

AUDACIOUS THINKING

AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER
FROM OSI-BALTIMORE

FALL
2008

Ninety-four years after the Constitution the United States was signed, the 15th Amendment was ratified, stating that the right to vote shall not be denied on account of race or color. It took an additional 95 years before the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 was signed, outlawing discriminatory voting practices. And yet, still today, voting inequities persist. **So, we ask, how long does it take for a vision to become a reality?**

Although this year marks OSI-Baltimore's ten year anniversary, we recognize that our vision of lasting change cannot happen quickly. We believe that the vision of a city where all residents live lives of dignity and prosperity is one that must be realized. Our accomplishments have been catalytic and critical yet, in some ways, we have just begun.

Read on.



IN THIS ISSUE*



Marilynn K. Duker



Audacious Individual
Nicholas Petr



Audacious Individual
Najib Jammal



Keeping Kids in School by Rethinking Discipline



An Epidemic of Student Absence in Baltimore



Lois Blum Feinblatt



Celebrating Ten Years of Audacious Thinking



Pictured here is Emma with her mother Rina Steinhauer (right) and Diana Morris, OSI-Baltimore Director (left.)

BELIEVE

Unlike most 14 year olds, Emma Koramshahi forgoes packages wrapped in ribbons and bows when her birthday arrives. For nearly five years now, she has been asking her friends and family to give a gift to an important organization in whose work she believes. She started this tradition when she heard George Soros on the radio while riding in her mother's car—she was impressed with what he was hoping OSI could accomplish in Baltimore and committed her birthday gifts to OSI. Every year since, she has given her birthday money to some noble cause and, this year again, Emma gave \$300 to OSI-Baltimore.

OSI-BALTIMORE'S BLOG HAS BUZZ!

www.audaciousideas.org

OSI-Baltimore launched a blog in September 2007 to stimulate discussion about solutions to difficult problems in the city. Since then, we've had an array of weekly bloggers—everyone from Baltimore School Superintendent Andres Alonso to City Health Department Commissioner Josh Sharfstein to federal judge Andres Davis to a group of Baltimore Urban Debate League students. Each blogger pots an idea about what can be done to promote opportunity, achievement, health and prosperity in Baltimore.

Join the conversation to create positive, lasting change. Sign up to receive your weekly notification at www.osi-baltimore.org

HELP US MAKE LASTING CHANGE.

Your financial gift to OSI-Baltimore will help us continue to tackle the most challenging issues our city faces and ensure that every individual in our region has the opportunity for a successful future.

No gift is too small or too large. Every dollar given will be matched 1:2 by our founder, George Soros. Our donors share a common goal to revitalize Baltimore. They realize that, by investing in OSI-Baltimore, they can play a vital role in improving our city's future.

You can contribute online at www.osi-baltimore.org or call us at 410-234-1091

DIRECTOR'S NOTE


DIANA MORRIS



Our 10th Anniversary gives us a chance to take stock of what we set out to do when we began our work in Baltimore and where we, and the city we serve, are now. Establishing a small office to take on some of the biggest challenges facing Baltimore—failing schools, untreated drug addiction, and an over-reliance on incarceration—was, of course, an audacious undertaking. But, we started off on the right foot by creating close working relationships with creative non-profit organizations and public agencies that wanted to do business differently. These partnerships have allowed us to work fast to find solutions that “stick.” Ten years later, we can point to some significant accomplishments.

Some of our target areas have been more amenable to change than others. We have had considerable success in creating a positive trajectory for our young people by helping to put key ingredients for success in place: small, rigorous and nurturing schools; engaging after-school and summer activities; and alternatives to suspension. In the drug treatment arena, we have improved the quality of treatment and the system’s accountability. Through the work of OSI and other advocates, the capacity of treatment providers to serve Baltimoreans suffering from addiction has doubled, but, the public system needs to expand dramatically yet again to treat those who are uninsured or underinsured. Progress in reforming the criminal and juvenile justice system has gone more slowly, given its complexity and inherently conservative nature. We have been successful developing solid prisoner re-entry programs, but there is no steady public support for their ongoing work. With strong leadership at the helms of these agencies, we must now look for creative ways, such as the Public Safety Compact, to support alternatives to incarceration while maintaining public safety.

“Ten years later, we can point to some significant accomplishments.”

Despite the enormity of the challenges facing Baltimore, we are proud of our work and feel that we have been making steady progress toward our goals. **What we need to do better, however, is to engage the public in our work.** Without explicit calls for change, many policymakers don’t have adequate incentives to change a longstanding policy or practice, no matter how ineffective or inefficient it may be. **During the next ten years, we hope you will join us by providing us with your ideas, influence and resources to continue our efforts to ensure that all Baltimoreans have the support and opportunity they need to succeed.** Your financial support ensures that we continue to tackle problems aggressively, strategically and persistently, despite changes in administrations or setbacks. Your substantive interest adds to the voices holding our public agencies accountable and advocating for change. **We know we are unable to do this alone and we welcome your voice in our on-going quest for a truly open society, with opportunity for all.** 

A Conversation with OSI-Baltimore Board Chair: MARILYNN K. DUKER

Marilynn K. Duker, President of The Shelter Group, has been a member of the OSI-Baltimore Board since 2003. Since 2006, she has served as Board Chair. As President of The Shelter Group, she is responsible for all three Shelter Group companies: Shelter Development, Shelter Properties and Brightview Senior Living. Prior to joining Shelter in 1982, she served as a Presidential Intern at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. She also worked for the Boston Housing Authority. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Multi-Housing Council and sits on the boards of the Baltimore City Board of Finance, the University of Maryland at Baltimore BioPark Corporation, the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore, the PNC Bank Regional Advisory Board and Mercy Medical Center.

When you look back at the past decade, how has Baltimore changed?

There are more people working towards a better Baltimore than ever—in the philanthropic community, in business and in government; there is a positive energy in the city and we've had energized leadership for several terms now, including our current Mayor. There are lots of positive indicators—population is increasing, for the first time in 40 years; the homicide rate is down dramatically to the lowest number in several decades; and many indicators show that real progress is being made in our school system.

What are Baltimore's chief strengths? Biggest challenges?

Our strengths are the size of the city—which makes it a manageable place to experiment with creative solutions to the problems facing many of our cities; the incredible generosity of its people; the strength and diversity of the regional economy and the commitment of the philanthropic community. The biggest challenge is the deeply entrenched poverty in so many neighborhoods in Baltimore. This clearly contributes significantly to so many of the serious social issues OSI works to address.

What difference do you think OSI-Baltimore has made to the city over the past ten years?

We've strengthened the drug addiction treatment system in this city in many ways—many more Baltimoreans now have access to higher quality treatment, which is carefully monitored. The many people in our city addicted to heroin now have access to a new and extremely effective treatment, buprenorphine; funding for treatment has risen 156% since 1998, while property crime has decreased by 43% and over-dose deaths and new cases of HIV have declined significantly.

We've worked closely with the Maryland Parole Commission and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services on a new program so that prisoners can receive drug treatment while incarcerated and are then released earlier on parole into the community where they immediately continue their addiction treatment. This program not only will produce savings for the state because of the reduced incarceration term, but will give ex-prisoners the treatment and training they need to rebuild their lives and become productive family members and employees.

With our largest grant, we helped to create a network of high quality after-school programs throughout the city, which we know increases attendance at school and provides our older children with a real alternative to becoming engaged in the drug markets.

**“There are more people
working towards a better
Baltimore than ever”**

“I also loved that OSI was tackling some of our city’s most significant and seemingly intractable problems”



Why are you involved with OSI-Baltimore?

I was incredibly intrigued by OSI’s approach to pursuing systemic change, not just band-aiding problems or providing temporary fixes. I was impressed that OSI doesn’t just make grants, but adds tremendous value through the involvement of the outstanding staff, all of whom are experts in their fields. I also loved that OSI was tackling some of our city’s most significant and seemingly intractable problems—like drug addiction, youth disconnected from school and too many people warehoused in prison—going at these problems in a way that addresses their root causes. These are not issues with powerful constituencies, but they are fundamental to the quality of life for all of Baltimore’s citizens—whether they are personally and directly affected by these issues or not. The level of intellectual discourse, the passion of the OSI staff and Board, and the fact that George Soros, someone with no previous connection to Baltimore, saw our city as a great laboratory in which he was willing to make this very substantial investment of \$50 million to try and attack these problems was really intriguing and inspiring.

What motivates you to give back?

I have been incredibly fortunate in my life—to have gotten a great education, to have a wonderful career in a great company and to have landed in this great city where my husband and I have raised our family. Because I am so grateful for my good fortune, I am involved with a number of organizations here in Baltimore that allow me to use my experience, my brain and my resources to work with some very talented, creative people who are experts in their fields to try and make a positive difference in Baltimore. 🍷

AUDACIOUS

Nicholas Petr | 2007 Baltimore Community FELLOW

Now nearly one hundred strong, the Baltimore Community Fellows are visionaries, risk-takers and social entrepreneurs whose work focuses exclusively on the city's underserved residents. Read about a Current fellow, Nicholas Petr, and Najib Jammal, an alumnus of the program. The Baltimore Community Fellowships are supported by OSI-Baltimore and The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Lois and Irving Blum Foundation, the Cohen Opportunity Fund, the Commonwealth Foundation, the Foundation for Maryland's Future, the Hoffberger Foundation, the Gloria B. and Herbert M. Katzenberg Charitable Fund, The Marion I. & Henry J. Knott Foundation, the John Meyerhoff and Lenel Srochi Meyerhoff Fund, the Alison and Arnold Richman Fund, and other investors in the OSI Campaign for Baltimore.



Through the years, artist Nicholas Petr has tried to use his creativity to highlight Baltimore's social issues, whether guiding tours through the city's most marginalized communities or producing documentaries on local activists. But he often felt like his art wasn't having an impact. "When I was making art about social issues and showing in galleries, I became extremely frustrated because I felt I was reaching a very limited audience," Petr says. "The things I tried to say and do weren't really getting out to people who really cared."

Then, after working with other community artists on several exhibits, Petr and his colleagues hatched a bold plan: why not establish a free quarterly newspaper focusing on issues such as poverty, homelessness, education and justice? "Through our experience in trying to gain media attention for our work, we recognized that information on social

"Why not create our own alternative news source?"

justice issues was missing from mainstream media," says Petr, who is also a cabinetmaker. "So we decided, 'Why not create our own alternative news source?'"

The Independent Reader began in 2005 with a group of volunteers, including members of the Baltimore Independent Media Center, leading its editorial direction. After becoming a 2007 OSI-Baltimore Community Fellow, Petr became the newspaper's first full-time staffer, allowing the fledgling newspaper to grow into a popular donor-supported organization with more than 5,000 readers and a presence on the Web. The free newspaper is distributed in barber shops, coffee shops, community organizations and other locales throughout Baltimore.

"*The Independent Reader* is a place to give people voice and to publicize the work of social justice groups," Petr says. Most contributors are not professional journalists, but are Baltimore residents, ranging from high school students and researchers to doctors and community organizers to Death Row inmates, providing a diverse array of perspectives on each issue's selected topic. The result is an in-depth examination of the city's most pressing social issues.

The winter 2008 issue focused on homelessness and housing, and featured interviews with some of downtown Baltimore's homeless residents. Immediately after the issue hit stands, readers responded with concerned e-mails, and the church sheltering the featured homeless people circulated the article to reach even more readers. "This is exactly what we set out to accomplish—spreading awareness of these kinds of issues," Petr says.

The Independent Reader also recently joined a coalition of local media groups to launch a youth journalism program that teaches students ages 13 and older about field reporting, social issues and writing.

"Media is very important," Petr says. "But there are a lot of untold stories in mainstream media. We don't set out to tell people what to think. We just try to show as many facts as possible and let the facts speak for themselves."

WHY WE FUND IT.....

INDIVIDUALS

Najib Jammal | 2005 Baltimore Community FELLOW ALUMNUS



Behind a humble storefront on West 36th Street in Baltimore's Hampden neighborhood, high school students are busy selling their wares—and learning valuable entrepreneurial, customer service and people skills. T-shirts, jewelry, artwork and music CDs—all created by youth—line the walls and fill the countertops. Students run the registers and help customers browse the store. But beyond working on the front lines, students are responsible for the operation's business plan, marketing strategies, accounting, inventory and sales as part of their involvement with Youth Organizing Urban Revitalization Systems (Y.O.U.R.S.).

Y.O.U.R.S. was founded by 2005 OSI-Baltimore Community Fellow Najib Jammal, a business teacher at Frederick Douglass High School who also has taught Spanish. He was one of the first teachers to be trained by OSI as a debate team coach and took that training to coach at Frederick Douglass. Jammal created Y.O.U.R.S. after recognizing the need for more resources and opportunities for students to have hands-on, practical educational experiences.

“Often, students feel disconnected from their learning because they don't see how their education applies outside of the classroom,” says Jammal, who appears in the recent HBO documentary, *Hard Times at Douglass High*. “We set up real-world learning opportunities that allow students to develop useful entrepreneurial skills while serving their community.”

Last month, the Y.O.U.R.S. Store opened its doors, the culmination of work by students from Frederick Douglass and Independence high schools, Baltimore Freedom Academy and Learning Inc. The opening marked a significant evolution from the organization's beginning.

“The goal was always to inspire students toward entrepreneurship and community service,” Jammal says. “Our mission is still to create a network of cooperatively owned businesses run by students.” With his fellowship from OSI-Baltimore, Jammal worked to develop and strengthen Y.O.U.R.S., which at the time focused on giving students opportunities to grow squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, lettuce and other produce in a community garden after school and then to sell them at a farmers' market on weekends. Over the years, Y.O.U.R.S. has stayed true to its mission while expanding its scope of activities to include jewelry-making, web design, T-shirt design and, now, running the Y.O.U.R.S. Store. Y.O.U.R.S. engages about 40 youth throughout the year.

The future direction of the organization may include a hair salon, an enterprise in which several students have expressed interest. Jammal plans to continue educating students on business management, product development and branding, while also helping students to obtain seed funding to start their own ventures.

“We have a lot of students who want to develop their own businesses,” Jammal says. “Through Y.O.U.R.S., they see the fruit of their hard work and realize that they can achieve their goals.”

“We have a lot of students who want to develop their own businesses”

“These Community Fellows bring their intelligence and ingenuity to two very different projects, but they both share a real passion and belief that they can help make a difference in this city—and they are doing it.”

—Pamela King, Director of Community Fellowships and Initiatives





INVESTING IN ADDICTION TREATMENT SAVES MONEY: NEW PUBLIC SAFETY COMPACT EXPECTED TO REDUCE MARYLAND'S PRISON COSTS

Like the rest of the country, Maryland is spending large sums to warehouse people, particularly non-violent offenders, in its prisons. The state spends more than \$1 billion to incarcerate about 23,000 people each year, 63 percent of whom are from Baltimore City. Almost a quarter of Maryland's prison population are individuals who are convicted for drug offenses and have a history of drug dependence. If untreated, these individuals, upon release from prison are likely to engage in unlawful activity to support their addiction, which fuels the cycle of incarceration, release, re-offense and re-incarceration. It is a cycle that occurs at high social and economic costs to Baltimore residents.

There is a solution. Research shows that drug dependent individuals who receive treatment while in prison and after they return to the community are significantly less likely to return to prison. With this in mind, a model partnership, facilitated by the Safe and Sound Campaign and the Open Society Institute-Baltimore, brings together city and state agencies and local and national foundations to develop and support an innovative new project—the Maryland Public Safety Compact—that holds promise for Baltimore and the rest of the country.

The Public Safety Compact is a policy and financing innovation designed to provide treatment and other services to prisoners, reduce the public costs of incarceration and reinvest these savings in community-based programs. It is part of the Maryland Opportunity Compact, an initiative aimed at dramatically changing the way the state delivers social services. The goal of the Maryland Opportunity Compact is to reduce excessive spending on “last resort” programs, such as prison and foster care, and to expand public investments in successful models, saving tax dollars and providing better results


The Public Safety Compact is a written agreement between the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and community-based programs to provide drug addiction treatment and other services to individuals both in prison and upon release into the community. After the successful completion of prison treatment services, inmates will be released earlier than originally planned on the condition that they continue drug treatment and other services at community-based programs. The Division of Parole and Protection will carefully monitor compliance with these and other conditions of prisoners' release.

WHY WE FUND IT.....

Initially, 250 prisoners will participate in the program. The gross public savings projected from their early release from prison is estimated to total \$3 million. These public savings will then be re-invested in community-based drug treatment and other programs, providing ongoing public financial support for programs that will continue to serve people who are returning from prison.

Former prisoners who receive drug treatment and services are expected to lead more stable lives and to be less likely to return to prison. Compact staff will track the recidivism rates of these individuals, as any reduction will produce additional savings.

The launch of the Compact is possible due to the generous support of local and national foundations. Through a fund-raising effort led by OSI-Baltimore, over \$2 million in private money was donated from the Abell Foundation, Baltimore Community Foundation, France-Merrick Foundation, Open Society Institute-Baltimore, Weinberg Foundation and the national JEHT Foundation to jump-start the program during its first two years. Public savings will be re-invested to sustain the programs beyond two years.

OSI-Baltimore and Safe and Sound Campaign worked closely with the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, the Family League of Baltimore City and Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems to develop the Public Safety Compact. It is expected to be signed by these organizations and agency this fall. 

“Research shows that drug dependant individuals who receive treatment while in prison and after they return to the community are signifigantly less likely to return to prison.”

“The Public Safety Compact builds on past OSI-funded initiatives to reduce the over-reliance on incarceration and expand high quality community-based drug addiction treatment programs. The Compact holds the promise of providing the support prisoners will need to make a seamless and successful transition from prisons to the community. At the same time, public dollars will be saved. This translates into a “win-win” scenario for former prisoners and the public.”



—Monique L. Dixon, Director of the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program

KEEPING KIDS IN SCHOOL BY RETHINKING DISCIPLINE

Each year for the past decade, nearly 10,000 students have been suspended from school in Baltimore. More than 60 percent of these suspensions are for nonviolent behaviors such as disrespect, disruption, tardiness, truancy and cell phone use—infractions that previously might have resulted in a trip to the principal's office or detention. Working in partnership with Baltimore City Public School System staff, parents, students, local college and university staff, and community members, OSI-Baltimore facilitated the creation of a new student code of conduct that is expected to improve school climate and reduce the number of suspensions, expulsions and school-based arrests for mundane acts of misconduct.



Suspension put students at risk of falling behind in their classes, dropping out of school and even getting into trouble with the law. Research shows that suspensions also are disproportionately doled out to African-American students, especially boys, and students with disabilities, such as those with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or an emotional disturbance.


Since 2003, OSI-Baltimore has worked closely with the Baltimore City Public School System to stem the use of suspensions, expulsions and school-based arrests, offer alternatives, and reform student disciplinary policies.

As part of that comprehensive effort, in 2007, Jane Sundius, Director of the Education and Youth Development Program

of OSI-Baltimore, co-chaired a Baltimore City Public School System work group that was asked to overhaul the school district's student code of conduct. OSI awarded a grant to the Advancement Project, a national civil rights organization that is well known for its school discipline reform work. With legal and policy research support from the Advancement Project, the work group analyzed Baltimore City School discipline data, conducted a thorough review of promising discipline policies and procedures, and created the new student code of conduct.

This new code puts Baltimore City in line with other school districts that are involved in a growing national movement to reverse the unintended harmful effects of a zero-tolerance

approach to school discipline. The new student code of conduct will include more in-school responses such as counseling, peer mediation, detention, in-school suspension and community service. Violent or dangerous behavior will continue to result in suspension or expulsion but, in all cases, students will receive educational services and referrals to address issues that may contribute to their misbehavior.

The new code will also establish a more consistent, standardized and fair application of discipline across schools in the district and eliminate counterproductive responses such as suspending students who have skipped class. The code is being implemented this fall. In an effort to ensure its success, the school district is now training its principals and teachers on the purpose and proper use of the code. 

WHY WE FUND IT

“The overuse of suspensions for certain student behavior is counterproductive and may ultimately lead to academic failure, drop out and involvement with the juvenile justice system. This new code is an effort to make school discipline fair and more effective, keeping schools safe and preventing students' contact with the juvenile justice system.”

—Monique L. Dixon, Director of the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program



AN EPIDEMIC OF STUDENT ABSENCE IN BALTIMORE



Jane Sundius

- *During the 2006-2007 school year, 9,854 children were suspended from Baltimore public schools, including 1,592 elementary school students.*
- *Despite school system policies that require follow-up, many Baltimore schools do not have a standard way of alerting parents or guardians of a student's absence, and most do not have student attendance workers or other staff who follow-up when children are absent repeatedly.*
- *Testing pressures, created by No Child Left Behind goals, discourage some schools from trying to get frequently absent students back to school, especially on testing days.*



Molly Farneth

Those are just a few of the provocative findings in a new series of three policy papers written by Jane Sundius, Ph.D., Director of OSI-Baltimore's Education and Youth Development program, and Molly Farneth, Education Program Assistant. The papers are the outgrowth of a major initiative led by OSI-Baltimore to reduce widespread school absence through strategies that engage children in school and remove barriers to regular attendance, including the overuse of suspension and expulsion. Over the course of the several years, OSI has hosted a series of forums on the use of suspensions and chronic school absence.

The three papers are called "Missing School: The Epidemic of School Absence," "Putting Kids out of School: What's Causing High Suspension Rates and Why They Are Dangerous to Students, Schools, and Communities," and "On the Path to Success: Policies and Practices for Getting Every Child to School Every Day." **To download copies of these papers, visit www.osi-baltimore.org.**

Among the highlights:


In Baltimore City, 14 percent of elementary school students, 34 percent of middle school students, and 44 percent of high school students missed 20 or more school days during the 2006-2007 school year—nearly a month of school.

Students are absent from school in large numbers for a variety of reasons, including illness, suspension and expulsion, poor transportation, fears of personal safety, disengagement, unwelcoming schools, school policies that push them out, and family or work responsibilities.

Regardless of the reason, students who miss school lose out on critical academic and social learning opportunities. As a result, children who miss school frequently—even in elementary school—are less likely to graduate from high school.

Suspensions have been used excessively, indiscriminately, and to the exclusion of efforts to teach and reinforce good behavior or to treat underlying problems. On average, 270 children miss school each day in Baltimore due to long-term suspension or expulsion—and even more are out of school on short-term suspension.

Today, children are suspended for behavior that used to be labeled naughty, mischievous, or prankish and used to result in detention or school clean-up. Last year, more suspensions were issued for truancy and tardiness than for dangerous substances, weapons, arson/fire/explosives, and sex offenses combined. An even greater number of suspensions were given for disrespectful and disruptive behavior.

The authors make a series of policy recommendations to improve student attendance and conclude that children, parents/guardians, teachers and school administrators, and city officials must all join together to make school attendance a top priority for Baltimore. "Regular school attendance is critical," they write. "In fact, without it, youth are unlikely to graduate from high school, escape poverty and stay on course for a productive future. For these reasons, school attendance is a bellwether for a city's future." 

PROFILE OF AN OSI-BALTIMORE INVESTOR: LOIS BLUM FEINBLATT

A life-long resident of Baltimore, Lois Blum Feinblatt is an alumna of Goucher College who received her Masters in Mental Health Counseling at the Johns Hopkins School of Health. Her interest in education and adoption issues was kindled soon after she graduated, when she became an adoption worker in the Baltimore City Department of Welfare and, shortly after, founded the Adoption Connection Exchange to offer support and search service. She then joined the Department of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, where she has been a practicing psychotherapist for over 40 years.



What originally motivated you to get involved in the community?

On the wall in my parents' home, there was a small black and white picture which they had cut out of the Baltimore Sun paper. There were two little kids on Eutaw Place manning a lemonade stand. A closer look showed my brother, Chuck, age seven, and me, age 5. Above the stand was a home-made sign that read, "Fresh Air Fund: Lemonade 5 cents." That is my first memory of getting involved in the community. I was born into two large Baltimore families. One started with an ice wagon; the other, a dairy store. Both families had lots of children but not much money. Yet they always had enough to give to their neighbors or relatives who were in need. Sharing was just a part of the families' ethos.

What are the issues that engage you most, the ones about which you are most passionate?

My greatest interest for the last decade has been public education. My family and myself, all products of the Baltimore City Public School System, feel that a fine education is the passport to a good and fulfilling life. We have used our foundation, The Lois and Irving Blum Foundation, to continue the legacy and ideals of my husband, who died at a relatively young age. In his lifetime, he fought for many causes. Always foremost in his mind were those who needed assistance to best help themselves. Our involvement in the public schools is a way of carrying on his legacy. His children and I have tried to carry on his high ideals. The Blum Mentoring Program, a highly successful program, which has helped to retain new teachers in our challenging urban setting, is an example of this.

**"We must give back what we owe
in relation to what we have."**

“My greatest interest for the last decade has been public education. My family and myself, all products of the Baltimore City Public School System, feel that a fine education is the passport to a good and fulfilling life.”

As a life-long resident of Maryland, how have you seen the city of Baltimore change?


I've always loved Baltimore and I have enjoyed seeing it change and grow. My second husband was Eugene Feinblatt, whose vision helped to reshape Baltimore's reinvigorated downtown. He was the Mayor's lawyer when the Inner Harbor was conceived and made into our gorgeous HarborPlace. And he helped the Stadium become a reality. It has been a thrill to go to the Harbor to see people from every ethnic group in our city mixing and enjoying the delights of our downtown. This was not the way Baltimore was when I was young.

With all that has happened to our fair city that is positive, we still have many problems. But then along comes a visionary like Dr. Andrés Alonso, who is the new CEO of Baltimore Schools. And suddenly, we know that we are on the right track to bring this most important part of Baltimore back to where it will be right for Baltimore's children.

Why did you decide to invest in OSI?

I am a firm believer in how leadership shapes any organization, our country, our family, OSI. I was fortunate to meet Diana Morris when she first moved to Baltimore and I have followed her career. Diana has the qualities of a true leader. When Mr. Soros wisely chose her to head OSI, I knew instinctively we had a combination that couldn't be beat. Of course, for the first eight years, OSI didn't need private funding. But when the appeal went out to meet Mr. Soros' challenge grant, my children and I felt a compulsion to show our support.

As someone who is clearly passionate about the Baltimore Community Fellows, how did you first become interested in them?

I am in love with visionaries and I find the Fellows to be real visionaries. There are both young and a sprinkling of older Fellows who have a vision of their own as to how they can change a little bit of our city and make an impact on the lives of those less fortunate than themselves. One wanted to pursue the idea of planning a city garden to help feed an underprivileged neighborhood with fresh vegetables. Another, to help people in conflict work their problems out through mediation instead of sticks and stones. Or, as Galen and Bridget Sampson are doing, feeding us all well at the same time they are training women who have been in prison or men who have been addicts to learn the restaurant trade. Encouraging such visions is a joy that means a great deal to me. As one of my greatest heroines, Eleanor Roosevelt said—although perhaps loosely translated, “We must give back what we owe in relation to what we have.” 

CELEBRATING TEN YEARS



"Our city is a much changed place and it is a place that is changing for the better and it is in very large part because you saw the hope that was here, you had the courage to risk action on the faith that your investment could make things better. And indeed it has. Our city's moving in a much better direction."

OF AUDACIOUS THINKING



Pat Turner

OSI-Baltimore celebrated its 10th anniversary on May 13, 2008. Thanks to **Pat Turner**, a member of the OSI-Baltimore Leadership Council, the celebration was the first event to be held at Silo Point, a new condominium project resurrected from a long-forgotten grain elevator and silos in South Baltimore.

Founder **George Soros** and members of the OSI U.S. Programs Board were in attendance among the 425 other guests for the night. OSI-Baltimore awarded Audacious Individuals Awards to three Baltimore individuals who represent the best of audacious thinking—acting boldly, with spirited and original ideas, in order to improve the lives of Baltimore’s underserved populations. The recipients were:

- **Andrés Alonso**, CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools
- **Carlos Hardy**, Executive Director of the Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
- **Jacqueline Robarge**, a 2002 OSI-Baltimore Community Fellow and Founding Director of Power Inside.




Andrés Alonso

Governor **Martin O’Malley**, thanked George Soros for his commitment to Baltimore and noted, “Our city is a much changed place and it is a place that is changing for the better and it is in very large part because you saw the hope that was here, you had the courage to risk action on the faith that your investment could make things better. And indeed it has. Our city’s moving in a much better direction.”



Carlos Hardy

Mayor **Sheila Dixon** gave a welcome from the City of Baltimore and introduced the current class of Baltimore Community Fellows, saying, “I simply can’t overstate how much OSI has meant to the city during this last decade, uplifting the neediest in our community. It is through this partnership that we are really going to make a difference in Baltimore City.”

Newark Mayor **Cory Booker**, the keynote speaker, galvanized his audience. He asked, “Will we see men and women in prison as the prodigal children? Will we see our children in school as the only hope we have to secure freedom and democracy in the coming decades? Will we see people laden by disease, whether it be HIV or drug addiction, as folks that are too often marginalized and must be elevated and must be loved? This is our challenge as a nation. This is our calling. We must now decide where we will go as a country. I am grateful for all you all are doing here in Baltimore. You are a light on the horizon of my city.” 



Jacqueline Robarge



Marilynn Duker



Diana Morris



Mayor Sheila Dixon



George Soros



Andre Davis



Governor Martin O'Malley



Mayor Cory Booker

OUR GOALS

As OSI-Baltimore moves forward, it is pursuing four main objectives:

- * Increase access to high-quality drug treatment to achieve a “tipping point” where 75% of Baltimore’s drug-dependent population is in treatment.
- * Increase public high school graduation rates from 59% in 2004-05 to 80% in 2008-09.
- * Decrease incarceration and recidivism while protecting public safety by reducing the number of people entering and returning to prison by 5%.
- * Populate Baltimore’s struggling communities with a strong network of proven, social entrepreneurs by awarding up to ten Community Fellowships per year.

Founded by philanthropist George Soros, Open Society Institute-Baltimore is a private operating foundation that supports a grantmaking, educational and capacity-building program to expand justice and opportunity for Baltimore residents. With support from a range of investors, its current work focuses on helping Baltimore’s youth succeed, reducing the social and economic costs of incarceration, tackling drug addiction, and building a corps of Community Fellows to bring innovative ideas to Baltimore’s underserved communities.

To learn more about Open Society Institute-Baltimore, visit our web site at: www.osi-baltimore.org.

Please sign up for our periodic e-newsletters on our home page.



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