



BALTIMORE
WOMEN'S
GIVING
CIRCLE

THE CIRCLE

A FUND OF THE BALTIMORE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION | FALL · 2014

FOCUS ON JANE RODBELL



"The Circle has helped me learn to be a philanthropist. The ongoing education provides me

with a wealth of information about local programs that I could never have gathered on my own. It has been a real education about the challenges faced by so many women living in the City."

Jane Rodbell has been a member of the Circle for over 12 years. She came to the Circle in 2002 and has served on the Grants Committee, Post Grants, the Nominating Committee, the Visioning Committee, and loves most the Membership Committee, where she gets to talk to everyone who will listen about the Baltimore Women's Giving Circle. She also serves as a mentor for new members, which is another way she helps women feel welcome and included in every aspect of the mission.

"The amazing women I've met through membership in the Circle have enriched my life." ■



Laura Wexler (standing) Storytellers left to right Tracey Durant, Dawna Cobb, Antoninella Peterkin, Tess Olove, Susan Saudek, Tong Zhang, and Karen Holmes.

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

Tasked with planning their final meeting as co-chairs for the Circle, Kimberly Warren and Gail Shawe, along with a small task force of Circle members, partnered with Laura Wexler, founder of The Stoop Storytelling series, to put together a moving program of personal stories about the transformative power of giving and receiving.

A call went out to all Circle members and grant recipients asking for volunteers willing to share their personal stories. Six extraordinary women answered the call. How fortunate for those in attendance to hear the highly personal and inspirational stories of empowerment, self-discovery, and philanthropy from these remarkable storytellers. With only minimal direction from Wexler, these women came forward and each told an amazing tale that captivated and moved all in attendance that afternoon.

While each of the storytellers had a unique story to tell, in the end their

messages were surprisingly similar. Sharing experiences through narrative is a natural way to generate an emotional connection. A good story resonates with people and is capable of engaging their emotions while allowing them to absorb important messages. Individually and collectively, stories help us make sense of our past and understand possible futures.

The message that day was clear. Harness the power of the personal. As Maya Angelo said "people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." And what's the best way to make people feel? By telling a compelling story. People forget facts, but they never forget a great story.

To hear the powerful personal stories of past grantees and BWGC members please visit our website at www.thebwgc.org and click on the "News" section.

CHAIR TALK



Penny Wald and Peggy Schapiro Co-Chairs of the Baltimore Women's Giving Circle

As BWGC embarks upon its 14th year, we celebrate a Circle that is thriving. We are an organization of over 430 dynamic, talented women, all who share a desire to change the trajectory of women and families living in poverty in Baltimore.

As our membership grows and diversifies, the question becomes, What do we need to do as an organization to sustain our vitality? In 2013-14, the Visioning Committee conducted an extensive study on the ramifications of membership growth and presented their findings to the Circle Steering Committee last April. An overarching theme in their report was the importance of maintaining our members' sense of connectedness to our mission and encouraging our members, new and seasoned, young and old, to find a meaningful place for themselves in the Circle.

To that end, let's look at a sampling of ways you can be involved in the Circle. For starters, you can attend our varied Circle events such as Full Circle meetings, the Circle Reads book club, Briefing Breaks and the October 2014 Grantee Showcase. Additionally, you might join one or more of our five outstanding committees — education, membership, communication, grants and post grants. All of our committees have numerous tasks to fulfill, some that you might not expect, such as financial analysis, logistics, event planning, writing, web maintenance and entertaining. Or if you're looking for a new project, how about volunteering to help organize our first ever Circle Volunteer Day to be held in the spring, joining the New Member Mentoring program, or helping us problem-solve our ever-changing technology needs? If you want to talk more about the best fit for you, please contact us at BWGCchair@theBWGC.org. We'd love to help you find a good match.

BWGC is a living, breathing organization that grows and changes with each new member. As we stretch and morph, we continue to seek meaningful ways to engage in our mission, connect with each other and make the Circle stronger. In this year ahead, how would you like to be involved? ■



Seated, from left: Sarah Hemminger, co-founder and CEO; Aisha. Standing, from left: Varun Patel, Executive Team Coordinator; Brenda Wilson, BWGC; Ryan Hemminger, Co-founder; Susan Sachs Fleishman, BWGC; Laura Kelly, BWGC.

MENTORING HIGHLIGHTED AT FULL CIRCLE MEETING

It was wonderful to convene again as a Full Circle at the Vollmer Center on September 17th. The meeting was kicked off with a delicious luncheon, catered by Connie Crabtree's Baltimore Outreach Service, followed by important Circle news and an amazing presentation from Thread (formerly Incentive Mentoring Program), one of our 2014 grantees and past recipient of multiple grants.

The Circle leadership announced two important new initiatives. First, we are conducting a pilot program, based on the recommendation of the ad hoc committee chaired by Anne Donahue, to test the concept of multi-year grants. These grants, called Two Year Impact Grants, may amount to \$50,000 over two years. This year, two of these grants will be awarded thanks to the dedicated work of the documents committee, chaired by Lissa Abrams.

In addition, the Circle has launched a mentoring program, under the leadership of Barty Carr and Susan Talles, matching new members with more experienced ones. The enthusiasm for this program is palpable with 27 mentors and 35 new members already participating.

Our guest speakers were Ryan and Sarah Hemminger, co-founders of Thread. They were accompanied by Aisha, an 18 year old student who has benefited from Thread's work, and Laura Kelly, a Thread volunteer and a BWGC member.

It is hard to capture in this short article the emotional impact of Ryan's introduction. He spoke to us about how his young dreams of being a fireman were derailed by the slow, steady unravelling of his family life due to the drug addiction of his parents. School seemed completely unimportant, but his life was turned around by a group of caring teachers who gathered around him and provided the support system and community he didn't have at home.

Sarah, inspired by Ryan's story, spoke to the principal at Dunbar High and asked him to let her work with the ten kids who were most in danger of not graduating high school. Thread was born.

Thread serves the most underperforming students in three high schools and commits to those students for ten years. By permanently reconfiguring the social support structure of these teenagers, Thread has yielded amazing results, with 100% of their students receiving high school diplomas and 96% accepted to college.

The entire room was energized by the new initiatives of the Circle and moved by the very compelling presentation of one of our grantees. The year is off to a fantastic start!

GRANTS COMMITTEE

The work of the Grants Committee goes to the heart of the Giving Circle's mission to empower Baltimore area women and their families to achieve self-sufficiency. The grants cycle begins in December when about 100 applications arrive at the Baltimore Community Foundation and ends in May when the Full Circle ratifies the 20-25 grant applications that the Grants Committee has voted to fund.

In between January and May, teams of grant readers, each of which is led by a Team Leader, accomplish quite a bit. Each team reviews six to seven grant applications, decides which applicants deserve a site visit, organizes and conducts the visit and later reconvenes to prepare written recommendations for funding. In the third week of April, members from each grant reader team orally present her team's recommendations for funding. Thereafter, each grant reader votes for the applicants she wishes to fund. The slate of selected applicants is presented to the Full Circle meeting in May.

Serving on the grants committee offers Circle members an unparalleled opportunity to learn about the daunting challenges faced by Baltimore area women and the non-profits that are working to make a difference. Grant readers also receive training and support through educational meetings --one in the fall and one in January-- that feature presentations and discussion about various aspects of the Circle's grant making process, trends in philanthropy and other relevant topics. These meetings are not only informative, but are an opportunity for grant readers to meet other Circle members or catch up with old friends. In short, the Grants Committee enables Circle members to personally carry out the Circle's mission, learn about Baltimore and meet other caring and committed women. ■

CIRCLE READS!

Innocent: Confessions of a Welfare Mother by Barbara Morrison
November 18th

Visit www.thebwgc.org for more information

MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

THE ARK PRESCHOOL: ENSURING AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL.

THE CHALLENGE

You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose ... And will you succeed? Yes! You will, indeed! (98 and ¾ percent guaranteed.)

— Dr. Suess

Unfortunately for children experiencing homelessness, Dr. Suess needs to drastically lower his percentages. The poverty and unsafe living conditions that accompany homelessness subject young children to a steady barrage of stressful circumstances and traumatic events during the most critical years of their emotional and intellectual development.

With the support of the BWGC, The Ark Preschool is giving children that 98 ¾% guarantee of future success. Preschool programs play a critical role in meeting homeless children's need for quality early care and education.

THE PLAN

The Ark Preschool focuses on the educational, emotional and developmental needs of children, ages three and four, who are experiencing homelessness or living in extreme poverty. The preschool helps children develop language and social skills in a safe, stable environment while also working with family members on a family-specific action plan to stabilize their lives and move toward permanent housing. A key outcome is to transition each child to high quality educational settings. Operated by Episcopal Community Services of Maryland, the preschool is located in Johnston Square Elementary School, a Title 1 school in East Baltimore City. The Ark Preschool is the only state-accredited preschool for homeless children in Baltimore City.

The BWGC is a long-term supporter of The Ark Preschool with grants beginning in 2006. The Circle's most



Oh, the places she will go thanks to The Ark Preschool!

recent grant of \$20,000 during the 2014 grant cycle supported a Family Support Specialist, a position that combines direct classroom teaching with family support services.

THE OUTCOME

During the 2014 grant year, the preschool enrolled 51 boys and girls, the majority of whom are African American. Of the 51 children enrolled, only 16 left The Ark Preschool with no known placement. Equally impressive, the children improved their language acquisition and comprehension by 24%, based on formal assessments. Because of the transient nature of the target population, the preschool has an average daily attendance of 15 and dedicates resources to removing barriers to attendance.

The Ark Preschool has many community partners to enrich the children's experiences and prepare these young minds for school, including the Irvine Nature Center which provides monthly ecology and science learning activities. Through other partnerships, The Ark Preschool provided 21 children with vision screenings, 19 with hearing screenings, and 37 children received dental screenings. The most important partnership is with the parents who are supported and encouraged to be their child's first teacher, thus dramatically increasing the child's chance of future academic success.



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

FALL 2014

Through collective giving and collaboration, The Baltimore Women's Giving Circle 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 activities.



IN HER OWN WORDS

What are Your Plans and Goals for the Year?



ERICA SARODIA

Co-Chair Communications

I'm excited to work with the Communications Committee to continue sharing inspiring stories about the Circle's activities and impacts. Along with the committee members, I want to evaluate the frequency and content of our communications, to ensure we are meeting the needs of BWGC members.



FRANCINE KRUMHOLZ

Co-Chair Post Grants

Our grantees do amazing work. I am pleased to join the group of women who monitor the progress of these organizations through their grant year. As I become more familiar with the work of the committee I would like to explore how to better capture and more widely disseminate the grantees' accomplishments to Circle members.



MARGUERITE KELLY

Co-Chair Membership

I am a Philadelphian who has lived in Baltimore for 15 years. One of my goals for the Membership Committee is to learn more about our current members, using our revised renewal form, and determine how to best engage them. I also want to grow our mentorship program for new members, which has been a great addition to our committee!



LAURA KELLY

Co-Chair Education

My goal is completely aligned with my co-chair to continue the good work of the committee to educate and energize the Circle members on our diverse and individual issues and causes. 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.

THE 22 ORGANIZATIONS LISTED HERE RECEIVED \$425,000 IN GRANTS IN 2014



NIGHT OF PEACE

Family Shelter

\$ 15,000

Shelters and assists homeless families with children, most headed by a single mother, for up to 90 days

Website: nightofpeace.com

LOW-INCOME HOME REPAIR

Rebuilding Together Baltimore

\$ 15,000

Provides home repair services allowing senior low-income women to maintain their homes and their independence

Website: rtbaltimore.org

SUSANNA WESLEY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM

YWCA Of Greater Baltimore

\$ 15,000

Supportive housing for women and their children with services including GED classes, job training, workshops, healthcare and substance abuse

Website: ywcagreaterbaltimore.org

ACTION IN MATURITY

Transportation And Social Services
For Elderly Women

\$ 20,000

Transportation and social assistance for low-income senior women

Website: actioninmaturity.org

ALTERNATIVE DIRECTIONS

Children Of Incarcerated Parents
(CHIP) Mentoring Program

\$ 20,000

Mentoring, tutoring and support for children of incarcerated parents

Website: alternativedirectionsinc.org

ASYLEE WOMEN ENTERPRISE

Support For Part-time Staff

\$ 20,000

Helps women seeking asylum rebuild their lives by providing housing, medical care, legal aid & other services

Website: asyleewomen.org

CAROLINE CENTER

General Operating Funds

\$ 20,000

Trains unemployed & underemployed women for work as nursing, pharmacy and patient care assistants

Website: caroline-center.org

CASA FOR FEMALE YOUTH

CASA Of Baltimore

\$ 20,000

Prepares girls in foster care for independent living

Website: casabalt.org

MY SISTER'S PLACE WOMEN'S CENTER

Catholic Charities

\$ 20,000

Day shelter for homeless women & their children, providing meals, phones, laundry, healthcare and other services

Website: cc-md.org/my-sisters-place/

THE ARK PRESCHOOL

Episcopal Community Services Of
Maryland

\$ 20,000

The sole state-accredited preschool for homeless children in Baltimore City

Website: ecsm.org

OUTREACH SERVICES FOR WOMEN & CHILDREN

Healthcare For The Homeless

\$ 20,000

Provides outreach pediatric and adolescent healthcare services to homeless women & children in shelters, housing programs, and drop-in centers

Website: hchmd.org

THREAD (FORMERLY INCENTIVE MENTORING PROGRAM)

Building Families That Transcend
Barriers

\$ 20,000

A mentoring to help struggling Baltimore City students complete high school; provides individual, intensive and long-term tutoring support starting in the freshman year

Website: thread.org

GIRLS EMPOWERMENT MISSION (GEM)

Living Classrooms Foundation

\$ 20,000

Provides academic and social support for girls at Chesapeake High School

Website: gemmaryland.org

MOBILE MEDICAL & DENTAL CLINICS

Mission Of Mercy

\$ 20,000

Free, comprehensive health and dental care serving over 300 people, many with chronic illnesses such as hypertension, asthma and arthritis

Website: amissionofmercy.org

GRANTS
2014

www.thebwgc.org



MY SISTER'S CIRCLE

General Operating Funds
\$ 20,000

Mentoring for 140 girls from low-income families who attend over 50 Baltimore City public schools
Website: mysisterscircle.org

MARTHA'S PLACE

Newborn Holistic Ministries
\$ 20,000

Provides transitional and long-term housing along with state-certified recovery services for women working to overcome addiction and homelessness
Website: newbornholisticministries.org

TERAPIAS PARA FAMILIAS, PAREJAS E INDIVIDUOS

Pro Bono Counseling Project
\$ 20,000

Counseling for Latina women and children experiencing domestic or sexual abuse or other violence
Website: probonocounseling.org

SECOND CHANCE FOR WOMEN

General Operating Funds
\$ 20,000

Legal and support services to help incarcerated women obtain parole and rebuild their lives after prison
Website: <http://fusionpartnerships.wordpress.com/sponsored-projects/second-chance-for-women/>

COMMUNITY OUTREACH, INFORMATION, ASSISTANCE AND REFERRAL PROGRAM

St. Mary's Outreach Center
\$ 20,000

Helps low-income seniors in central Baltimore connect with medical, housing, food and fuel assistance programs
Website: smocbaltimore.org

RESIDENCE PROGRAM FOR WOMEN

Samaritan Women
\$ 20,000

Residential care facility for survivors of sex trafficking
Website: thesamaritanwomen.org

YOUNG LIFE GEMS

General Operating Funds
\$ 20,000

Provides life skills activities such as meals, cultural field trips, college visits and camp experiences for low-income teenage girls in Sandtown mentoring program
Website: baltimoreurban.younglife.org

YOUTH EMPOWERED SOCIETY

Funding For Peer Case Manager
\$ 20,000

A day drop-in center offering services to youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
Website: fusiogroup.org

GRANTS

2014