

OCTOBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

GRANTEE PROFILE

Sarah's Hope Family Shelter

Sheltering in Place When you Don't Have a Home

Sarah's Hope Family Shelter in West Baltimore continues to provide exceptional care to families struggling with homelessness in these unprecedented times due to the pandemic. While we know that COVID-19 disproportionately affects people of color and marginalized populations struggling with poverty, St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore (SVDP) continues to serve without interruption.

Since March, Sarah's Hope has remained at capacity. Thanks to early adoption of CDC guidelines, including daily screening and social distancing, Sarah's Hope has seen only one positive case (contracted and isolated outside of the shelter.)

In addition to implementing and adjusting protocols to ensure the safety of the staff and clients, SVDP case management and supportive services continue. Ten families have secured permanent housing, and resident children were able to attend an onsite summer camp that included daily educational programming and outdoor activity.

Staff members that the Baltimore Women's Giving Circle has worked with through the years have been promoted, and SVDP has been able to attract exciting new talent. Elishabha Eaton is the new Children's Coordinator at Sarah's Hope. She is excited to join the resources serving children there. Elishabha has wonderful ideas on how to bring warmth and joy to the children during holidays, while keeping everyone safe and healthy.



Sarah's Hope Family Shelter

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St. Ambrose: Sustaining Homes for Older Women (SHOW) Fund

With support from the Baltimore Women's Giving Circle, St. Ambrose recently launched an emergency fund to ensure that older Baltimore women can maintain their homes safely and sustainably and can continue to live in the communities they know and love. Owen Jarvis, St. Ambrose's Director of Legal Services, recently worked with Gloria, a single woman in her 50s, to save her home, which was in jeopardy.

Mr. Jarvis had been working with Gloria for months and had negotiated a mortgage modification that would enable her to pay a lower monthly bill. As the new terms were set to begin, Gloria's sister died.

Gloria had to fly out of state to help make arrangements and take care of her nieces. In the same month, she had to renew her car registration and manage her regular household expenses. This financial strain forced her to borrow money from a friend, which she had to repay before her first modified payment came due. She had to ask for an extension on making the payment. After working for nearly a year to finalize a mortgage modification, Gloria was now in a position where she could lose her home.

Fortunately, funding from the BWGC enabled St. Ambrose to step in and provide direct financial relief. St. Ambrose covered the gap, enabling Gloria to make her full mortgage payment and, more important, to save the home she had owned for 13 years.

Walking Tour

A small group of Steering Committee members toured downtown Baltimore on a walking tour led by Johns Hopkins of Baltimore Heritage. There were many eyes peering down on them from lions, grotesques, fairies, and gargoyles. The group discovered many hidden landmarks and enjoyed the unique stories of our local history.



Prospective Member Event

On September 9th, the Membership Committee hosted our first virtual prospective member event, and it was a huge success! Our speakers were Karen Adkins and Yvonne Terry from Baltimore Outreach Services (BOS). BOS provides services and programs to homeless women and their children and has a long history with the Circle. Its services include emergency housing, educational programs, job training, and health services. BOS showed a wonderful video to highlight its great work. We had 12 guests attend our Zoom event. After the presentations from our speakers, we had a Q&A period and members shared their experiences in the Circle. Special thanks to: Anne Donahue, Marsha Ramsay, Beth Lebow, Pam Pasqualini, Suzanne Dagurt, and Susie Reichmister for their work on this event. Thanks to the wonderful Jeff Davis for his tech help on Zoom. At the Full Circle on 9/23, we collected “donations” to BOS by directing members to its website. For those who are interested, donations can be made directly at www.baltimoreoutreach.org.

FULL CIRCLE MEETING

September 23, 2020

Breaking the Cycle of Generational Poverty: Affordable Housing Approaches

Moderator:

Lawrence Lanahan, author of the book “The Lines Between Us” and former WYPR commentator.

Panelists:

- Adriana Foster, Leadership Organizer for the United Workers
- Adria Crutchfield, Executive Director, Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership (BRHP)
- Matt Hill, Public Justice Center attorney

Lawrence Lanahan introduced the panel and recounted the long history of racially segregated housing in Baltimore. The panelists discussed the ways their organizations are working to alleviate this problem. Lanahan joined us again on October 15th for a discussion of his book with “Circle Reads”.

Adriana Foster spoke about efforts to create Community Land Trusts that provide development without displacement, allowing homeowners to build equity but also facilitating the creation of affordable housing in distressed communities.

Adria Crutchfield discussed the BRHP efforts to subsidize rents for low-income families who want to relocate to less segregated communities in Baltimore City and County. BHRP’s efforts arose out of the decision in *Thompson v HUD*, which found that HUD had violated the Fair Housing Act of 1968 by unfairly concentrating African-American public housing in the most impoverished and segregated areas of Baltimore.

Matt Hill described the current eviction crisis due to the pandemic and the urgent need to provide rent relief for those who need it.

United Workers: www.unitedworkers.org | Baltimore Regional Housing Partnership: www.bhrp.org | Public Justice Center: www.publicjustice.org



Lawrence Lanahan