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## Grantee Partners GPEP, PREPARE and PIVOT Offer Hope to Women in the Criminal Justice System



**PREPARE**  
PREpare for Parole and REentry



**PIVOT**

"Judges tell me that there are many resources for men in the criminal justice system, but almost none for women," says Veronica Jackson, Executive Director of PIVOT Women's Reentry and Workforce Development Program.

Three of the Circle's current grantee partners – [Goucher Prison Education Partnership \(GPEP\)](#),

[PREPARE](#) and [PIVOT](#) – address that disparity and offer life-altering resources to incarcerated women.

At the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women, about 50 women enroll in GPEP's free college courses each year. Rising to this challenge reimagines life outside the walls. "I want to succeed outside," a GPEP student says.

For eligible women, the next step is applying for parole. But with no state assistance available to them, many women turn to PREPARE to guide them through the process and help make a case for release. Many PREPARE clients are GPEP students. "It's fantastic to tell a story in a parole packet that a woman came into prison without a diploma, completed her GED, and was accepted by Goucher," says Elizabeth Finne, PREPARE's co-founder. PREPARE also assists with a reentry plan. For that, they can call on PIVOT, a reentry program to which PREPARE may refer clients.

PIVOT helps reentering women reboot their lives. The 8-week program of personal success coaching, mental health and wellness, employment training and counseling and support services has a 91% retention rate. For committed enrollees, PIVOT gets results: 70% of graduates find employment, and there is less than a 1% recidivism rate.

United by mission, GPEP, PREPARE and PIVOT offer imprisoned women in Maryland the resources they need to close the door on incarceration and step forward.

## Letter from the Co-Chairs



We hope your holiday season was fun and festive, and we want to wish everyone a happy new year! We are excited to announce that we have hired an administrative coordinator, Lisa Calixto, who will begin

work in January. There is more on the search and Lisa below.

All enjoyed the second Full Circle on December 14, as we learned from James B. Potash, MD, MPH (Director of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Johns Hopkins Hospital) about new uses of psychedelics in mental health.

On a sad note, our tech superstar, Jeff Davis, has taken a new job. He has been a wonderful support for the past two years as the BWGC learned how to have meetings on Zoom. We will miss his kind and patient guidance.

It is NOT too late to join a committee. Reach out to committee co-chairs to volunteer if you are interested in getting involved. The Grants Committee is swinging into high gear, and it is a fun way to meet other members and learn more about organizations in the Baltimore area doing wonderful things for others.

At the December Steering Committee, a new program was launched – Sponsorships. Volunteers will be needed to help us reach out to businesses and individuals who might want to support our grants fund, underwrite a meeting etc. Stay tuned for details and guidelines.

All the best,

*Ann & Salli*

Ann and Salli

## The Search for an Administrative Coordinator...

An Ad Hoc Committee led by Lisa Field and Mary Jo Wiese met in the fall to begin the search for an administrative coordinator for the BWGC. The committee surveyed the Steering Committee to determine their needs, wrote a job description, posted it online, and received more than 350 applications. Lisa, Mary Jo, and Anita Pomerantz reviewed the applications, drew up a list of finalists, checked references and interviewed the top three candidates. Circle Co-Chairs Ann Daniels and Salli Ward then interviewed the top 3 candidates recommended by Lisa, Mary Jo and Anita. After much discussion and consideration, Ann and Salli chose Lisa Calixto. Many thanks to the committee, which included Susannah Bergmann, Sherry Billig, Amy Boebel, Pam Corckran, Maria Darby, Georgia King and Renee Gordon.

## ...Brings Lisa Calixto to the Circle

Lisa Calixto, the Circle's first administrative coordinator, brings years of experience in the nonprofit sector. She has a BA in International Studies from American University and is working toward a master's degree in Digital Marketing and Analytics. She lives in New Jersey with her husband, three children, and their miniature Goldendoodle. She enjoys traveling and dancing with her husband.



## December Full Circle Meeting

December's hybrid Full Circle drew 94 members and guests to Chizuk Amuno Congregation in Pikesville (plus 60 on Zoom) to hear about the latest research into the use of psychedelics in the field of mental health. Jimmy Potash, MD, MPH, Director of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Johns Hopkins, traced the history of the medical use (and misuse) of psychedelics from 1940 to 1975 (when their use was effectively halted) and their reemergence over the past 25 years in clinical studies. Psilocybin-assisted therapy ("magic mushrooms") has shown promise, Potash said, as has MDMA ("ecstasy"), which is being tested as a PTSD therapy. To date, no psychedelic drugs have received FDA approval. Potash cautioned that while research suggests such therapies may be helpful, they are not for everyone, and unsupervised use of these drugs can be dangerous.



JIMMY POTASH, MD, MPH



[Click here](#) to view the Full Circle meeting and other videos on the Circle's YouTube page.

## Calendar of Events

1/25/23	All Grant Readers Workshop	2/21/23	Membership Committee
1/26/23	Post Grants mid-year meeting	2/22/23	Grant Team Leader Check-In Meeting
2/08/23	Circle Works Project: Maryland Food Bank	3/07/23	Grantee Connect Meeting
2/09/23	Steering Committee Meeting	3/08/23	Steering Committee Meeting
2/16/23	Communications Committee Meeting	3/15/23	Full Circle Meeting (hybrid)

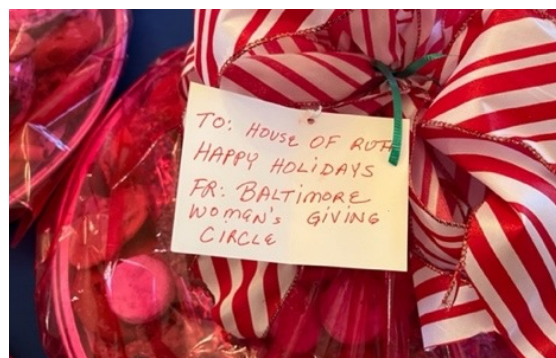


## CIRCLE WORKS FALL PROJECT

### House of Ruth

Circle Works Committee Co-Chairs Susan Griisser and Sherry Billig and committee members Beth Diehl and Pam Corckran spearheaded the fall project for House of Ruth. In the weeks before Thanksgiving, Circle members donated more than \$20,000 in supplies and baked dozens of holiday cookies, creating 12 huge cookie platters.

"Having the incredible support of the Baltimore Women's Giving Circle holds a special place in my heart," said Justice Schisler, House of Ruth development director. "Women helping other women in need--this is what it is all about." She added that their 81 current residents need comforters and bed sheets, towel sets, laundry pods, Lysol spray and pots and pans.



HILARY CAMPODONICO, SUSAN GRIISSER AND SHERRY BILLIG (FROM LEFT) show off cookie donations for House of Ruth.

*Welcome to our new BWGC members!*

Margaret Kenney, Mara-Lee Khouzami, Leah Maddox, Deborah Rabin

## REDI (Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)

The Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) Committee's Vision, Mission and Values (VMV) drafting group met three times in October and November led by facilitator Patty Prasada-Rao from Maryland Nonprofits. There will be focus group opportunities for the entire membership to consider the VMV group's draft statements.

The REDI Grant Pilot Initiative group plans to establish a five- to seven-member team of community advisors and BWGC members who will meet to decide the focus, size and process for distributing the \$25,000 in unrestricted funds awarded to it by the Steering Committee. BWGC expects to learn much from this pilot.

The Conversations Initiative group, taking a cue from the results of the recent Circle survey (reported in the November newsletter), is planning a February program that will consider the changes/trends in our regional demographics. This information should help the Circle become better-informed grant makers.

The REDI Committee met for an update from all the initiatives on December 5.



The Vision, Mission and Values (VMV) drafting group, front row, from left: **PATTY MCLEAN, JANE STRAUSBAUGH, LINDA BLONSLEY, SALLI WARD (CIRCLE CO-CHAIR), DANA FOLEY, PATTY PRASADO-RAO (FACILITATOR), JUDY DOBBS, JANET FELSTEN, CRICKETT WOLOSON**

Second row, from left: **DAWNA COBB, BRUCE WEBB, JACKIE VORENKAMP, MARY-ANN PINKARD, LYNN BYRNES, ANN DANIELS (CIRCLE CO-CHAIR), KATIE LEKIN, ANN BOYCE, BARBARA EPKE, LUCIA KERZNER. (MISSING: JANE BERKOW, VIVIAN MANEKIN, JOYCE MOSKOVITZ, MARY JO WIESE, CAROL YODER)**

## Social Media – Taking a New Approach

A new ad hoc committee is making plans to update the Circle's social media (SM) presence. The goal is to highlight the Circle's philanthropic work and recruit new members. The new SM approach will promote the Circle's mission of collective impact, increase the Circle's visibility in the greater Baltimore community, recruit new members and advance the Circle's strategic priorities. The Circle will also use SM to help Grantees by providing networking and education through Grantee Connect.

The Circle has been on Facebook and Instagram for a decade, and more recently on YouTube. The committee is considering adding LinkedIn to reach out to younger, working women.

If you are interested in participating, please contact [Communications@theBWGC.org](mailto:Communications@theBWGC.org)

## Grants Committee Seeks Readers

Grant readers perform one of the most important and rewarding functions in the Baltimore Women's Giving Circle. They meet the people doing amazing work to make Baltimore a better place for women and families. Volunteering to be a grant reader is also a great way to get to know other Circle members.

If you are interested in becoming a Grant Reader, please sign up for a virtual New Grant Readers Orientation by emailing the Grants Committee, at [grants@thebwgc.org](mailto:grants@thebwgc.org).

The 2023 Grant cycle will begin at the Grant Reader Zoom meeting on January 25. Hopefully, the grant reader teams will be able to conduct site visits in person this year.

## Grantee Connect



MAGGIE OSBORN   PETER LANE

Twenty-nine grantees attended the Grantee Connect fall forum on November 16, exploring the topic Not Enough People and Low Morale: How Do We Get the Work Done? The zoom session, also attended by 17 committee members, featured presentations by Maggie Osborn, President, MGO Partners, a consultant in philanthropy and leadership, and Peter Lane, President, Peter Lane Coaching and Consulting, LLC, a health and wellness coach. In zoom breakout sessions, grantees discussed challenges in attracting and retaining staff and strategies for creating community and team environments. Grantees appreciated the opportunity to connect with other grantees. "We're all in this together!"

one participant wrote. "We shared concrete ideas for how to address our struggles." Following the program, attendees received a recording of the program, notes from the breakout groups, and a list of resources. The next forum will take place in May.

[Click here](#) to watch the recording on our YouTube channel.



## *Philanos National Conference* IN NOVEMBER

The Circle belongs to Philanos, a network of more than 80 giving circles in 27 states, the District of Columbia, England, and Australia.

This year, BWGC is co-hosting the Philanos National Conference, which will take place in Baltimore November 5-7, 2023. BWGC members Vivian Manekin and Mary Helfrich are heading up the Conference Committee, which will help plan the conference. If you would like to learn more or volunteer, contact Vivian ([vmanekin@gmail.com](mailto:vmanekin@gmail.com)) or Mary ([mrshelfrich@gmail.com](mailto:mrshelfrich@gmail.com)).

## Donations to Hampden Family Center

At the December FC meeting, BWGC members donated much-needed winter clothing items and toys to the [Hampden Family Center \(HFC\)](#). HFC is a grantee whose programs, including support services and children's after-school and summer enrichment programs, are available to all who live, learn and work in the community. The Center received socks, winter coats and new toys for children, women's winter coats and cash donations.

## Circle Forum—Marian House

The Circle Forum led Baltimore Women's Giving Circle members on a November 10 visit to Grantee Partner [Marian House](#), which offers programs for homeless women, many of whom were previously incarcerated.



# MARIAN HOUSE

Psalms Rojas, chief administrative officer of Marian House, explained that the goal is to provide a safe, sober, loving environment for women experiencing homelessness. Marian House provides

shelter and treatment for substance abuse and mental health issues, job readiness training, a GED program, and other services. The program is highly structured with a multitude of rules, chores, and a curfew.

There is also fun and sisterhood. One resident said her favorite outing at Marion House was an overnight camping trip, something she'd never dreamed she would experience. On completing the two-year program, an astonishing 80% of participants go on to achieve permanent housing and employment.

## Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee has produced a Pathways to Leadership Orientation for the Circle's YouTube channel. If you are interested in learning about Circle leadership, watch: <https://youtu.be/1nnBi-frzsY>

## Pathways to Leadership

Presented by the Baltimore Women's Giving Circle  
Nominating and Leadership Development Committee



## VOLUNTEER CORNER

# Opportunities to Help Current and Former Grantees



[Ballet After Dark](#), which works with survivors of trauma and violence, seeks volunteers to take inventory, organize in-kind donations, and work in community outreach, information tables, and event logistics. Contact [kalin@balletafterdark.com](mailto:kalin@balletafterdark.com).



[CASA of Baltimore County](#) provides individual advocates for abused, neglected or abandoned children in foster care. For more information, or to volunteer, contact Jessica Stine ([jstine@casabaltco.org](mailto:jstine@casabaltco.org)).



[PIVOT](#): Women's Reentry and Workforce Development Program

needs volunteers to conduct virtual mock job interviews. Scheduling is flexible. For more information, or to volunteer, contact Veronica Jackson [veronica@pivotprogram.org](mailto:veronica@pivotprogram.org)



[Drink at the Well/Hon's Honey](#) serves underprivileged families and supports women survivors of trauma in Baltimore's Curtis Bay area. Volunteer needs

include a Spanish translator assistant at the front desk or remotely; mentor for a sister-friend; and a childcare assistant during the week engaging children 6 weeks-11 years old. Contact [Juliana@drinkatthewell.org](mailto:Juliana@drinkatthewell.org).

*If you decide to volunteer for any of these organizations, please let us know! Send your name and the name of the group you will be volunteering for to: [granteeconnect@thebwgc.org](mailto:granteeconnect@thebwgc.org) and to [postgrants@thebwgc.org](mailto:postgrants@thebwgc.org).*

## Thank you to our contributors:

Jane Berkow

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Joyce Moskovitz

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Dawna Cobb

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