

# AUDACIOUS THINKING

AN OCCASIONAL  
NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2011



**NO YELLOW SCHOOL BUSES  
FOR BALTIMORE'S CHILDREN...**

Is race an issue here?

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Audacious Individual

## SPECIAL CAMPAIGN INSERT: FINAL REPORT

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## OSI-BALTIMORE WELCOMES...

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**Chip Wendler** to its Board of Advisors. Wendler, who serves as the director of consultant relations of T. Rowe Price Global Investment Services, joined the OSI-Board in January 2011.

**Kiera Edwards** as program associate for both the Education and Youth Development Program and the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program.

## HELP US MAKE LASTING CHANGE.

*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 1:1 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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# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Baltimore received national recognition recently because we have accomplished something no other major city has done: our city schools have significantly reduced the drop out rate of African-American male students (by 59%). This was national news because, throughout the country, children of color – especially boys – are more likely to drop out of school and graduate in much smaller numbers than their white counterparts.

While we at OSI-Baltimore applaud this change and supported many of the initiatives that made it happen, **it is distressing that in 2011, almost 150 years after the end of slavery and 55 years after Brown vs. Board of Education, unequal education for African-American children persists.** This fact speaks volumes about our collective failure to create an open society and to make the changes necessary to equip youth to participate fully in the economic, social and political life of our community.

**The universal right to public education is one of the most important benefits accorded to children in the United States.**

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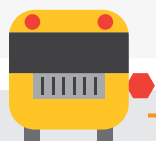
The opportunity has the potential to “level the playing field” and allow each child to realize his or her talents, gain economic stability, and become engaged and productive employees, parents, and neighbors. But the opportunity only exists if children, including children of color, have access to it. In too many cases, access to good education is blocked, sometimes literally.

Consider this: **Baltimore City is the only Maryland jurisdiction that doesn't provide dedicated yellow buses to its students who live a mile and a half or more away from school.** Instead, it relies on the Maryland Transportation Authority (MTA), an inadequately funded public transit system with too few buses. Students wait for buses unsheltered from the weather. They have long rides, often with multiple transfers, and their buses are frequently late. Worst of all, the buses sometimes even fail to stop.

Government regulations and service demands on the MTA limit its ability to tailor routes for students, a fact that makes getting to and from school harder for city students. Unlike typical yellow bus service, for example, MTA bus stops may be several blocks away from the school door – a dangerous fact of life for too many Baltimore students. Early school closings for bad weather do not trigger additional MTA buses to bring students home early, because busses are scheduled less frequently in the mid-day hours. Together, transportation challenges discourage many students from coming to school and from participating in enriching after-school activities, when they must walk to and wait for buses in the dark. And, the parents of most children of color in Baltimore do not have access to a car as an alternative. According to a Brookings Institute report, Baltimore ranks fourth in the country in low access to a car (at 32%); and undoubtedly, the percentage of African-Americans in Baltimore without access to a car is even higher, given poverty rates. (Visit the website of Policy Link, an OSI grantee, at [www.policylink.org](http://www.policylink.org) for general information about the importance of public transit to people of color.)

Does a system like this make students feel valued or convey the value of school to the students? No. **Is it really a surprise that Baltimore high school students have, on average, the poorest attendance rate in the state?** Of course not. These transportation policies affect students of color more than their white counterparts. Three quarters of Baltimore's school-aged children are children of

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE



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color. Yet 94% of our public school students are children of color because the majority of their white counterparts attend private and parochial schools. So naturally, more students of color are using public transportation to get to school.

There is a term used to describe the persistent forces that have their origin in historical racial discrimination and maintain inequitable outcomes: “structural racism.” Indeed, since opening our office in 1997, we have understood that structural racism – policies and practices that essentially maintain the status quo and block the ability of African-Americans to access opportunities and resources – is one of the main barriers to changing Baltimore’s fortunes for the better. The Aspen Institute, an international policy center focused on developing leadership and practices required for a “good” society, defines structural racism as, “The many factors that contribute to and facilitate the maintenance of racial inequities in the United States today.”

The existence of structural racism is difficult for many of us to accept because it challenges the basic tenets of our society – that America provides equal opportunity and allows any individual to

get ahead with hard work and persistence. But the enduring fact of large, pervasive racial inequalities should force all of us to take the arguments about structural racism very seriously.

When you look at the example of school transportation in Baltimore with a structural racism lens, you see a set of school and public transportation policies and practices that, unwittingly, have reduced student attendance and, because it results in frequent absences, have also reduced student achievement. While exhortations to individual students to come to school may improve this situation, we argue that policy change is what is really necessary to improve school outcomes for our community, which, of course, is primarily a community of color.

In all of our work at OSI-Baltimore, structural racism analysis shapes our goals and strategies. Because we believe it is at the root of so many of the city’s woes, we focus on changing the underlying conditions that conspire to hold back entire communities because of their race. **We focus less on helping individuals who might succeed despite those conditions and more on changing those underlying conditions and unblocking access to equal opportunity so whole communities can succeed.**

This is an audacious goal. We know that there are many factors that shape children’s life options and outcomes. Yet, we also know that the impact of these factors is not equitable and, specifically, is often negative for children of color. School transportation policy is one structural barrier to equity that we can begin to address (see Rate Your Ride on page 3). The effort is critically important as, without our collective action, school transportation policy will continue to block children of color disproportionately from having easy access to Baltimore City schools. **Our public schools are improving. Let’s make sure that all of our children can benefit from them.**

**DIANA MORRIS**, Director of OSI-Baltimore



BRIAN O'MALLEY

# RATE YOUR RIDE

## Every Day, Thousands of Children Depend on Public Transit to Get to School

Often, getting at the core issues City Schools face is not easy. Sometimes, technology can make it simpler.

Even a casual glance at City School's attendance data makes one thing very clear: Baltimore's schools, especially its high schools, are facing an epidemic of student absence. All told, more than 22,000 students missed the equivalent of one whole month of school last year—11,000 of them were in high school. One often-cited reason for school absence is inadequate transportation. Because Baltimore's middle and high school students rely largely on public transportation, youth often have long, complicated journeys to make via the bus system and sometimes are late, or even miss school, because of the Maryland Transit Authority (MTA) bus service.

**Questions about how public transportation contributes to spotty school attendance led to an innovative campaign called Rate Your Ride.**



# CAMPAIGN GETS REAL-TIME FEEDBACK ABOUT MTA SERVICE



MICHELLE WHELLEY and BRIAN O'MALLEY

The Rate Your Ride Campaign uses cell phones and text messaging to get real-time feedback about MTA service. Students – and other riders – text the word “ride” to the number 30802 and answer five brief questions about the quality of their trip, says Brian O’Malley, director of transportation policy and research for the Central Maryland Transportation Alliance.

Participants who complete the survey – via text or internet – are eligible to receive prizes, including iPods and iPads. The survey is available online at [www.rateyourride.org](http://www.rateyourride.org).

“When children are standing at the bus stop – or on the bus – if they have a cell phone, they can participate in the survey,” O’Malley says. **“The idea of using text messaging is to give riders the opportunity to give us their feedback in the moment.”**

The campaign is an initiative of the Transportation Alliance and is funded primarily by OSI-Baltimore.

Michele Whelley, Transportation Alliance President and CEO, noted that additional support for Rate Your Ride was provided by The Ford Foundation, in collaboration with the Baltimore Neighborhood Collaborative and The Clayton Fund. The Baltimore Community Foundation also provided logo design, administrative and communication support.

The idea to use cell phones to collect information about transit services grew out of discussions among OSI, the Baltimore Student Attendance Initiative, and the Transportation Alliance. **“We found that, by using inexpensive texting programs, we could link the school attendance and transit issue to the Transportation Alliance’s larger goal of improving public transportation for all City residents,”** Whelley said.

Jane Sundius, OSI-Baltimore’s Education and Youth Development Program Director, noted that, “One of the reasons students gave for poor attendance was that they have trouble simply getting to

“One of the reasons students gave for poor attendance was that they have trouble simply getting to school. They told us about long bus rides, with multiple transfers; they complained about a lack of bus shelters and frequently late or too-full buses. Worst of all, they told us that some buses simply don’t stop for students.” - SUNDIUS

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school. They told us about long bus rides, with multiple transfers; they complained about a lack of bus shelters and frequently late or too-full buses. Worst of all, they told us that some buses simply don’t stop for students. Hearing these stories first-hand was really distressing; it pushed us to ask the Transportation Alliance if they could help to collect better information about how prevalent these problems are.”

That’s why transportation officials are also participating in Rate Your Ride: to understand how well – or poorly – the city’s bus and light rail service is working. According to Whelley, “We’re pleased with the response and with the buy-in of the Maryland Transit Administration. They’ve been interested in what riders are saying and report that they are trying to respond to the service complaints.”

**O’Malley said that the response has been far greater than anticipated; “We hoped for 500 responses per month, but are averaging over 1,000 per month.”**

O’Malley acknowledges hearing early concerns about whether kids would take the initiative seriously. “But we’ve gotten serious, credible responses from students, and we’ve found that average student ratings are similar to ratings of non-students,” he said.

“Initial results show that problems are concentrated in certain routes and that the most frequent complaints are about timeliness,” O’Malley said. **So far, six bus routes have been identified as problem-prone and will be investigated more closely to develop solutions.** Also, the Transportation Alliance issued an interim report in February on the first four months of Rate Your Ride.

“For the kids who don’t have perfect attitudes about attendance, we don’t need transportation pushing them over the edge and making them decide ‘I’m just not going to go to school today,’” O’Malley said. “We can’t control some of the problems associated with school attendance, but transportation is a part we can improve.”



## WHY WE FUND IT

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“OSI-Baltimore is focused on increasing learning opportunities for all students and, in particular, examining the role that attendance plays in academic success. We know that frequent school absence is a better predictor of eventual school drop-out than standardized test scores. We want to remove barriers to attendance – and ineffective transportation is a real barrier.”

**JANE SUNDIUS**, Director of Education and Youth Development

# A CONVERSATION WITH AN OSI-BALTIMORE BOARD MEMBER

A portrait of Suzanne F. Cohen, an elderly woman with short, wavy white hair and glasses. She is smiling and resting her chin on her right hand. She is wearing a teal blazer over a dark turtleneck and a necklace with blue and gold beads. In the background, there is a red wall with white lines and measurements: a vertical line labeled '22"' and a horizontal line labeled '42"'.

## SUZANNE COHEN

**SUZANNE F. COHEN** gave her first charitable gift at the age of five and has been a professional volunteer her entire adult life. But recently, she says, her philosophy on giving has evolved to a new level.

“My philanthropic vision has developed and become more finely tuned over the years,” says Cohen, who is one of Baltimore’s leading philanthropists, activists and champions. “I really try to focus on areas of specific need in the city, providing access and helping underserved populations. My giving is now more proactive, rather than reactive.”

For many years, Cohen has given her time, energy and resources to various causes, including: THE ASSOCIATED: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, of which she was board chair; the Baltimore Jewish Council, of which she was president;

the Baltimore Museum of Art, of which she also was board chair; Goucher College; and, many other boards in the city.

But her philanthropic vision fits in well with her current focus on the work that goes on at OSI-Baltimore. Cohen – who raised her family in the suburbs, but moved to the city in 1991 – is keenly interested in what she and others could do to help solve Baltimore’s toughest challenges. As a member of the Board of Directors and chair of the “Soros Challenge,” a recently-completed fundraising campaign that raised \$15.7 million, Cohen’s gifts – in every sense of the word – have gone a long way toward reaching that goal.

And although the campaign has ended, Cohen’s work with OSI-Baltimore will continue.



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**“This is important work. There’s not always an immediate, nor a visible payoff. But there is much to be done, and OSI is in a position to be a big part of the change our city needs.”**

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**WHAT INSPIRES YOU MOST ABOUT OSI-BALTIMORE?**

I’m tremendously inspired by the idea of systemic change, the determination to address and help solve society’s most intractable problems. OSI is dealing with big stuff, and it’s not sexy stuff. And I am tremendously impressed by how brilliant, thoughtful and creative the program staff is. I also am captivated by the idea of the Community Fellows. They are wonderful! They’re our ear to the ground, and they have the ability to make such a difference by working directly in neighborhoods.

**HOW DID YOU END UP CHAIRING THE SOROS CHALLENGE CAMPAIGN?**

How could I say ‘No’ to something that I loved and believed in? That’s really what it amounted to. And because I believe in it so much, I really have to thank everyone who has given to our campaign. I want to give my thanks particularly for each one’s generosity of spirit and resources. Such a huge show of confidence gives OSI added credibility as we move forward.

**PEOPLE SAY YOU HAVE THE MAGIC TOUCH WHEN IT COMES TO FUNDRAISING. WHAT IS YOUR SECRET? HOW DID THAT MAGIC TOUCH WORK IN REGARDS TO OSI-BALTIMORE?**

I’m not sure it’s a magic touch. It’s a basic respect for other people and trying to either know their interests beforehand or listening to what they have to say and trying to match up their interests with our programs. A few times, when I’ve felt it was appropriate or possible, I have invited people to match my gifts. Mine is a very personal way of soliciting; it has nothing to do with computer-generated information or models. It is a matter of mutual respect. I try to ask for appropriate, or reasonable, gifts. And people respect my involvement and my financial commitment. I will not solicit for something that I’m not deeply committed to. So I hope what people see in me is integrity when it comes to giving and asking.

**SINCE THE RECESSION, HAVE PHILANTHROPIC LEADERS CHANGED THEIR APPROACH TO GIVING?**

The recession has definitely affected giving. It’s harder to raise the money, but I think what’s happened as a result of the recession is that people are more interested in giving as an investment. The concept of giving as an investment works very well at OSI, because one is truly investing in solutions. People are more cautious, understandably, which I think means we have to make our case better, and I think we probably have to personalize our case more. The concept of systemic change is very difficult for people to grasp. So I think when we can relate this idea more personally, we can involve more people that way. And as a result, we will be more effective.

**HOW HAS YOUR APPROACH TO GIVING CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?**

Since I became a city resident, I’ve tried to focus my philanthropy. I really try to focus on specific needs in the city, providing access and helping underserved populations. So I try to develop a consistency to my own giving and my participation. OSI is dealing with some of the most intractable issues in the city and I want to be part of striving for improvements in those areas. I want to be part of helping to solve the problem, helping make the city a more viable, livable place.

**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A YOUNG PERSON WHO WANTS TO START GIVING AND DOESN’T QUITE KNOW HOW TO BEGIN?**

I think one of the most important things for them to know is to ask questions. Pick an area of interest, learn as much as you can about it, show up at public forums, make a small gift. And I’m not designating what small is. Then get on a mailing list where you get the information about that area of interest, read it and then continue to ask questions.

And I want them to know it’s doable. We are all craving the interest and participation of young people.

**WHAT ROLE DOES OSI-BALTIMORE PLAY IN THE FUTURE OF THE CITY?**

I believe OSI plays a major role in the future of the city – as thinkers, problem solvers, innovators and coalition builders. **Though we often function as an urban laboratory, we are not a time limited experiment. Happily, we are here to stay and determined to make a difference in Baltimore. We invite each of you to become part of the solution.**

A portrait of Jessica Turrall, a young woman with dark, curly hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark, short-sleeved collared shirt. The background is a soft-focus interior with light-colored walls and a wooden door frame.

## FIRST CLINTON BAMBERGER COMMUNITY FELLOW:

# JESSICA TURRAL

Clinton Bamberger is known as many things: an attorney, professor, activist, and mentor. In his long and distinguished career, he has won so many awards and been bestowed so many honors, that it is daunting to try to name them all here.

But now, Jessica Turrall, the first to be named as a Clinton Bamberger Community Fellow, has yet another title to decree upon him: “friend.”

“Since I met him that very first time, he has been very supportive and encouraging,” says Turrall, who was introduced to Bamberger at a reception this fall. “He’s a very busy man, but he said to keep in touch with him and so I have. I’ve emailed him and he actually talks to me like a friend. I just share different things with him and he listens and gives me good advice.”

Those who know Bamberger are not at all surprised to learn that he has taken a young woman under his wing, with the goal of mentoring and guiding her forward toward success. After all, Bamberger has worked tirelessly for years on behalf of those in need of a hand.


But for Turrall, 23, such one-on-one attention is, she says, “an honor.”

OSI-Baltimore created the Clinton Bamberger Community Fellowship this year as a way to honor Bamberger, who has been an invaluable member of its Board since its inception in 1997. In addition

to his commitment to the many issues OSI-Baltimore focuses upon, Bamberger has been an ardent supporter of the Community Fellows, serving as a member of the selection committee for the program 12 of the last 13 years. He has been engaged in and supported their work as a whole and individually – and his interest in their projects often continues long after their fellowship ends.

The Clinton Bamberger Community Fellowship will continue to be awarded every year to the Fellow whose project most embodies the audacious qualities that characterize Bamberger, as a way to acknowledge his role as an enthusiastic and tireless advocate with a commitment to justice and opportunity for all.

His work and Turrall’s are a natural fit. Before she even considered an OSI Fellowship, Turrall was connected to OSI-Baltimore. In high school, she was an active member of the Baltimore Urban Debate League, which was incubated at OSI-Baltimore. Being part of BUDL helped her evolve into who she is today.

**A little more than a year ago, Turrall started an organization called Hand in Hand Baltimore, which connects juveniles charged as adults with caring mentors – most of them community members – who provide counseling, individual and group therapy, academic enrichment and case management.** [CONTINUED ON PAGE 9](#) 



CLINTON BAMBERGER

# AN APPRECIATION: CLINTON BAMBERGER

By Diana Morris, Director, OSI-Baltimore

For over 13 years, the Baltimore Community Fellows' commitment to the city has been matched by their audaciousness. Clinton Bamberger's audaciousness is matched by his commitment to the Fellows.

When Clinton announced – after 13 years of inspiring service – that he was stepping down from the Board, it seemed natural and fitting for us to establish the Clinton Bamberger Community Fellowship.

Clinton has guided the Fellows program from its inception, encouraging us, over the last 13 years, to take calculated risks and recognize a broad range of approaches to shake up the status quo and instigate change. An astute observer of the destruction and hardship that is caused by poverty and bias and an energetic crusader for change, Clinton has pushed us to be bold, to take chances, to be serious about our mission.

Clinton can empathize deeply with the heart, goals and tactics of the Community Fellows because he embodies their ideals. With tremendous energy and strategy borne from experience, he has used legal and advocacy skills to champion those who suffer from injustice and discrimination. Among many other accomplishments, Clinton was the first director of the national Legal Services Program and he introduced clinical legal education to widen the aspirations and experience of law students in the U.S. and abroad.

Over the years, Clinton has mentored hundreds of young people, who have followed his example, taking on some of the biggest challenges to a just and open society. Long before Facebook, Clinton became the center of an extensive social network, connecting one social justice advocate to another, building a community and developing talent in the process.

Simply put, Clinton sees what is right and should be, and he pursues it – tapping that special combination of idealism and pragmatism that fuels our Community Fellows.

And for that, we say, "Thank you." Thank you for all you have given to OSI and will continue to do in the pursuit of justice.

**"I feel very honored and blessed to be bestowed this great tribute." - TURRAL**

Because of Turral's leadership, nearly 30 young men, ages 14 to 18, have contact with a caring adult three or four days a week. They spend time individually with a counselor once or twice a week and attend group therapy sessions on Tuesdays, where the goal is to build community and alleviate isolation. On Fridays, the youth discuss and debate current events, write plays or poems and perform for their peers. On Sundays, they focus on academics and plan for their futures.

Bamberger has taken a keen interest in Turral's efforts, reading extensively about her project, sharing his thoughts and even attending her latest fundraiser.

"I feel very honored and blessed to be bestowed this great tribute," Turral says. "OSI expects a lot out of all the Fellows but now, because of Mr. Bamberger, I expect more out of myself."



A close-up portrait of Dr. Carla D. Hayden, a Black woman with short, dark, wavy hair and bangs. She is smiling warmly at the camera, showing her teeth. She is wearing a blue collared shirt. The background is a soft-focus, warm-toned interior, possibly a library or office, with wooden beams and shelves visible.

# PROFILE OF AN OSI-BALTIMORE INVESTOR:

# CARLA HAYDEN

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**DR. CARLA D. HAYDEN** came to Baltimore 17 years ago to become the Chief Executive Officer of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, one of the oldest free public library systems in the United States.

Her work to revitalize the aging system has been widely recognized. She is credited with bringing the library's technology into the 21st Century and for using her formidable influence to oversee a fundraising campaign that helped expand the central library.



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Dr. Hayden's belief that all people should have access to the library is evident in her efforts to improve outreach services to city neighborhoods, such as offering teens after-school homework assistance and college and career counseling. For her successes, she was honored with the Librarian of the Year Award from Library Journal magazine in 1995, becoming the first African American to win such an honor. She was recently appointed as Chair of the Mayor's Youth Cabinet.

Dr. Hayden was born in Tallahassee, Florida and grew up in Chicago. A graduate of Roosevelt University, she earned her MA and Ph.D. degrees from the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago.

Prior to coming to Baltimore, Dr. Hayden was the First Deputy Commissioner and Chief Librarian of the Chicago Public Library, an Assistant Professor in the School of Library and Information Science at the University of Pittsburgh, and Library Services Coordinator at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.

Dr. Hayden is past president of the American Library Association where she advocated that the USA Patriot Act be amended to "protect civil liberties and privacy of the public while at the same time ensuring that law enforcement has the appropriate tools necessary to safeguard the security of our country." She has been named a 2003 Woman of the Year by Ms. Magazine. She also has impeccable style.

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#### **HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH OSI-BALTIMORE?**

I was very honored to be asked by Diana Morris, director of OSI-Baltimore, when the nonprofit opened in 1998 to join its Board. I was excited to be part of a new organization and the opportunities it presented to help the significant challenges this city is facing. So it was my privilege to be a member of OSI-Baltimore's board when it was first established. I now serve as the co-chair of OSI-Baltimore's Leadership Council.

**HOW DOES YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND HELP YOU IN YOUR ROLE AS CO-CHAIR OF THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL?** Growing up in Chicago, I understand the challenges and issues an urban city like Baltimore faces. My

professional career has taken me from Chicago to Pittsburgh, and from Baltimore to President of the American Library Association. The lessons and people I've met along the way have created a great foundation for dealing with the three Baltimore issues OSI wants to solve: drug addiction, overreliance on incarceration, and education.

**WHAT PROGRESS HAVE YOU SEEN IN BALTIMORE SINCE COMING HERE?** Since moving to Baltimore I've seen an increase in coordination around city efforts. From the library's partnership with several city agencies like the health department, the school system, the police department and more, all have helped enhance lives in this great city. OSI has been very helpful in particular areas, for instance in drug treatment and criminal justice – these are areas in which they have been major catalysts.

**HOW ARE THE GOALS OF THE ENOCH PRATT FREE LIBRARY AND OSI-BALTIMORE ALIGNED, IF AT ALL?** The goals of the Enoch Pratt Free Library and OSI-Baltimore are definitely aligned – both provide services and resources for people in need. For over two years, both the library and OSI have partnered in a very successful lecture series, Talking About Race. We kicked off this series in 2009 and it's been very successful, standing-room-only for most lectures. It definitely shows the importance and the eagerness of people in our area to discuss and tackle issues connected to race. This series has created a dialogue beyond the walls of the library.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT BEING THE HEAD LIBRARIAN IN THE CITY THAT READS?** My favorite part of being the head librarian in Baltimore City is that I get the opportunity to contribute to the development and enrichment of the city and its citizens. For more than 15 years at the Pratt Library, I have loved hearing the remarkable stories of generations of families who have used this great institution. From a grandmother who received her first library card at the Patterson Park Branch more than 80 years ago to people thanking us for helping them get a job, the Pratt Library is definitely part of this city's fabric, and I'm so happy I can be a part of it.

# CAMPAIGN FOR BLACK MALE ACHIEVEMENT:

## MAKING CHANGE FOR MEN & BOYS IN BALTIMORE



In Baltimore, a city infamous for its homicide rate and where many black men and boys face a legacy of institutional racism and prejudice, several programs funded by the Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA) are helping to bring about transformation and offer hope.

Launched by the Open Society Foundations' U.S. Programs two and a half years ago, CBMA is a national initiative that awards nearly 80% of its grants in the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic and the Gulf, says Shawn Dove, Campaign Manager.

Innovative CBMA programs – and the change agents who run them – are making a difference in Baltimore where many black men and boys struggle with issues ranging from joblessness to fatherhood.

"We've been phenomenally happy with the work in Baltimore. For more than a decade, the Baltimore office has invested in issues around education, workforce development and responsible fatherhood," Dove says. "What we were able to do through deciding to invest additional dollars in Baltimore and to partner with the

Baltimore office is to really build on a lot of the existing transformative work that they've been doing for the last 13 years."

Rashid K. Shabazz, CBMA Program Officer, said the organization funds national and local groups that will

RASHID SHABAZZ (LEFT) and SHAWN DOVE



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ultimately reach thousands of people. He cites the Oakland Unified School District's Department for African-American Male Achievement as a site where some of the lessons learned in Baltimore will be put into practice.

"With the investment we're making with Oakland's school district," Shabazz says, "we hope to see tremendous impact, similar to what our colleagues and friends have achieved in Baltimore, by cutting the number of suspensions of African-American youth. This means that more of these young people will stay in school and graduate."

Adds Dove, "While the Campaign's narrow lens focuses on black men and boys, the wide-angle lens is really a community-building strategy in the African-American community to not only help raise and nurture healthy, productive black men and boys, but also, to strengthen families."

CBMA is working in a number of U.S. cities, including Philadelphia, Chicago, Milwaukee, New Orleans and Jackson, Miss., but it began its outreach in Baltimore almost from inception.



## DAVID MILLER

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David Miller is on a mission to save black males.

As Co-Founder and Chief Visionary Officer of the Urban Leadership Institute based in Baltimore, he travels the country working to educate and empower them.

A 1999 OSI-Baltimore Community Fellow, Miller also manages Raising Him Alone, a campaign for single women who are raising black males. Funded by the Campaign for Black Male Achievement, Miller's program provides educational support and advocacy, financial literacy, tips on reconnecting fathers to their children and information on health and wellness, including mental health, to the more than 12,000 women it serves nationally.

"With 72 percent of black children being born into single-parent homes, mostly female, it's critically important that we engage these mothers around healthy lifestyle practices," Miller says.

Miller realized years ago that reaching parents is critical. "You cannot work with these boys in isolation, and I think one of the reasons we have challenges is we're not working with the parents."

"CBMA is an innovative approach to philanthropy targeting black males," Miller said. "When you look at homicides, violence and other quality-of-life indicators regarding young African-American males, it suggests we're still in trouble. To be bold enough to create a campaign for black males is revolutionary."

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# CAMPAIGN FOR BLACK MALE ACHIEVEMENT

“While the Campaign’s narrow lens focuses on black men and boys, the wide-angle lens is really a community-building strategy in the African-American community to not only to help raise and nurture healthy, productive black men and boys, but also, to strengthen families.” - DOVE

“We had an immediate presence in Baltimore because one of our flagship initial grants was to the Center for Urban Families,” Dove says. “Joseph Jones, founder and CEO, is a dynamic social entrepreneur and has created a responsible fatherhood and workforce development strategy that’s now a national model.”

Dove and Shabazz also noted the exceptional work of David Miller, co-founder and chief visionary officer of the Urban Leadership Institute and an alumni OSI-Baltimore Community Fellow. Miller created Raising Him Alone, a campaign targeting single women who are raising black males.

Jones and Miller are just two of many examples of individuals helping to improve the plight of Baltimore’s black males, CBMA leaders say.

“David Miller and Joe Jones are hometown heroes,” Dove says. “It’s critical that philanthropy invests in organizations and individuals

that have made the decision to commit their lives and their callings to social change work and to support focused attention to deal with the conditions of black men and boys.”

Dove says that CBMA applauds OSI-Baltimore’s efforts to improve public schools.

“We have followed the work of the Baltimore office very closely, including its work to increase black male graduation rates and to change the discipline codes,” Dove says. “It has resulted in fewer suspensions of not only black boys, but all children. In looking at tangible results, I would certainly have to put that at the top of the list.”

**THE CAMPAIGN FOR BLACK MALE ACHIEVEMENT** is a multi-issue, cross-fund strategy to address black men and boys’ exclusion from economic, social, educational, and political life in the United States. The campaign, housed at the Open Society Foundations (OSF), OSI-Baltimore’s parent organization, responds to a growing body of research that reveals the intensification of black males’ negative life outcomes. It builds on OSF’s U.S. Programs’ mission to support individuals and organizations that nurture the development of a more democratic, just society, as well as the Open Society Foundations’ expertise and past work to reduce incarceration, promote racial justice, and support youth engagement and leadership development.

Since its launch in May 2008, the campaign has engaged in exploratory grantmaking, philanthropic partnership development, and strategic planning, which has helped narrow its strategic focus to three areas that profoundly shape the life outcomes of black males – education, family and work.





(LEFT TO RIGHT) RASHARD WILLIAMS, Youth Provocateur; PETER BRUUN, Project Coordinator; FANON HILL and SAM HOLMES, Co-Directors

## BLACK MALE IDENTITY PROJECT

Far too many negative stereotypes exist about black men in America and in Baltimore it is no different. To combat those erroneous ideas and to begin to build a new public face of black men, the Campaign for Black Male Achievement is funding the “Black Male Identity Project,” an initiative of the community arts organization Art on Purpose.

The Black Male Identity Project has the goal of serving as a catalyst for a national campaign to build, celebrate and accentuate authentic images and narratives of black cultural identity. It will engage local artists working in many different media as well as community members, both young and old, to create a more positive – and more accurate – depiction of black males.

“This is an exciting project with the goal of stimulating a Baltimore-based dialogue about image-making,” says Fanon Hill, who is sharing the initiative’s project director duties with Sam Christian Holmes. “It’s an art-

based project charged with developing a counter-narrative about black males. Workshops facilitated by professional artists will assist those in the community in telling their own story through their art.”

The year-long project was launched in March and will involve a city-wide celebration of black men and boys. At the project’s end, its website, with a repository of all the artwork and imagery, “will be accessible to anyone who wants to use it for educational, advocacy or even inspirational purposes,” Hill says.

“Art has saved my life,” Hill says. “So this project is a celebration in the most personal sense. We are extremely grateful to the Campaign for Black Male Achievement for making this a possibility and making this real in Baltimore city. This is a project that will ultimately benefit people of every color.”

# AUDACIOUS INDIVIDUAL



"[The students] saw a real hunger and thirst for education. They saw that at home in Baltimore they have access to libraries and computer labs, and the youth in Africa – with not even half as much – were doing twice as much. This was very profound for them." - WHITLOW

# TRE SUBIRA WHITLOW BALTIMORE COMMUNITY FELLOW

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It's a question that is often asked: how does change in a community start? Who propels the action; who begins the thinking? In Baltimore, the young people involved in Baltimore Community Fellow Emery "Tre Subira" Whitlow's video-production training program are learning not only how to better their video skills, but how to look at a larger goal of creating positive community change.

This fall, Tre Subira led that same group of young people to Ghana, West Africa. There they came to understand that community change often must start with personal change.

**"To say it transformed the lives of the young people is an understatement,"** says Tre Subira. "They are very different people than they were before this trip."

The 11 young men and women, aged 14 to 19, who traveled to Ghana to learn about their history and culture, now are more grateful and appreciative, he says. They are more confident and not as wasteful. No longer can someone call these young people "spoiled."

"This was not a typical tourist experience," Tre Subira says. "It was a cultural exploration of their heritage. It was at the same time very much a homecoming, even as it pushed them outside their comfort zone."

Tre Subira's fellowship project, The Griot's Eye, draws inspiration from the ancient role of griots in West African societies. The griots are revered storytellers who use song, poetry and history to perpetuate oral traditions and celebrate the community.

Tre Subira's program has modern twists: the storytellers he's training are all from Baltimore, and the mode of communication is through video. The program focuses on enriching the lives of young people and also on community development.

The youth who spent three weeks in Ghana – living with families, exploring the communities and soaking up the culture – left the continent motivated to do more with their lives and share their experiences with peers. They are now producing a documentary about what they learned.

"They were inspired by what they saw and experienced in Africa, and they saw that there was a lot they could teach to other youth," Tre Subira says. "They saw a real hunger and thirst for education. They saw that at home in Baltimore they have access to libraries and computer labs, and the youth in Africa – with not even half as much – were doing twice as much. This was very profound for them."

One young woman in The Griot's Eye, who already was a good student, vowed to be even better, Tre Subira said, and is now the top student in her grade. Another realized how often she asks her mother for money, instead of working and earning money to get what she wants and needs on her own.

"I think a lot of them felt like, 'Wow, I'm not living up to my fullest potential,'" Tre Subira said. "They saw they had taken things for granted. This really does a whole lot for their confidence, their leadership skills and their community activism."

Tre Subira now is raising money to take a larger group of students to both Ghana and Ethiopia for a month. The group will use their filmmaking skills in community development projects at an orphanage and a school.

"I think this trip, too, will be very powerful for them," he says.



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# \* FINAL CAMPAIGN REPORT ENCLOSED



## DIANA MORRIS ON WYPR

Listen to Diana Morris's monthly radio commentary on WYPR 88.1 FM. Keep an eye out for an email announcing the air date of her next commentary. You can also listen to past commentaries by visiting [www.wypr.org](http://www.wypr.org).



## HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN JOURNALISM IS GOOD OR BAD?

In order for members of an open society to be well-informed citizens, they need to know how to evaluate what good and bad journalism is. NewsTrust Baltimore, funded by OSI-Baltimore's parent organization Open Society Foundations, was recently launched as a six-month pilot project. The online service allows readers to rate selected stories with a set of objective tools, thereby becoming better educated consumers.

Sign up to participate in the pilot at: <http://baltimore.newstrust.net>.

### NOT RECEIVING EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT OSI-BALTIMORE?

Sign up to receive the latest news, the most recent audacious ideas and events at [www.osi-baltimore.org](http://www.osi-baltimore.org).

**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, cull 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.