the No Easy Ridin' Here: Stories and Recipes of Survival project with senior citizens who reside at the Basilica Apartments. To celebrate the wisdom of these individuals, Herbert will record and preserve their stories and individual "recipes" of survival for posterity.



KAPLAN

NONPROFIT TEACHES YOUTH TO 'bMOREfit'

By Melanie R. Holmes, AFRO Staff Writer

The following article appeared in *The Baltimore Afro-American* on January 9, 2010. It is used here with permission from the Afro-American Newspaper Archives and Research Center. bMOREfit is the project of 2008 Baltimore Community Fellow, Jon Kaplan. Students in the program were recruited from YO! Baltimore, an initiative of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development.



Jon Kaplan's dream became reality when his vision to diminish gang violence developed into bMOREfit, a nonprofit program for at-risk youth. He sought to create a positive alternative for teens in danger of causing harm to themselves or their peers by transforming the lives of high school drop-outs through fitness training.

"Steering people away from violence, I put together this program," Kaplan said. "It was successful to the point where we started our own nonprofit after a year."

In October 2007, Kaplan received funding through the Open Society Institute to found bMOREfit, a six-month program that teaches participants the basics of physical fitness, nutrition, strength training, cardiovascular training, weight lifting and also introduces them to anatomy, physiology and kinesiology.

Kenneth Smith, 18, lost 50 lbs during the completion of bMOREfit, a nonprofit organization for at-risk youth and is now an instructor at a YMCA. (Courtesy Photo)



Participants also take classes to complete their GED, receive job training and are paid minimum wage to attend all program requirements. The program began in March 2008 with 10 participants, four of which left the program early on.

Kenneth Smith, 18, is one of Kaplan's first success stories after losing 50 pounds. He is now a certified fitness trainer and is on his way to becoming an instructor at a local YMCA.

"I wanted to be more healthy and live a long life," Smith said. "Before, I used to eat out of boredom, snack while walking... Now, I drink a lot of water... I love salad and I don't eat fast food anymore."

Not quite at his goal of 200 pounds of solid muscle, Smith does a lot of cardio and advises others who desire to lose weight to work out but don't overdo it.

"If you're tired, take a break," he said. "Don't hurt yourself. Ask people for help if you need it."

Running the program has been one of the greatest challenges of Kaplan's life, but also one of the most "amazing" experiences. He is particularly proud of Smith, who he said is "a really smart kid," but also of the other five participants.

The organization will be recruiting its second group of youth in March.

"It's just been such a wonderful experience for them because they were exposed to some of the best and brightest trainers in the industry," Kaplan said. "You really saw them grow mentally and physically."

For more information, log on to www.bmorefit.org



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DOGWOOD RE-OPENS

OSI-Baltimore is pleased to announce that the Dogwood restaurant has re-opened. Congratulations to our alumni Fellows **Bridget and Galen Sampson** for keeping their commitment to transform lives one plate at a time. The interior of the Dogwood now features a brand new mural designed and painted by community members under the direction of another alumni Fellow, **Jay Wolf Schlossberg-Cohen**.

To learn more about the Dogwood or to make a reservation, visit www.dogwoodbaltimore.com.



*** SAVE THE DATE**

TALKING ABOUT RACE: SPRING SERIES

For dates and times and to learn more about the events, see page 10.