



BALTIMORE  
WOMEN'S  
GIVING  
CIRCLE

# THE CIRCLE

A FUND OF THE BALTIMORE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION | FALL · 2013

## FOCUS ON ADRIENNE GIESZL



Adrienne Gieszl is BWGC's new liaison at BCF. Before starting her current position as a Donor Services Associate,

Adrienne worked as circulation manager for Alter Communications (*Jewish Times* and *Style* magazine), and for 13 years before that, in marketing, communications and customer service at Center Stage. Her responsibilities at BCF beyond BWGC include meeting and event planning.

Previously unfamiliar with the concept of a giving circle, Adrienne now aspires to become a BWGC member. She particularly admires "everyone working together towards a common good with such warmth and generosity."

Originally from Long Island, NY, Adrienne has lived in Baltimore for more than 15 years. She is married, and has two children, aged four and seven years. With a degree in Theater Design from UMBC, Adrienne has worked professionally in theaters, and also volunteered with several local theaters. ■



Dawna Cobb and her mentee Destiny.

Photo: Steffi Graham

## BEYOND THE GRANT: BWGC MEMBERS VOLUNTEER

For many young people, living in poverty often means not having much to do after school or on weekends, other than watch television, or hang out on the streets. As a mentor to a sixth grader through a BWGC grantee, *My Sister's Circle*, Dawna Cobb and her mentee, Destiny, have found numerous ways to combat the "boredom of poverty," and forge a bond. They have biked around Druid Hill Park and have attended a Shakespeare play complete with a picnic on the lawn at Evergreen House. Dining out together feeds not only Destiny's hunger, but sets the table for conversation, sharing information that builds trust and friendship.

*My Sister's Circle* has received four grants from BWGC over the past eleven years. Dawna, and other Circle members

who are or have been mentors in this program, including Peggy Schapiro, Lorraine Schapiro, and Day Bank, make a seven-year commitment to mentor a young woman from sixth grade through high school graduation. The time and effort expended by these volunteers is paid back exponentially in the satisfaction of guiding and supporting young women into adulthood.

Sherry Billig initially volunteered to read to first and second graders at Milbrook Elementary School, a public school in Baltimore County. Many Milbrook Elementary School students are children of immigrants from Latin America, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Russia. Many live in homes where no English is spoken, and there are no

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## CHAIR TALK



Gail Shawe and Kimberly Warren, Co-Chairs of the Baltimore Women's Giving Circle

The BWGC is off and running this year due to the thoughtful work of the Education Committee over the summer. Ellen Galinsky, author of *Mind in the Making*, spoke at the September Full Circle meeting about traits that help children become life long learners. Her research interested us because raising children to be successful and self-sufficient adults has long been a focus of our Circle.

We hear the word "impact" frequently used by experts in philanthropy as the guiding principle for grantmaking. Since joining the Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers (ABAG) and Women's Collective Giving Network (WCGN) last year, we have more opportunities to learn and share ideas with other philanthropists in our community and other circles around the country. Our members continue to be interested in how we can make the greatest possible impact in the Baltimore community with what we have to give: our time, money, and voices. As a first step in exploring the topic of impact, the next Full Circle meeting in December will focus on advocacy.

The Communications Committee has made great strides in advancing the media presence of the Circle. Facebook is alive and well, the web site is improved, the archives are more accessible, and Constant Contact, a platform new to us, has facilitated membership communications.

We continue to focus on the effects of a growing membership. We will try evening meeting times for one Full Circle meeting and one Circle Reads this year to see if these times accommodate a more diverse membership. The Visioning Committee is exploring the questions that relate to growth including how to ensure members' engagement and what meeting venues will work best. In the meantime, all members are urged to sign up for a committee. Members who have worked together in small groups report the most satisfaction in Circle membership.

We look forward to working with all of you this year. ■

## FALL FULL CIRCLE MEETING FOCUSES ON LEARNING SKILLS

At our luncheon, Ellen Galinsky, President and Co-Founder of the Families and Work Institute, presented research on skills that help children become life-long learners. Galinsky is the author of 40- plus books and reports, including *Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs, Ask the Children, and The Six Stages of Parenthood*.

Galinsky's experiences as a teacher, researcher, and mother have led her to focus on the role of executive function skills in learning from infancy through adulthood. According to Galinsky, mounting evidence from neuroscience, education, and workplace studies demonstrate that executive function skills are as important as cognitive abilities in determining successful learning at all levels.

These skills include knowing how to focus, holding bits of data in working memory, developing cognitive flexibility to manipulate these bits, validating initial conclusions against facts, planning an approach to a problem, and identifying missing pieces of information. Perhaps most important is the ability to delay gratification when necessary to achieve desired outcomes. Children who develop these skills at an early age perform better than those who do not from preschool through their work careers.

Research studies have identified types of activities that promote executive function skills. Games such as "Simon Says"; "Red Light-Green Light"; and "Mother, May I?"; help develop focus and inhibitory control. Hands on projects, rhyming games, and collaborative problem solving via puzzles or building projects help develop cognitive flexibility skills. Memory and matching games help develop working memory. By contrast, lecturing, yelling, saying "pay attention," and using multiple choice tests are detrimental to learning. Many Circle members left talking about ways to incorporate these lessons into daily life.

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## BEYOND THE GRANT (continued from page 1)

books, magazines, or newspapers in English.

The enthusiasm of the children, the staff at the school, and Sherry's own "feel good" vibes, prompted Sherry to bring 30 friends into the school to join her. This summer, Sherry ran a book drive that collected 600 books for the children to take home with them over the summer and to keep. When given his book, one boy asked Sherry, "Is this my forever book?" The book, as well as this child's love of stories, is a "forever" gift from Sherry to the future of these children. WMAR aired a story on Sherry's project last spring, available now on YouTube.

Jen Kozak, who has her own graphic design business, was part of a grants team visiting *Alternative Directions*, a BWGC grantee that works with women in prison and after their release to make transitions necessary to lead a productive life. After that visit, Jen was so taken with the program that she called up the executive director and asked, "How can I help?" This simple question has led to board membership for Jen, chairing two of *Alternative Directions'* fund raisers, and providing pro bono design services for the organization.

These stories are just a few examples of how our membership contributes to our community what money cannot buy.

If you have a volunteer story to share, or know of a member who has one, please contact [communications@theBWGC.org](mailto:communications@theBWGC.org) so that we can continue to shout out the extraordinary contributions of our Circle members. ■

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE EXPLORES COMMUNITY ISSUES

From Full Circle meetings to Briefing Breaks and site visits, Education Committee co-chairs Dotsie Boyce and Katie Ryan Lakin aim to keep discussions relevant to BWGC's mission, and broaden members' knowledge of the region's crises in healthcare, employment, education, and housing. "The good news—or bad news—is that there is no dearth of relevant community issues to explore," Dotsie said.

Many of this year's programs explore the importance of early childhood education. The September Full Circle meeting featured a national expert in that field, Ellen Galinsky, author of *Mind in the Making*. Members also made a site visit to St. Jerome's Head Start program. The December 4 Full Circle meeting will focus on advocacy.

To enhance the committee experience, Dotsie and Katie have invited community resource specialists to committee meetings. They are also specialists. Katie is currently president of Catholic Charities Board of Trustees, and Dotsie is a University of Maryland School of Social Work alumna with a long history of leadership in developing programs for the elderly.

Recognizing the lifestyle diversity of Circle members, the dynamic duo is also exploring new meeting times and formats. There will be at least one Full Circle evening meeting, and Circle Reads is hosting its first evening meeting over wine and cheese, November 14, at a member's home. "We don't want to get tied to a routinized schedule," Katie adds. "If a topic is better suited to a briefing break than a site visit, we'll change the schedule to a briefing break."

Watch for BWGC e-vites and check monthly e-newsletters for word of programs. To become an Education Committee member, send an e-mail to [education@theBWGC.org](mailto:education@theBWGC.org). ■

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

## ST. MARY'S OUTREACH CENTER HELPING SENIORS LIVE AT HOME



Sandra Simmons, left, Executive Director of St. Mary's Outreach Center, helps a client apply for energy assistance.

A woman walked into the St. Mary's Outreach Center seeking help to pay her Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE) Company bill, as her service had been turned off. The woman was caring for her children and a disabled sister in her home.

St. Mary's Fuel Fund was able to provide the needed assistance. "That same afternoon, the client called our office to report that BGE had arrived to turn her service back on," said Sandra Simmons, St. Mary's Outreach Center director. "She was so grateful for the assistance we gave her. This is just one of many such stories we can tell here at St. Mary's Outreach Center, thanks to the financial support we received from the Baltimore Women's Giving Circle."

BWGC awarded St. Mary's Outreach Center a \$20,000 grant in both 2010 and 2012. With the BWGC grant funds, St. Mary's Outreach Center hired Carol Wolbert, a part-time staff member, helping the center better assist economically disadvantaged seniors, enabling them to maintain self-sufficiency and live independently in their communities. The program serves the neighborhoods of Hampden, Medfield, Hoes Heights, Wyman Park, and Woodberry in Baltimore City.

With the help of the BWGC grants, St. Mary's Outreach Center also has been able to expand its partnerships with organizations that assist seniors, such as the Maryland Food Bank's SNAP Outreach Program and the Fuel Fund of Maryland. This year, St. Mary's Outreach Center has helped 176 low-income clients access SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program formerly known as Food Stamps) and 186 clients access the Fuel Fund.

Additionally, St. Mary's Outreach Center provides hands-on assistance to seniors who need information about their eligibility for benefits associated with local, state, and federal programs. These benefits include Renters/Homeowners Tax Credits, Medicare, Water Bill Discount for Seniors, and Maryland Energy Assistance. To reach seniors, staff members speak at community-council meetings, and social clubs, and distribute community flyers.

In addition to the grants, the BWGC supplied paper goods for the center's Fall Harvest Luncheon fundraiser in both 2011 and 2013. BWGC's financial support has been especially important since St. Mary's Outreach Center receives no government funding.

<b>Name of Organization:</b>	St. Mary's Outreach Center
<b>Name of Project:</b>	Community Outreach To Hampden-area Seniors
<b>Date and Amount of Grant:</b>	\$20,000 in 2010 and 2012
<b>Program/Grantee Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.stmarysoutreach.org">www.stmarysoutreach.org</a>
<b>For More Success Stories:</b>	<a href="http://www.thebwgc.org/grantees/stories">http://www.thebwgc.org/grantees/stories</a>



**BALTIMORE  
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c/o The Baltimore Community Foundation  
2 East Read Street  
9th floor  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
www.thebwgc.org

FALL 2013

Through collective giving and collaboration, the Baltimore Women's Giving Circle at the Baltimore Community Foundation **seeks to empower women and their families in the greater Baltimore area to achieve self-sufficiency.** The Giving Circle encourages members to participate in philanthropy through education, grant making, and other community based activities.



## IN HER OWN WORDS

### What are Your Plans and Goals for the Year?



#### **JODI DUNN**

Co-Chair Post Grants

*I am interested in examining the post-grant evaluation program to build on what is working well while identifying opportunities to better define the results of our investment of grant dollars. I plan to initiate a discussion and collaboration among interested Circle members with the objective of developing recommendations to the Steering Committee.*



#### **DAWNA COBB**

Co-Chair Grants

*I would like to explore moving the grant application and review process to a paperless process, i.e., an online process. To test this idea, one grant reader team will use a computer application called Dropbox to electronically receive, share, and review applications. I will share results of this experiment in a future edition of the newsletter.*



#### **SUSANNAH BERGMANN**

Co-Chair Visioning

*One of our goals for 2013-14 is to focus on the impact and ramifications of membership growth on the Circle culture, Full Circle meetings, committees, grants, infrastructure, etc., and make recommendations for next steps to meet the Circle's current and future needs.*



#### **KATIE RYAN LEKIN**

Co-Chair Education

*My goal is to continue the good work of the committee to educate and energize the Circle members on our diverse and individual issues and causes. Our December Full Circle meeting is about advocacy. We hope to inspire our members to advocate for the issues important to them, through philanthropy, by investing their time and talent, or by becoming personally proactive.*

Editor: Rachel Forward

Contributors: Susannah Bergmann, Dawna Cobb, Jodi Dunn, Donna Eden, Susan Sachs Fleishman, Elaine Freeman, Steffi Graham, Shirley Kaufman, Lynne Lamberg, Beth Lebow, Katie Ryan Lekin, Julie Rothman, Gail Shawe, Kimberly Warren.

# THE 23 ORGANIZATIONS LISTED HERE RECEIVED \$410,000 IN GRANTS IN MAY 2013.



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## 2 GOD B THE GLORY

Women and Children  
Housing Program

\$19,995

Purpose: To provide transitional housing and support services for women and families coping with crises related to homelessness, abuse, HIV/AIDS, addiction, and previous incarceration

[www.2godbtheglory.org](http://www.2godbtheglory.org)

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## BALTIMORE HEALTHY START

Teen Zone 410

\$20,000

Purpose: To provide staff and curriculum materials aimed at reducing teen pregnancy in East Baltimore

[www.baltimorehealthystart.org](http://www.baltimorehealthystart.org)

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## BALTIMORE OUTREACH SERVICES

Supportive Housing Program

\$20,000

Purpose: To help women and their children move from homelessness to self-sufficiency

[www.baltimoreoutreach.org](http://www.baltimoreoutreach.org)

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## BALTIMORE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

OrchKids

\$ 15,000

Purpose: To provide free after-school musical education for 600 Title I students in four elementary and middle schools in Baltimore City

[www.BSOmusic.org](http://www.BSOmusic.org)

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## BALTIMORE'S SAFE AND SOUND CAMPAIGN

RoboDoves Team 2528

\$7,000

Purpose: To support the RoboDoves, an all-girl competitive robotic team from Western High School and the only all-girl team in Maryland that competes in large robot competitions

[www.safeandsound.org](http://www.safeandsound.org)

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## BIOTECHNICAL INSTITUTE OF MARYLAND, INC.

BioSTART to Lab Associates  
Program

\$20,000

Purpose: To train unemployed and underemployed high school graduates in Baltimore City to work as lab technicians in the bioscience industry

[www.biotechmd.org](http://www.biotechmd.org)

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## BON SECOURS COMMUNITY WORKS: FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

Bon Secours Baltimore Health  
System Foundation

\$20,000

Purpose: To foster good parenting skills in teen parents

[www.bonsecoursbaltimorefoundation.org](http://www.bonsecoursbaltimorefoundation.org)

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## CAMP FIRE PATUXENT COUNCIL

Out of School Time Program-Baltimore

\$20,000

Purpose: To expand an after-school program that helps students in Patterson Park and Orchard Mews improve social, leadership, and academic skills

[www.Campfireusa-patuxent.org](http://www.Campfireusa-patuxent.org)

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## CHILDREN'S GUILD, INC.

Ways to Work Program

\$20,000

Purpose: To help fund car loans, enabling working families to gain better access to jobs, job training, and other services

[www.childrensguild.org](http://www.childrensguild.org)

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## CITIZENS LAW RELATED EDUCATION PROGRAM

Law Links Internship

\$18,000

Purpose: To provide a paid summer internship and mentoring program to help high school students prepare for college

[www.clrep.org](http://www.clrep.org)

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## THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Community Academic and  
Mentoring Program

\$15,000

Purpose: To support an intensive academic and mentoring program for low-income youth in Hampden/Medfield/Remington

[www.tcs-camp.com](http://www.tcs-camp.com)

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## DAYSRING PROGRAMS, INC.

Dayspring Employment Project

\$20,000

Purpose: To offer job training in a "Ready to Work" program to transitional housing residents

[www.DayspringBaltimore.com](http://www.DayspringBaltimore.com)

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## ENOCH PRATT FREE LIBRARY

Buena Casa, Buena Brasa

\$10,000

Purpose: To support a bilingual Spanish-English literacy program for 200 preschoolers at Brooklyn and Southeast Anchor libraries

[www.prattlibrary.org](http://www.prattlibrary.org)

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## FARM ALLIANCE OF BALTIMORE CITY (Civic Works Inc.)

Food Access through  
Neighborhood Farmstands

\$14,000

Purpose: To facilitate WIC and SNAP clients' food purchases from community-based urban farms

[www.farmalliancebaltimore.org](http://www.farmalliancebaltimore.org)

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[www.thebwgc.org](http://www.thebwgc.org)

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## FUSION PARTNERSHIPS

Power Inside Victim Services

\$16,000

Purpose: To help provide victim-advocate services for women and girls affected by incarceration, street life, the sex trade, and abuse

[www.fusiongroup.org](http://www.fusiongroup.org)

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## HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF THE CHESAPEAKE

Women Build 2013

\$20,000

Purpose: To provide building materials and train volunteers to build a house in Baltimore City for a woman-headed household

[www.habitatchesapeake.org](http://www.habitatchesapeake.org)

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## HIGHER ACHIEVEMENT BALTIMORE

Summer Academy

\$15,000

Purpose: To provide a six-week summer academic program for 80 low-income students in grades 5-8 in Cherry Hill

[www.higherachievement.org](http://www.higherachievement.org)

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## INNTERIM HOUSE & INNTERIM GARDENS

INNterim Housing Corporation

\$20,000

Purpose: To help women and children in Baltimore County's only remaining transitional housing program rebuild their lives and achieve financial independence

[www.innterim.org](http://www.innterim.org)

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## INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

Community Health Promoters Program

\$20,000

Purpose: To help refugees and asylees gain self-sufficiency in their first year in Baltimore

[www.rescue.org/baltimore](http://www.rescue.org/baltimore)

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## MARYLAND CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

College Degree Program

\$20,000

Purpose: To provide college courses for women in prison in partnership with Goucher College

[www.goucher.edu/gpep](http://www.goucher.edu/gpep)

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## ST. AMBROSE HOUSING AID CENTER

Homesharing

\$20,000

Purpose: To match people seeking affordable housing with homeowners willing to rent space

[www.stambrosehousing.org](http://www.stambrosehousing.org)

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## ST. VINCENT DE PAUL OF BALTIMORE

Sarah's Hope

\$ 20,000

Purpose: To provide an emergency shelter for homeless women and children

[www.vincentbaltimore.org](http://www.vincentbaltimore.org)

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## SALVATION ARMY BALTIMORE AREA COMMAND

Booth House Emergency and Transitional Shelter

\$ 20,000

Purpose: To support an emergency shelter and transitional housing for families in need

[www.tsabaltimore.org](http://www.tsabaltimore.org)

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[www.thebwgc.org](http://www.thebwgc.org)

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