



OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE-BALTIMORE



BALTIMORE COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIPS

CHANGING BALTIMORE WITH SMART SOLUTIONS, ONE AUDACIOUS IDEA AFTER ANOTHER

The Baltimore Community Fellows are becoming the city's new leaders for social change. What makes them different is their tenacity, creativity and visibility.



Now nearly one hundred individuals strong, the Baltimore Community Fellows are a corps of social entrepreneurs working throughout the city—their imprint is everywhere.

FELLOWS = 

BALTIMORE COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIPS

In 1998, Open Society Institute-Baltimore created the Baltimore Community Fellowships Program with the specific goal of working to improve life in Baltimore's underserved communities in unique and important ways. Each year, up to ten individuals are added to the ranks of this now thriving group of nearly 100 social entrepreneurs, all committed to change and to revitalizing our city.

The program's original purpose remains unchanged: to meet the challenges facing Baltimore's most needy communities by identifying and supporting social innovators of unusual promise from diverse backgrounds and providing them with the ingredients to ensure that their ideas have a stable foundation and long-term viability. These individuals become leaders for our future.



“Contempt, fear and rage all keep us from getting along with one another.”

—Lauren Abramson, 1998 Fellow

Working with a technique called community conferencing, Abramson brings together youth offenders and their families with victims and their families. From her original project, Community Conferencing has grown so that today it has partnerships in over 250 schools, churches, libraries, community centers throughout Baltimore and also operates inside the prison system, with annual budget of \$1 million. The model, based on a facilitated model from Australia, is predicated on the idea that communities and individuals can safely and effectively resolve conflicts themselves—and it works.

THE ISSUE

OSI-Baltimore focuses its work exclusively on the root causes of three intertwined issue areas that the city's most impoverished residents face—drug addiction, a vicious cycle of incarceration, and obstacles that impede youth in succeeding inside and outside the classroom. Its work focuses on changing systems by building private and public partnerships and by more effectively utilizing existing and new resources.

But OSI-Baltimore also recognizes that solutions to these challenging issues sometimes sprout from untested and unlikely places. The Baltimore Community Fellows are a very important component of our work for just this reason. The Fellows program enables individual risk-takers and visionaries from diverse backgrounds to work in innovative ways with underserved populations. This corps of committed social innovators undergird our efforts in the larger arenas—they are active individuals, on the ground, working in our communities. The Fellows program gives expression to one of Open Society's most central goals: creating lasting impact by enabling individuals from all communities to experience and fully realize their talents.

THE CHALLENGE

OSI-Baltimore has been funded solely by its founder George Soros, whose contribution of more than \$50 million to the city is the single largest outside philanthropic investment in Baltimore's history for work to help its most vulnerable citizens. Because of this investment, OSI-Baltimore has been a significant contributor to Baltimore's recently highly acclaimed renaissance.

To assure its future and sustainability, we now seek other investors in our work. For the Baltimore Community Fellowships Program, our challenge is to raise \$3 million to sustain this important program and continue to identify additional Fellows for future classes.

Every dollar we receive will benefit not only the program, but be matched by \$.50 from the Soros Challenge Fund.



“I didn't know anyone would support what I was trying to do.”

—Jacqueline Robarge, 2002 Fellow

Robarge founded Power Inside to advocate for services and policies to meet the critical needs of women detained or recently released from detention because of sex and drug-related crimes. These women, often suffering from mental illness, abuse and addiction, are largely ignored in society. Power Inside has collaborated with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and works with the courts and other public agencies, continuing to grow as a strong advocacy organization today, working to deliver services such as treatment, housing, and employment to break the cycle of ongoing incarceration.

87% of Baltimore Community Fellows continue to do important work in the city long after they complete their fellowship.



The Fellows touch every community as a visible sign of change and hope, hallmarks of a city rising.

HOW ARE THEY IDENTIFIED

Each year, OSI-Baltimore solicits candidates by distributing announcements broadly throughout the city. The Baltimore Community Fellowships Program elicits an average of 200 to 300 applications annually. The selection is a rigorous, multi-tiered and transparent process. Community members, with expertise in various fields, review the applications. A rotating group of local leaders comprises the final selection committee, which interviews up to 20 of the strongest applicants and then selects up to ten fellows who will become the next class of Baltimore Community Fellows.

The selection committee does not look for sure bets and often funds individuals who would find it difficult to secure venture capital at this stage of their work. Instead, **it looks for those that are risk-takers and dreamers, who not only have vision, but also appear to have the ability to harness their idealism with pragmatic skills to motivate change.**

HOW THEY DO THEIR WORK

Fellows are given a stipend to support their work for 18 months. They also receive financial support to cover additional expenses, including seed money to launch their ideas, travel, medical expenses and education costs, when applicable. Throughout their fellowship—and frequently beyond—they are given advice and support by OSI-Baltimore staff members and other leaders in their fields to ensure their ideas have a stable foundation and long-term viability.



“I got tired of seeing an endless cycle of people with criminal records and who had absolutely no opportunity to advance out of the lower levels of the workplace.”

—Galen Sampson, 2006 Fellow

After years running the kitchen at the exclusive Harbor Court Hotel in downtown Baltimore, Galen Sampson has established a culinary apprenticeship program that teaches cooking skills to people in transition from addiction, homelessness or the criminal justice system. He and his wife Bridget, a 2003 Fellow, have partnered on this project and opened the Dogwood Restaurant, which was almost instantly a Baltimore “destination,” and their project, which began with two apprenticeships, is now positioned to serve 36 individuals in 2008.

DEVELOPING LEADERS ONE PERSON AT A TIME

What is different about this fellowship program is the hands-on technical assistance that each Fellow receives.

The leadership of Pamela King, Director of the Community Fellowships Program, is a major contribution to the success of the program. She brings over a decade of program development experience and each Fellow works with her, one-on-one, during the 18 months. She ascertains, right from the beginning, what will be needed to make their projects successful and sustainable. Whether the need is to find additional partners and working capital, fund-raising techniques, community outreach, communications skills, or accounting, the Fellows are given guidance and direction to move their ideas to fruition. OSI sponsors an annual, three-day conference that provides additional training and networking opportunities.

FOCUSED ON ONE CITY

Another important distinction is that the program is dedicated exclusively to Baltimore. Because every Fellow is working here, they are able to meet together monthly, discussing their successes and challenges, brainstorming about solutions and sharing resources. Throughout the 18 month period, the Fellows meet with guest speakers from Baltimore and beyond to refine and clarify their work and to find out about best practices elsewhere. This peer network serves as an important touchstone of ideas and often the relationships build into on-going partnerships. They join existing clusters of Fellows who are committed to finding opportunities and solutions within and outside systems to actively make social change.

Deeply concerned about issues of fairness and social justice, the Fellows draw upon their modest resources and address some of the most pressing and complex problems in Baltimore. What makes them different is their tenacity, creativity and visibility.

The program not only helps individuals and communities, but sends a strong cultural message that public service is valuable, that individual residents can effect change, and that innovative and bold ideas warrant investment.



“I kept reading stories of human suffering and that’s what was interesting to me.”

—Paul Santomena, 2002 Fellow

Paul Santomena had worked for Jay Leno and the “Tonight Show,” but that wasn’t his passion. He established the Megaphone Project to produce short films and videos at a low cost for non-profit organizations so that they can create awareness of social and economic inequities to garner support for important issues. He has produced over 25 films and videos as of 2007.

Born...

In less than ten short years, Fellows have established over 20 community-based programs, each creating more opportunity for Baltimore's under-served communities.

out of Baltimore
Community Fellowships.



"We cannot keep killing generations."
—David Miller, 1999 Fellow

Concerned about the increasingly high rates of violence, David Miller worked with urban youth in the Edmonson Avenue corridor in West Baltimore. He launched the Urban Leadership Institute, which focuses on shifting the public's negative perception of young black men in the community to a positive emphasis on youth development. His work continues today and has both a local and national focus.



"I benefited from other Fellows sharing their process, models, and experience. Now I would like to make myself available to future Fellows in the event that my experience may be helpful to their work."

—Leon Faruq, 2003 Fellow

After serving years in prison, Leon Faruq changed his life dramatically. He worked directly with men in prison and ex-prisoners to make their re-entry into the community a successful transition. He encourages other service providers in treatment and workforce development programs to use cognitive development approaches to offset the harmful effects of incarceration and negative lifestyles that helped get these men into prison originally. He has become a leading spokesperson on these issues, and today is heading up a new program, CeaseFire, introduced to Baltimore in 2007, to reduce violence in specific neighborhoods.

- Access Art
- Baltimore Freedom Academy
 - Baltimore Free Store
 - The Book Thing
 - Chefs in the Making
- Community Conferencing Center
 - Community Law in Action
 - Dance Girls of Baltimore
 - Drumming Project
 - Fluid Movement
 - Follow Your Dreams Records
 - Habits for Success
- Immigration Outreach Center
- Kids on the Hill
- Meet Me Halfway Mentoring Program
- Megaphone Project
- Por la Avenida (On the Avenue)
- Power Inside
- Rebuilding through Art
- Urban Leadership Institute
- Wide Angle Youth Media
- Youth Organizing Urban Revitalization Systems
- Youthlight Baltimore
- Unchained Talent



“I realized I wasn’t doing this to find kids who were just like me at their age, I was doing it for any kid who needed an outlet.”

–Tony Shore, 2000 Fellow

Tony Shore, winner of the 2007 Sondheim Prize, collaborated with young people in his Southwest neighborhood to create Access Art, a youth run art gallery, classroom space, darkroom and computer lab. There is also a studio for resident artists. All of the art instruction is free to the community. Access Art participants have created numerous public murals and have contributed art to several exhibitions.

RESULTS FOR BALTIMORE

Our alumni follow two distinct paths—they serve in leadership positions at existing non-profits and public agencies where there is a fit or need for their expertise or they create new, self-sufficient entities.

Initiatives begun during the Fellowships not only continue to have quantifiable results, but have blossomed into important programs for the city and have become significant vehicles for community improvement in specific areas including youth development, juvenile justice, the environment, workforce development, media literacy and advocacy, and community arts. Some have lead to the development of new and active nonprofit organizations in the city while others generate important changes within the organizations in which they have been hosted.

Now that OSI-Baltimore has seeded so many projects and nearly 100 Fellows, the effects of their work is making cumulative change in many different areas, including community arts, juvenile justice, after-school projects, literacy and advocacy. **These Baltimore Community Fellows are becoming the city’s new leaders for social change.**

PROGRAM SUPPORTERS

The Lois and Irving Blum Foundation Inc.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Cohen Opportunity Fund

The Commonwealth Foundation

The Foundation for Maryland’s Future

The Hoffberger Foundation

Gloria B. and Herbert M. Katzenberg Charitable Fund

John Meyerhoff and Lenel Srochi Meyerhoff Fund

Alison and Arnold Richman Fund

... and other investors in the OSI Campaign for Baltimore



“I didn’t want to start a program. I just wanted to create relationships with young people.”

–Rebecca Yenawine, 1999 Fellow

Living in Reservoir Hill, Rebecca Yenawine saw neighbor children painting graffiti on her walls and invited them inside, providing them with after-school arts education that evolves directly out of the interests of these young people. Kids on the Hill is now a flourishing program that serves over 50 children annually, ages seven to 18.

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE BALTIMORE COMMUNITY FELLOWS

The Baltimore Community Fellowships Program has been tested, refined and proven. Its successes clearly validate the strategy and demonstrate the program's value.

We believe that now is the time to insure that Baltimore has future leaders with the commitment, vision and skill to make certain that the city embraces its most vulnerable communities so that all can experience a "second renaissance," one that builds opportunity from within.

OSI-Baltimore invites you to make a gift of support that will allow this innovative and important program to continue well into the future.


We offer important opportunities for donors who are interested in supporting the Baltimore Community Fellows:

The opportunity to watch individuals make visible change as it happens.

Investors are welcome to attend selected Fellows gatherings and site visits to watch transformation of communities as they occur. Our donors have connected personally with individual Fellows whose work inspires them.

The opportunity to follow real progress.

Every year, the Baltimore Community Fellows are featured in local and national media. The Fellows and their work are not only the subject of newspaper, radio and television stories, but they have testified in Annapolis and in Washington, DC about critical issues facing our society. Through regular publications and electronic media, donors have access as these events unfold.



"Each child who comes through the program knows they're a valuable part of society—I want them to know they're worth a lot."

—Bernard Fayall, 2006 Fellow

Bernard Fayall uses a hands-on approach to help hundreds of young students stay in school and navigate difficult adolescent years. His "Meet Me Halfway" center which began in Garrison Middle School provides a safe, nurturing place for students to receive guidance, work through conflicts, find tutoring help or just hang out. The program has now expanded and serves about 1000 children from three different public schools.



The opportunity to hear from charismatic national leaders.

Since 2004, OSI-Baltimore has hosted an annual event to increase the awareness of the Fellows and to benefit the broader community of civic leaders. OSI invites highly acclaimed, recognized leaders whose work embodies a spirit of hope and passion for justice.

The opportunity to build an enduring benefit for Baltimore.


Once donors are aware of the work that is being accomplished in the city by the Baltimore Community Fellows, they can't help but be struck by their motivation, commitment and power. Our investors see that change is happening, that hope is a reality—and that they can make this program a ubiquitous, sustained entity in Baltimore City. Because every dollar we receive will be matched by \$.50 from the Soros Challenge Fund through 2010, many investors have chosen to make a multi-year pledge.

We hope this publication has whetted your appetite to become more engaged in this program.

PLEASE JOIN US.

For more detailed information about how you can contribute to the Baltimore Community Fellowships Program, contact us:

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"Time and financial security are needed to take a solid idea and incubate it long enough to show the results needed to attract additional interest and financial support."

—Terry Hickey, 1998 Fellow

Terry Hickey founded Community Law in Action (CLIA), an organization designed to encourage leadership and civic involvement among inner-city youth. The program that now serves more than 500 youth per week, teaches young people to act upon their concerns and to achieve real victories through their efforts by identifying, addressing, and solving issues before legal representation becomes necessary. Under the leadership and direction of CLIA, a new high school has been created—the Baltimore Freedom Academy.

**They are in the parks. On the streets. Behind the fence.
In the schools. In front of computers. In the courts.
In the gardens. On the playground. Behind the camera.
In the clinics. On the sidewalks. On the corner.**

They are everywhere in Baltimore, doing critical work in our city.

Audacious thinking for lasting change.



OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE-BALTIMORE
BALTIMORE COMMUNITY FELLOWS: AUDACIOUS INDIVIDUALS.