



Our first year as co-chairs is in the books. In looking back the first feeling that comes to mind is gratitude for more than 300 Circle members who organized, volunteered, led and went beyond the call to ensure that the Circle carried out its mission. The second is that we are excited about all that is planned for this coming year. Here are just a few reasons for our excitement:

Year-in-Review

By now you should have received in the mail the Circle's first ever year-in-review. In a few short vibrant and informative pages it beautifully summarizes the Circle's grant-making, educational programs and community engagement. An electronic copy can be found [here](#). Kudos to Communications Committee co-chairs Renee Gordon, Susan Perl and Barbara Spector and graphic designer Holly Burke for their dedicated professionalism in producing this lovely publication.

September Full Circle save the date

Wednesday, September 18, 2019 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Chizuk Amuno Congregation, 8100 Stevenson Road, Baltimore, MD 21208. In addition to the opportunity to meet half of our grantees, our featured speaker will be Baltimore-based author Elaine Weiss, who will discuss the collective power of women, something she knows quite a bit about having authored *The Women's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote*, which describes the suffragettes' collective effort to pass the 19th amendment giving women the right to vote 100 years ago. Ms. Weiss' book will be the subject of a television series produced by Stephen Spielberg and Hillary Clinton!

Mark your calendar! Future Full Circle dates

December 11, 2019 luncheon at Chizuk Amuno Congregation
March 25, 2020 luncheon at Chizuk Amuno Congregation
May 13, 2020 reception at Church of the Redeemer

A sneak peek at the topics for future Full Circle meetings

The December Full Circle meeting's theme is Women who are Changing the Narrative of our City. Concerned about the constant negative press that Baltimore receives, we will hear different and more positive points of view from several impressive women leaders working in Baltimore's non-profit and grass

roots sectors. In March, the topic will be housing and the challenges that women and their families face finding adequate housing. The Circle Study subcommittee is currently meeting with housing experts to better understand current issues and how best to inform Circle members on this important topic.

Prospective member event

The next prospective member event is Tuesday, September 10, 2019 at 5:30–7:00 p.m. at the Renaissance Fine Art Gallery in Cross Keys. If you would like to invite a relative or friend to this meeting, please email our Membership Committee co-chairs Barty Carr and Susan Hovanec at membership@thebwgc.org. Also, if you are interested in hosting a future prospective member event, please let them know. Thanks to gallery owner and Circle member Merritt Miller for offering this lovely space for our event.

Membership renewal

Last year we introduced an on-line process for renewing Circle membership. It was a huge success in that renewals were received on a more timely basis and with much less paper to manage. By now you should have received an emailed invoice for this year's (7/1/19 - 6/30/20) dues. If you have any questions about renewing on-line please email help@thebwgc.org. We are grateful to Cathy Neuman and Anita Pomerantz who have worked behind-the-scenes to institute this more efficient renewal process.

Grant-making update

This past June you, the 450 plus Circle members, made possible grants to 24 grantees totaling \$489,300. You can read about this year's grantees [here](#).

Also, a year-long in-depth and thoughtful review of the grants program was conducted by an ad hoc Grants Governance Workgroup comprised of Grants chairs, Post Grant chairs and other Circle members experienced in our grant-making. Their recommendations were presented to the Steering Committee. Keeping in mind the best interest of the Circle, it was unanimously decided to:

- 1) Discontinue two-year grants in 2019-2020 (of course, those grantees awarded a two-year grant in spring 2019 will receive them).
- 2) Increase the maximum one-year grant amount from \$20,000 to \$25,000. It has been 11 years since this amount was increased.
- 3) As the Circle is always looking to innovate, the same Workgroup will study the feasibility of making collaborative grants to grantees that work together on one project.

The basis for this decision are too lengthy to outline in this letter, please click [here](#) to read more detail on this discussion.

What we are reading

Serving as co-chairs inspired us to read some terrific books recommended by several of our members. For example, *The Art of Gathering and Why it Matters* by Priya Parker. Ms. Parker, a professional facilitator, suggests myriad ways to make meetings, dinner parties and conferences more meaningful, fun and insightful.

The Moment of Lift by Melinda Gates. At every level and in all places women truly are the bedrock supporting their communities. As Trevor Noah said, "The book is a beautiful and concise mission statement on what we need to do to move society forward - continue to empower women."

We Speak for Ourselves: A Word from Forgotten Black America by Baltimore writer D. Watkins. Mr. Watkins' newest book shines a light on how the public and the media don't explore the lives and experiences of poor African Americans.

The Master Plan: My Journey from a Life in Prison to Life of Purpose by Chris Wilson. Born and raised in Washington, D.C., but now living in Baltimore, Mr. Wilson went to prison at 17 for murder. While in prison he decided to alter the course of his life and undertook to study, learn languages and read as much as he could. In his mid-thirties he convinced a judge to reduce his sentence. He is now a successful artist and entrepreneur. His story is compelling and makes a great case statement for second chances.

Looking ahead

Having just completed the calendar for the upcoming year, we can assure you that there is something for everyone. Check it out [here](#) for information on upcoming Circle events.

We wish everyone a lovely summer and look forward to seeing you in the fall.



Dawna Cobb & Susannah Bergmann
Co-Chairs

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