

OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE-BALTIMORE

# AUDACIOUS THINKING

AN OCCASIONAL  
NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2011

**A GOOD IDEA**

**CAN GROW**

**AND GROW**

**AND GROW**

**AND CHANGE LIVES.**

THE BALTIMORE URBAN DEBATE LEAGUE was developed to help young people find their voices. With teams in over 50 schools now, more students have better attendance records and higher math and reading test scores.

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## DIANA MORRIS HEADS TO NEW YORK... BUT STILL REMAINS AS DIRECTOR OF OSI-BALTIMORE

As of May 1st, **Diana Morris** has been serving as acting executive director for U.S. Programs at Open Society Foundations following Ann Beeson, who has left Open Society to pursue new opportunities working with the arts, culture and social change in her home state of Texas.

During the search for the new director of U.S. Programs, Morris will continue to retain her position as director in Baltimore, splitting her time between Baltimore and New York. While Morris is in New York, Monique Dixon, director of the Juvenile and Criminal Justice program at OSI-Baltimore, will serve as deputy director of programs in Baltimore.

For the last few years, U.S. Programs has been looking to expand its work to the city and state level because

so many issues – including juvenile and criminal justice, access to addiction treatment, and education – can best be addressed at the state and local levels.

As an experienced grantmaking executive who has worked with the Open Society Foundations for 14 years, Morris will bring lessons learned from Baltimore and fulfill the important role of the Baltimore office as a social justice laboratory. As always, OSI-Baltimore will be able to tap into its New York colleagues' expertise as it moves ahead with its place-based work.

"The appointment of Diana Morris demonstrates the Open Society Foundation's high regard for the accomplishments and ongoing work of OSI-Baltimore," said Bill C. Clarke III, Chair of the OSI-Baltimore Advisory Board.



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

White privilege is difficult to talk about. It's possibly even more difficult to acknowledge and address than racial discrimination. What is white privilege anyway? Why does talking about it make many people in the white mainstream community uncomfortable?

**The image I have of white privilege is a simple one:** I see a track with a white man and a black man, each at his own starting block. But, the white man's starting block is 10 meters in front, and the track that lays ahead of him includes many fewer hurdles than that of the black man.

I think of white privilege as another kind of racial inequity. It's the affirmative advantages that accrue to me as a white person because of access my family has had for generations to resources, power and opportunity.

Let me provide an example. I have a friend who is a lawyer like me. Her mother recently had an operation and she planned to drive to North Carolina and visit her mother over the weekend. But two days before her trip, my friend's wallet was stolen from her gym

locker. So, she bought a last-minute airline ticket, which cost a small fortune, to fly to her mother's home.

Why did she decide to fly? Because her license was in her stolen wallet and my friend – an African-American woman – felt that she could not take the risk of driving through Virginia without a license. Even with a passport for identification.

I, on the other hand, would not have hesitated to drive to see my mother without my license. First, I never would have expected to be stopped by a police officer; and, if I had been stopped, I would have simply explained my situation. White privilege. It wouldn't even have occurred to me to feel at risk or that I would be a likely target.

And that is one big point: **white privilege allows the white mainstream population to deny the very existence of inequity.** It is, in fact, often outside of the experience of white people. It takes effort to hear the experiences, the fears and the hard feelings that build up among African-Americans and other people of color who do not enjoy such privilege. And, it takes even more effort to see it on your own and to recognize the special status that history and current policies and practices give to you. Fundamentally, acknowledging white privilege requires us to question whether meritocracy is, in fact, a cherished American value.

Decent jobs that come with health insurance and good retirement benefits, the GI Bill, mortgages and homeownership, access to credit, access to housing in neighborhoods with good schools, social security – all of these programs and policies have contributed to the wealth and power of white Americans but were largely not available to people of color. Those benefits undergird privilege – the advantage on the race track – that white Americans experience.

**White privilege. It's complicated. It's uncomfortable. But, it exists. And, if we are going to talk about race, we need to recognize and talk about it.**

DIANA MORRIS, Director of OSI-Baltimore



This commentary originally aired on WYPR. To listen to this commentary and others by Diana Morris, visit [www.osi-baltimore.org](http://www.osi-baltimore.org).

# BUILDING A FIELD:

## TREATMENT ADVOCATES POISED & READY

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*As health care reform becomes reality, drug addiction treatment will be an assured benefit if a new network in Maryland has its say*

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When the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 became law, a collective cheer erupted at various agencies, medical offices and nonprofits throughout Maryland.

They celebrated the idea that the new health care reform law was designed to transform Maryland's health care delivery system – introducing an integrated, comprehensive approach to addiction treatment.

But many also were cheering the powerful clout of a strong network of treatment advocates determined to ensure that Maryland transforms its system, a network that OSI-Baltimore has helped to create and strengthen for more than a decade.

“The enactment of the Affordable Care Act was an important development,” says Chris Shea, program officer for OSI-Baltimore’s Tackling Drug Addiction Program. “But advocates have a vital role to play if health care reform is to be implement in a way that truly provides easy access to treatment.”

“We’re in a position now to have a real impact on the decisions related to implementation of health care reform,” says Ann Ciekot, a longtime advocacy consultant for the Maryland chapter of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD).

But it wasn’t so long ago that those in Maryland who care about substance abuse treatment would have been unable to make such a bold and hopeful statement.

Many in the field remember when there was no cohesive group of advocates banded together with the unified mission of making sure addiction was recognized as a chronic disease, that patients had access to high quality treatment and services, that providers were able to deliver services efficiently, and that adequate resources were made available to fund such goals.

“It used to be a much more siloed world,” says Rebecca Ruggles, director of special projects for Baltimore Medical System. “There was a time when, if you asked a group of primary care providers in Baltimore

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city, 'What are the barriers around your core business, your primary mission?' you would not have had the level of intelligence and insight that we have today, as it pertains to substance abuse treatment."

Ciekot remembers a time in the early 1990s, when then Governor William Donald Schaefer made significant cuts to health programs, including addiction treatment.

"There was very little resistance to the cuts to addiction treatment," Ciekot says. "There was no organized effort to fight them. There were groups and individuals who cared, but no organized effort."

Soon after those budget cuts, groups and individuals – specifically certain religious organizations and a few service providers, Ciekot says – began working to ensure such a slash to treatment never happened again. OSI-Baltimore and the Maryland Chapter of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence weighed in heavily to help the small group of supporters educate policymakers on the effectiveness of treatment, and its benefits.

In 2000, two years after arriving in the city, OSI-Baltimore funded an unprecedented position at the local NCADD chapter: advocacy director.

"That was the first time there was philanthropic support directly for organizing addiction treatment support," says Ciekot, who filled that position for two years. "When OSI-Baltimore came to town, everybody knew that this was going to be a great opportunity to take advocacy for addiction treatment to the next level. And most certainly, OSI-Baltimore's presence gave a great deal of attention to the issue. Other foundations had been supportive. But the 'Big Bang' came when OSI-Baltimore came to town."

Shortly thereafter – with a focused campaign around treatment, as well as a better economy – the tide began to turn in the advocates' favor. Policymakers began to get the message that many of the city's issues could be addressed with improved investment in treatment. And, in the early 2000s, Governor Parris Glendening agreed to increase the city's drug addiction treatment budget by \$25 million per year.

The funding was a huge win. But advocates and OSI-Baltimore did not rest on their laurels.

OSI-Baltimore continued systematically funding groups and programs to increase awareness around treatment and make certain good treatment is accessible. For example, Ruggles worked with

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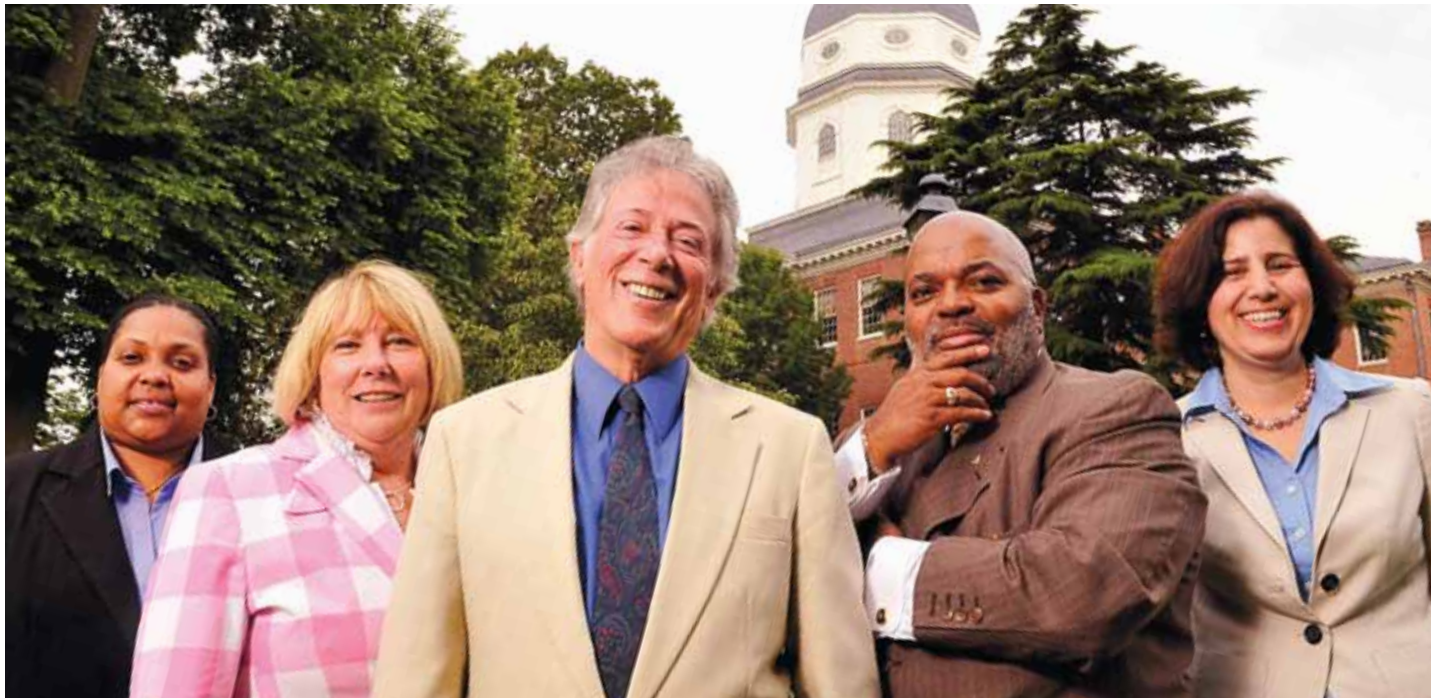
**"We're in a position now to have a real impact on the decisions related to implementation of health care reform," - CIEKOT**

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the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers. This organization oversees the network of federally funded health clinics in the city, where people without health insurance often go for health care. It was discovered that only a handful of these clinics were providing addiction counseling. An OSI-Baltimore grant to these clinics expanded addiction treatment and is making progress integrating drug treatment with primary care.

"Our focus is to make sure that people have access to high-quality treatment," says Diana Morris, OSI-Baltimore's director. "To reach this

# TREATMENT ADVOCATES POISED & READY



(LEFT TO RIGHT) TERRIE ALEXANDER, Addictions Counselor; Institutes for Behavior Resources DR. KATHLEEN O'BRIEN, Executive Director; Walden Behavioral Health JOHN WINSLOW, Program Director 2nd Vice-president; Maryland Addictions Directors Council and Dorchester County Addictions Program Director KEVIN G. AMADO, SR., Program Director; Carroll County Health Department, Bureau of Addiction Treatment Services LYNN H. ALBIZO, ESQ., Director of Public Affairs; Maryland Addictions Directors Council

**“Those of us in the treatment field have to do a lot better to build up the grassroots advocacy. We need to do a better job organizing and solidifying the advocacy base with people in recovery.” - HARDY**

goal, we have underwritten educational materials to disseminate research that clearly shows the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of treatment; we have introduced new modalities of treatment to ensure that there is a continuum of options to meet the treatment needs of each individual; and, most importantly, we have supported and conducted advocacy to build the public support and political

will to ensure that treatment is adequately funded and easily accessible. Luckily, as a field office of a national foundation, we have been able to combine local and national efforts to build strong advocates for addiction treatment.”

With OSI-Baltimore's strategic help over the years, Baltimore City Directorate, Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, Maryland Addictions Directors Council, Baltimore HealthCare Access as well as universities, law schools and others all have strengthened their advocacy components.

And by most accounts, those advocates have been successful.

This year, for example, after a nearly 10-year-long fight, the Maryland General Assembly voted to increase the alcohol tax by 50 percent.

“Advocates played a huge role in that,” says Carlos Hardy, director of public affairs for Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, Inc., an

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organization that administers federal, state and local grant funds for substance abuse treatment and prevention services in the city. "And it wasn't one single group. It was a coalition among mental health, substance abuse and the developmentally disabled community."

The vote showed the strength of addiction treatment and other advocates – but in the end, the legislature decided that these tax dollars would not go towards addiction treatment. At least, not at this time.

**"What we have done over the last 10 to 20 years is build an environment that is open and accepting of addiction treatment as a public health issue,"** Ciekot says. "And we have a broad group of advocates who understand the importance of participating in those public policy discussions, and who are willing to devote the time to do it. They understand how important it is."

But all involved say much more still needs to be done – especially now that health care reform is gearing up for implementation.

Concerns still exist that many necessary treatment services might not be covered, which is why advocates need to be proactive, making certain that these services are covered. Many advocates feel they can influence better integration of behavioral health and primary care services by helping the state shape its Patient Centered Medical Home model.

"Locally, there needs to be an effort to make sure that parity legislation is enacted," says OSI-Baltimore's Morris, referring to a federal law that requires insurance companies to ensure that any benefits for mental health and substance abuse are covered as other medical and surgical benefits. "Making sure health care plans include a meaningful treatment benefit at this point is critical if we are to make treatment available to anyone who needs it."

But this will require an even stronger, and more wide-reaching field of advocates.

"Those of us in the treatment field have to do a lot better to build up the grassroots advocacy," Hardy says. "We need to do a better job organizing and solidifying the advocacy base with people in recovery and the family members who are affected. That's how you're able to influence legislators. Right now, most of the advocates are providers."

Morris points to the circumstances around the passing of the alcohol tax increase as an example of where the field still needs to improve.

**"The tax passed after a decade of work of the addiction community, but not one cent was earmarked for addiction treatment,"** she says. "That shows that we still have a long way to go to build a consumer movement and make sure that the public

speaks out. We know from polling that people are very supportive of treatment. But that's still different from people speaking out and asking policymakers to make sure public money is being used to help people get the treatment they need in the community. We cannot continue to be passive and allow huge amounts of our public monies to be used to incarcerate people who have an underlying, untreated addiction problem."

"We're interested in building social movements," Morris says. "We know it's critical not only for the health of individuals and families but also for the health and economic prosperity of the region."



## WHY WE FUND IT

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"OSI-Baltimore has worked over the years to build a network of advocates dedicated to expanding community-based treatment. Maryland advocates have had many successes, but there is still much more to do to ensure that the benefits of addiction treatment are accessible to all Marylanders."

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**CHRIS SHEA**, Program Officer  
of the Tackling Drug Addiction Program

**A CONVERSATION WITH AN  
OSI-BALTIMORE BOARD MEMBER:**

A portrait of Susan Leviton, a woman with short brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a purple jacket over a white top and a colorful beaded necklace. The background is a solid blue color.

**SUSAN  
LEVITON**

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From her home in Otterbein in South Baltimore, Susan Leviton loves to watch the city come alive with folks going to work, young families walking their children to school and convention-goers. But over the years, she's also become keenly aware of how different her neighborhood is from many others in Baltimore, the city she loves.

"You begin to realize how disparate our world is," she says.

It's what makes the University of Maryland Law School professor and founder of the statewide child advocacy group Advocates for Children and Youth want to create opportunity for Baltimore's most underserved populations. And it's what fuels her service as an OSI-Baltimore board member.

Leviton has a long history in law and advocacy. She has specialized in representing children in juvenile court and special education proceedings. And, last year, she was honored with the Margaret Brent-Juanita Jackson Mitchell Award by the Bar Association of Baltimore City. Margaret Brent was a feminist and lawyer from Maryland's colonial era. Juanita Jackson Mitchell was the first black woman both to attend the University of Maryland Law School and to practice law in Maryland.

Leviton embodies this legacy, bringing passion and a pioneering spirit to her role as an OSI-Baltimore board member.

### **IT'S CLEAR YOU HAVE A REAL LOVE FOR BALTIMORE. WHAT ATTRACTS YOU TO THIS CITY?**

I think that in cities, you really get a blend of all kinds of people and that makes them interesting and exciting places in which to live. There is always something new and exciting going on. I walk around the harbor most mornings. It's great to see the city come to life – folks taking water taxis to work, mothers walking their children to school, high school kids coming from all over the city to go to high school.

Cities are where most immigrants start their American experience. My grandmother came to Baltimore at age three, lived in east Baltimore and, as a young woman, worked in a sewing factory near where I now live. The neighborhood is now thriving, close to my work, friends and restaurants, and it was a wonderful place to raise my son and daughter. It's fun now to watch the young families who have moved to my street raise their children. I think cities just keep re-inventing themselves and provide opportunities to get to know all kinds of people.

### **HOW HAS CITY LIFE HELPED TO SHAPE YOUR ROLE AS AN ADVOCATE FOR THE UNDERSERVED?**

As a professor at a law school, I have my law students teach at a charter school in east Baltimore. Some of the neighborhoods where the high school children live are really tough and, seeing this, you realize how the high school students' moms must worry about how their kids will be able to get home safely. It makes you realize the tremendous disparities in the resources and opportunities that children growing up in our cities have. And you begin to realize that every single one of their mothers wants to ensure that their kids have a

# A CONVERSATION WITH SUSAN LEVITON

*You really get a blend of all kinds of people and that makes Baltimore an interesting and exciting place in which to live.*

great school, a safe neighborhood and opportunities for sports and enriching after-school activities. So it gives you a real perspective on the need to create opportunities for all kids.

## **HOW DID YOU GET CONNECTED TO OSI?**

In 1986 I started an organization called Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY), which is a statewide child advocacy group. At ACY, our primary concern is to ensure that the services we could provide to our children – a good home, food, health care and a safe school and neighborhood to live and play – is available to all children. OSI-Baltimore's agenda was similar and so it became one of our big supporters. It was through this connection that I knew and admired the work of OSI-Baltimore.

## **AS CHAIR OF OSI-BALTIMORE'S GRANTS COMMITTEE, HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT GRANTS TO MAKE?**

The program officers bring us the very best programs and ideas to consider. What we try to do with our grants is to look at a problem and then think of a multi-pronged strategy to deal with that problem and then fund different groups that can work with us to bring about change. It's not about funding one treatment program; it's about funding the advocacy groups or the grassroots groups who can work with us to ensure that the greatest number of people in Baltimore can receive the services that they need. You can take \$300,000 and fund a treatment program or you can take that same

money and fund a drug policy and advocacy group that is working with the government and agencies to ensure that, when regulations are written, they will enable more people with addiction to access services. OSI-Baltimore would do the latter.

I think it's a smart approach because all foundations, even the wealthiest, have limited funds. So the way I think you can have the greatest impact with your money is to fund organizations that can create change for the greatest number of people.

## **YOU'VE SEEN SO MANY GRANTS FROM THEIR INCEPTION THROUGH THEIR FRUITION. DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE?**

That's a hard one. I love the work we did in helping to start the Baltimore Urban Debate League. From my work with a charter school, I was able to see firsthand the effect that good after-school programs like BUDL can make. Some of the students who cared the least about school became passionate debaters and now are leaders of their college debate teams. They learned that they had a voice and could make a difference.

I am also excited about a new small grant we gave to train middle school kids about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. So many LGBT kids suffer from depression because of the way they are treated by their classmates. Teaching all students to respect each other's differences is a lesson that will help them, as well as the broader community.

# AUDACIOUS INDIVIDUALS



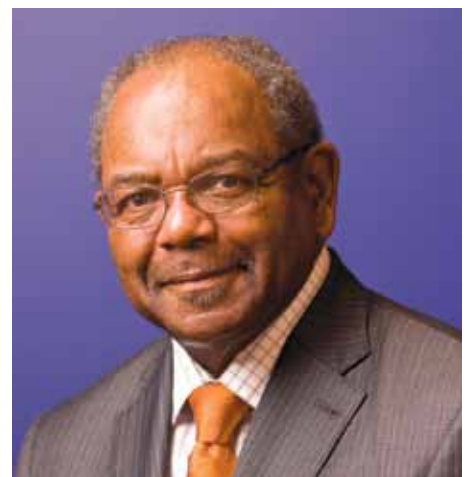
## OSI Salutes GALEN SAMPSON, 2006 Community Fellow

Galen Sampson is the recipient of an honorary doctorate from Baltimore International College. Sampson's fellowship helped fuel what is now The Dogwood Restaurant, an award-winning local eatery that provides paid employment and training to individuals transitioning from underemployment, addiction, incarceration, and/or homelessness. Approximately 20 apprentices have come through his apprenticeship program. Some have remained with the restaurant and serve as mentors; others are successfully working in the food service industry.



## Kudos to CLINTON BAMBERGER, Trustee Emeritus

Clinton Bamberger, OSI-Baltimore Trustee Emeritus, received an honorary doctor of laws degree from the University of Maryland School of Law, where he also holds the title of professor emeritus. Bamberger was the law school's director of the Clinical Program in the 1980s. Under his leadership the program became – and remains today – among the nation's top-ranked clinical law programs. Bamberger has served as an attorney in public and private practice, a law school dean, a public administrator, and the first director of the federal program to provide legal assistance for the poor. He has also worked internationally to introduce clinical instruction into law schools in other countries.



## Congratulations to EDDIE BROWN, OSI Board Member

Morgan State University honored Eddie Brown with an honorary degree in May, which occurred just as his new autobiography, *Beating the Odds: Eddie Brown's Investing and Life Strategies*, was published. His inspirational book tells the story of his childhood in the rural and segregated south and his climb to one of the country's top stock pickers and money managers, whose Baltimore-based financial firm has amassed more than \$6 billion.



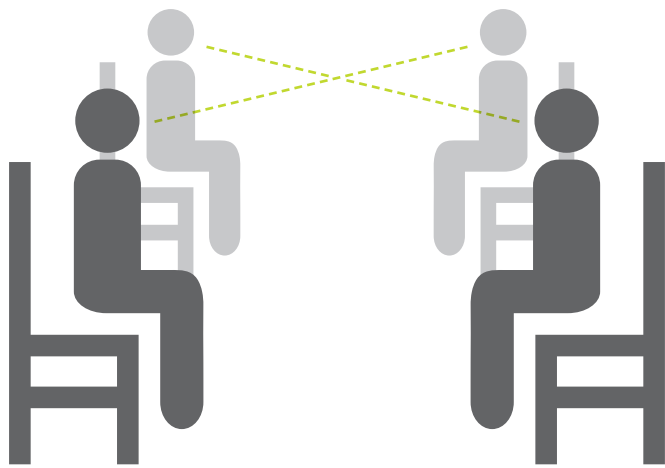
**MORE THAN JUST**

# **CLASSROOM SPARRING:**

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**BALTIMORE URBAN DEBATE LEAGUE  
GIVES YOUTH THE POWER OF VOICE**

Jarrell Anderson with students from The Green School of Baltimore's debate team.



*When OSI-Baltimore decided to start an urban debate league in the city, leaders there had no way of knowing that there was such a person as Jarrell Anderson. But they had an audacious idea that would eventually change Jarrell's life — as well as the lives of hundreds of other young people in Baltimore.*

In classrooms across Baltimore city, young people are squaring off, arguing the pros and cons of a topic they have been researching all year. There are thousands of them, boys and girls, in high schools, middle schools and even elementary schools. They are gregarious and shy, in ties and in T-shirts. They have different hopes and dreams, but one thing in common: the Baltimore Urban Debate League (BUDL) is helping them all get where they want to go.

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Jarrell Anderson can attest to that personally.

He came from a home where both parents were drug abusers, and his life was so much in upheaval that school was barely an after-thought. In the 10th grade, he joined BUDL just so he would have something to do in the afternoons instead of going home.

BUDL changed – and saved – his life.

Jarrell improved his grades, graduated in the top 10 percent of his class at Walbrook High School, and now – after graduating from Georgia State University – is back in Baltimore, bringing his skills full-circle as the BUDL's elementary/middle school program coordinator.

"You can learn a lot from debate, about the world, how to view things, how to analyze arguments, how to research and how to write properly," says Jarrell, whose debate team at Walbrook won several championships. "But even more importantly, you learn a lot about yourself. It changes you."

And new independent research about BUDL proves Jarrell's point. **The research shows that students who participated in the debate program had better attendance and scored higher on math and reading tests than those in the general student population.** Earlier studies have shown that urban debaters are less likely to engage in high-risk behaviors and more likely to go on to college.

These results are what OSI-Baltimore was after in 1999 when it made the decision to bring debate back into the urban classroom by incubating a debate league in its own offices.

"It was never just about the activity of debate, it was always much bigger than that," says Pamela Block, who was chosen by OSI-Baltimore to be the BUDL executive director in 1999. "It was always about improving the quality of education within Baltimore city schools,

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“I loved the fact that you could get up and talk and at that moment you were the only one that mattered; everything that you had to say was listened to,” he says. “As a young adult, all I ever wanted was just my personal space and a voice for myself.” - ANDERSON

Debate provided that space for Jarrell and for the thousands of other Baltimore City youth who have participated in the program since its inception twelve years ago.

To read more of Jarrell's story, visit [www.osi-baltimore.org](http://www.osi-baltimore.org).



changing the way educators within those schools thought about their approach to teaching and about the potential of the students within their own classrooms. It was about really helping a young person by giving them the tools and the gift of their own voice – helping them realize they have the ability to change the things in their own lives.”

As BUDL has done that for more than a decade, OSI-Baltimore has been solidly in the program's corner, supporting and helping it to grow. BUDL is representative of the very best in OSI-Baltimore's grantmaking philosophy. **It is a shining example of what happens when OSI-Baltimore takes an excellent idea, nurtures it over time, and helps it evolve into something bigger, stronger and transformational.**

“This wasn't by accident,” says Diana Morris, OSI-Baltimore's director, about the great work BUDL has accomplished in just a little over a decade. “When we talk about building a field, we really take that quite seriously. We are strategic about it and have big ambitions for what our grantees working together can accomplish. This is an illustration of what happens when we make a long-term investment in an organization and reinforce it with local and national resources.”

Modeled after debate programs the Open Society Foundations launched internationally and in New York, BUDL started out 12 years ago in eight of the toughest high schools in Baltimore's school system. Today it is the largest academic afterschool program in the city, with programs in 35 high schools, 25 middle schools and even some elementary schools. More than 1,000 students are participating this year alone, bringing the total number of students touched by debate to more than 8,000.

“What's interesting is that there was a lot of doubt initially as to whether Baltimore city kids would even be interested in this,” Block says, especially considering that BUDL specializes in policy debate – which is the most rigorous, research-heavy form of debate.

“This is not about who sounds the best,” Block says. “It's less about public speaking and eloquence and much more about researching and supporting your arguments.”

As a result, debaters learn critical thinking skills and significantly increase their reading, research and vocabulary-building skills. They spend hours upon hours poring over books, periodicals, reports and studies. They are taught how to



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**“It was one of our first grants. We nurtured it, babied it, developed it. - KING**

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dissect arguments, speak with conviction and listen with the intent to learn.

“All sorts of worlds open up to them because they understand how to dissect complicated policy issues, why news reports are important and how information can be manipulated,” says Morris.

Little doubt exists today, however, about city students’ interest or abilities.

BUDL debaters take their considerable skills in research and argument to monthly citywide tournaments and participate in competitions throughout the region and around the country. BUDL debaters have brought home numerous top honors from national and international matches.

The League has been featured in US News and World Report, The Washington Post, and on CBS’ 60 Minutes. In the 60 Minutes segment,

correspondent Leslie Stahl said the captain of the top suburban team in the area called BUDL debaters “by far, our toughest competition.”

In 2006, BUDL was recognized by the White House as one of the nation’s premier youth development organizations. And in 2008, two BUDL alumni – students at Towson University – became the first African-American debaters to win the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) national college debate championship.

Over time, BUDL has added summer camps and has given students opportunities to participate in debate institutes on college campuses around the country and abroad. And it has rounded out its programming with a College Access Program, helping students with year-round college counseling, entrance test preparation, assistance with college essay writing and scholarships and financial aid applications.

And as it has become infused in schools and curriculum across the city – including during the school day in social studies and language arts classroom lesson plans – debate has also improved the way many teachers teach.



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"We always realized that introducing debate had the potential to be a school reform initiative," Morris says. "It changed the way teachers interacted with their students. We had teachers say to us, 'I was just about to leave teaching because I was so frustrated and overwhelmed by classroom management issues. I didn't think I was making a difference. By introducing debate into my classroom, I became the teacher I always wanted to be. The kids were up on their feet, animated, and initiating their own learning. Now, these students are a great resource.'"

BUDL's successes are a testament to OSI-Baltimore's visionary thinking.

"It was one of our first grants," says Pamela King, OSI-Baltimore's director of Community Fellowships and Initiatives. "We nurtured it, babied it, developed it."

King says she and Morris always knew what BUDL could be, and stuck with it through growing pains and organizational adjustments. Initially, Block worked out of OSI-Baltimore's offices. But eventually, OSI-Baltimore determined the program would work more efficiently as its own non-profit. King also worked hard, from the start, to develop a close relationship between BUDL and Baltimore City Schools, taking care to integrate the program into the district's curricular and after-school programming.

"At first, we were very hands-on. We were the funder, the technical advisor, the friend of BUDL," King says. "Then, when we figured out the right model for the program – when we got it where we wanted it to be – then we began to let go. But we remain connected to the program so Pam [Block] always feels like she can come back to us and talk to us and get support or help."

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# BUDL TODAY

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The partnership is a two-way street. Recently, OSI-Baltimore tapped BUDL to help with a major attendance campaign. A group of debaters, the "A-Game," are helping OSI understand why many young people don't believe school attendance is important and figure out how to encourage city students to come to school every day.

BUDL students participating in the campaign "are essentially ambassadors about attendance," says Jane Sundius, director of OSI-Baltimore's Education and Youth Development program. They have interviewed students, have held focus groups and have worked to develop incentives that would attract their peers toward daily attendance.

"The BUDL kids really seemed to be perfect for this," Sundius says. "We knew we had to have kids who were trained to advocate and who felt comfortable being on the 'wrong' side of an issue. It's really been a great experience for them, and for us."

U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan was so impressed with the "A-Game" that he invited BUDL participants to take part in a national Youth Summit this past February in Washington, D.C.

Block agrees that urban debaters have the right mix of skills to be attendance ambassadors in schools or on Capitol Hill. In fact, they have the skills to be and do anything they want.

"Debate makes them responsible for their own learning and puts them in a position to be listened to in a way that they never have been before. So it really is about discovering voice," she says. "A lot of times, when people meet our debaters, they can't believe their confidence and poise and how articulate they are. The students come in saying, 'I know who I am. I'm not afraid to talk to you even though I've never met anyone like you before.' I think that is what makes debate different from a lot of other afterschool activities. It's a magical combination of celebrating a young person for his intellect and giving a young person the gift of discovering his own voice."

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# SHERRILYN IFILL

## APPOINTED CHAIR OF U.S. PROGRAMS BOARD FOR OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS



In April, Aryeh Neier, president of the Open Society Foundations, announced the appointment of Sherrilyn Ifill as the new board chair for U.S. Programs for Open Society Foundations. Ifill has served on the national board for the last three years.

Ifill, an OSI-Baltimore Advisory Board member since 2002, brings to her new role valuable expertise in the areas of race, civil rights, criminal justice and the judicial process. She will continue to build on Baltimore's unique role and perspective as she oversees U.S. Programs' goals.

"The point behind opening the Baltimore office was always to help solve real problems in Baltimore and Maryland and to create a resource for the U.S. Programs in terms of thinking and strategy," says Ifill. "OSI-Baltimore has showcased a particular model of place-based philanthropy. U.S. Programs has drawn ideas and lessons learned from that model. And that will continue to be true."

"I'm looking at Sherrilyn's appointment as a confirmation of the talent here in Baltimore," says Bill C. Clarke III, chair of the OSI-Baltimore Advisory Board, noting that Diana Morris, OSI-Baltimore's director, also has been tapped by OSI's founder George Soros to serve as acting executive director for U.S. Programs. "I believe Mr. Soros has seen Sherrilyn's exceptional talent. Indeed, in her work here in Baltimore as a law professor, as a community leader and as a member of the OSI-Baltimore's board, she has demonstrated real dedication and quite a set of leadership qualities. So as much as we're hesitant

to share these talented women, we realize that both are truly leaders in sparking systemic change in urban issues. And we think that our work locally and nationally will be much better off for it."

Ifill will now take on the role of leading the board forward in its mission to support grantmaking, programming, and policy initiatives that advance systemic change and support the values of an open society. Until now, the board played an advisory role to Open Society's founder George Soros.



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Its new charge is to become more of a governing board.

“Of course, with Mr. Soros and Open Society Foundations, things are never traditional,” Ifill says. “We value our edge, our innovation, and our willingness to think outside the box. But this also means being very careful about our development and strategy efforts, so that we are creating a structure that can be even more nimble and can be more effectively responsive to developments in the United States that threaten open societies.”

To do that, Ifill and the board will develop a vision and a set of goals for U.S. Programs in the coming months.

“The board is comprised of an amazing group of individuals,” said Ifill, “very talented people with long and extremely distinguished track records in this country. I think the goal right now is for us to collaboratively develop a vision that is reflective of Mr. Soros and the organization he created, but that speaks to the 21st century moment that we’re in right now.”

Ifill says that one thread likely to influence goal-setting for the new board under her leadership is the nation’s lingering economic woes.

“We will be thinking very hard about the particular pressures on democratic engagement, public participation and critical thinking,”

she says, “and how we can be supportive given the realities that we face, created by the financial crisis and the tremendous economic pressures on state government. Threats to the safety net have created a bleak picture for many Americans.”

Delving into inequalities is one of Ifill’s major passions.

Her book, *On the Courthouse Lawn:*

*Confronting the Legacy of Lynching in the 21st Century*, published in 2007, exposed how racial violence remains part of America’s social fabric. The critically-acclaimed book was a finalist for the 2008 Hurston/Wright book award for non-fiction.

And before joining the University of Maryland School of Law as a professor in 1993, Ifill was assistant counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund in New York, where she litigated voting rights cases. During her tenure at Maryland’s law school, Professor Ifill has continued to litigate and consult on cases on behalf of low-income and minority communities.

While serving on both the U.S. Programs board and OSI-Baltimore’s Advisory Board, Ifill maintained a full-time schedule at the University of Maryland. But now, as chair, she will cut back to teaching half-time.

“Sherrilyn is one of the most dynamic law professors and critical thinkers on the legal scene today. She put the ‘D’ in dynamic,” says OSI-Baltimore Advisory Board member André M. Davis, who is a judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. “We have nurtured her and she is spreading her wings, and it’s just so wonderful for her and for us.”



## PROFILE OF AN OSI-BALTIMORE INVESTOR: **BETSY KRIEGER**

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**BETSY KRIEGER** was born and raised in Baltimore and is now deeply involved in efforts to support grassroots groups and vulnerable children and youth. She graduated with a degree in English from the University of Massachusetts-Boston and earned a master's degree in social work from the University of Maryland, Baltimore with a concentration in social strategy. She worked for several years as a community organizer in Malden, MA, and in the Waverly neighborhood of Baltimore, where she helped create and lead the Waverly Family Center. For more than a decade, she has served as a trustee of the Zanvyl and Isabelle Krieger Fund, named for her parents. More recently she has served as the president of the Fund for Change, which she helped create.

## **HOW HAS BALTIMORE CHANGED IN RECENT YEARS?**

For people with resources, Baltimore has become a much more interesting city. In the last 30 years or so, there's much more of an arts scene. There are more interesting restaurants and places to go. It's a much more cosmopolitan city. But for people without resources, I don't think it's changed at all.

## **WHAT'S THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING BALTIMORE TODAY?**

There are so many, but we (at the Krieger Foundation) have gotten really interested in what it would take to reverse the negative effects of childhood trauma. So many adults in our community have grown up with poverty and violence. They are traumatized by their early experiences and now they are raising traumatized children. We're very interested in providing support to parents so they can give their children a good start. We're trying to learn as much as we can about the subject. We've invited national experts to present their research to a group of about 150 practitioners, administrators, and policymakers. We've learned of various programs that have been favorably evaluated, and we've replicated several. The problem, as usual, is money. If you're going to impact people at a deep level, it's very expensive. As a society, we're not willing to put resources into prevention. If we did, we'd save a lot of money – and lives.

## **ADDICTION IS AN ISSUE THAT YOU HAVE WORKED ON. DO YOU SEE PROGRESS IN DEALING WITH ADDICTION?**

I think there's been a lot of progress. In Baltimore, we have added buprenorphine treatment, which allows people to be treated for heroin addiction in physicians' offices, so they can maintain a job and live a normal life. We are also now focusing on a recovery-oriented system of care. We recognize that addiction is a lifelong issue and that people need support throughout their recovery. There's a lot more understanding nationally and internationally about what addiction is and what it isn't. It needs to be treated as a public health issue. It needs to be decriminalized. Obviously, there's a genetic component as well, but research has shown that early emotional deprivation is strongly associated with addiction. Until we provide support to families, we're going to have lots of addicts. It doesn't make sense to keep putting people who are addicted to drugs in jail. The War on Drugs hasn't succeeded either: we spend billions, and the dealers continue to get new clients. Europe is far ahead of us in dealing with addiction.

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## **YOU GAVE OSI-BALTIMORE A VERY AUDACIOUS GIFT AT THE OUTSET OF ITS CAMPAIGN, FOR WHICH WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL. WHAT WAS IT ABOUT OUR WORK THAT IMPRESSED YOU?**

Several of the issues that OSI-Baltimore is dealing with mesh with our work – particularly substance abuse and prison reform. OSI-Baltimore looks at changing the system, and that fits exactly with our philosophy. When OSI began work in Baltimore, it made such a difference in the foundation community. It took on issues that were new to the community, and it had the resources to make a difference. OSI-Baltimore's program officers bring significant expertise to the issues.

## **WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY ABOUT PHILANTHROPY?**

I believe that foundations should be system changers. Foundations should change the system when it's not working. In my opinion, the role of a foundation is not to provide food, but to make sure government policy insures that everyone has enough to eat. The government has a role and foundations have a role. I think we should be the risk-takers – then government can take over the successful innovations. It's always upsetting to me when I hear people say that foundations can take the place of government. Our resources are minuscule; even the largest foundations can't compete with government resources. And most foundations don't fund projects for the underserved. It's far-fetched to think foundations could take the place of government.

## **AS A PHILANTHROPIST, WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE CHALLENGES FACING THE PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY IN BALTIMORE?**

A lot of foundations in Baltimore work very well together. There is a core group of foundations that go to the same meetings and fund collaboratively. They're just aren't enough of us. Baltimore has a small foundation community. I am envious of other cities that have so many more.

## IN MEMORIAM

# HERBERT JOHNSON

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**“I heard one time that when an old person dies, it’s like a museum burning down. I’m really trying to capture that history before it’s gone. And maybe the young people might hear the stories and, after a while, maybe they might pass them on.” - JOHNSON**

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At the age of 75, Herbert Johnson, a 2009 Community Fellow, died on March 28.

During his time as a Fellow, Johnson brought back the art of storytelling, and while doing so, validated and honored the lives of seniors.

Johnson’s Fellowship, “No Easy Ridin’ Here: Stories and Recipes of Survival,” focused on recording and sharing the stories of older adults – in particular their homespun lessons about life and down-home treatments for maladies. He began his project with fellow residents of Catholic Charities Senior Housing at Basilica Place, where he lived, and eventually collected more than 60 entertaining, informational, and inspiring stories.

Johnson, a retired social worker and business owner, spent three years in the Army, was twice married, had five children and moved to Baltimore in 1999 to be closer to one of his sons. Charming, witty and a master storyteller, Johnson said the idea for his project came when a grandson asked to hear stories about Johnson’s life when he was a boy.

A portrait of Herbert Johnson, an older man with glasses and a goatee, wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored sweater. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

“Way back when there was no TV and no radio, we would all get together and dance and tell stories and laugh,” Johnson said, at the beginning of his Fellowship. “Today, when I tell some of those stories to my grandchildren, they laugh and feel good. This is what I’m trying to do, collect stories that have some practical application and that make you feel good.”

“Just the act of collecting the rich stories did more good and had more practical application than Johnson ever imagined,” says Pamela King, OSI-Baltimore’s director of Community Fellowships and Initiatives.

“He told me that, once the residents (of Basilica Place) started telling their stories, it changed the power dynamic. All of a sudden the nurses realized, ‘These people have something to say. They have something of value to contribute. They’re not just old people here to wither away,’” King says.

And bringing seniors together also empowered them to use their voices to encourage change.

For example, when the sidewalk in front of Basilica Place was in need of repair, the residents joined together to convince management to make the necessary repairs, King says. Such an act of unity never happened before Johnson sparked something among the seniors.

“He reminded people in his age group that they still had a lot to say and contribute. They could still make a difference in the lives of young people who would enjoy and learn from the lessons of their elders,” she says. “That’s why I think his legacy will live on.”



## OSI-BALTIMORE WELCOMES

**Ruzana Hedges** as program associate for the Tackling Drug Addiction Initiative and the National Drug Addiction Treatment and Harm Reduction Program. Prior to joining OSI-Baltimore, Ruzana worked for the Center for Children, Families, and the Law at the University of Virginia and later joined the National CASA as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for Children in Charlottesville, Virginia. She recently received an M.S. in Development Management from American University.



GOURDINE



LAVEIST

## SAVE THE DATE

**Do White Americans Get Better Health Care than People of Color?**

Dr. Michelle Gourdine, physician and author of *Reclaiming Our Health: A Guide to African American Wellness*, and Dr. Thomas LaVeist, director of the Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Disparities Solutions, will discuss the inequities that exist in our current medical care system and offer solutions for change.

Thursday, September 15, 2011, at 7 PM  
Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch

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*Your financial gift to OSI-Baltimore helps create opportunities, justice, and economic stability for those in our city who need it most. We tackle Baltimore's most challenging issues.*

We welcome all gifts of every level. Every dollar given is matched by our founder, George Soros. Our donors share a common goal: to revitalize Baltimore. They realize that, by investing in OSI-Baltimore, they play a vital role in improving our city's future.



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# \* AUDACIOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS



## NEW BLOG LAUNCHING SOON

**SEPTEMBER 19, 2011** OSI-Baltimore launches a new edition of our blog, [www.audaciousideas.org](http://www.audaciousideas.org). Not only will you hear from individuals in our community who share their innovative ideas, but you'll see and hear a lot more new features – all about lasting change in our city. **SUBSCRIBE** now, so you are among the first to see at [www.audaciousideas.org](http://www.audaciousideas.org).



## SCAN THE CODE TO STAY CONNECTED

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**OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE-BALTIMORE** focuses on the root causes of three intertwined problems in our city and state: drug addiction, an over-reliance on incarceration, and obstacles that impede youth in succeeding inside and out of the classroom. We also support a growing corps of social entrepreneurs committed to underserved populations in Baltimore. Before we make a single grant, we analyze the root causes of a problem, consult research and examine current practices. Because we aim for lasting, sustainable solutions, we engage public and private partners from the start. It is only then, with a clear picture of the problem, that we begin to focus our approach and diligently craft a roadmap for change.