

AUDACIOUS THINKING

AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER
FROM OSI-BALTIMORE

WINTER 2010

MARYLAND OFFICIALS PLAN TO SPEND **\$104 MILLION**

TO BUILD A JAIL TO LOCK UP BALTIMORE YOUTH WHO ARE CHARGED AS ADULTS AND AWAITING TRIALS IN ADULT CRIMINAL COURT.



**SHOULD YOUTH BE AUTOMATICALLY
CHARGED AS ADULTS? NO.**

Statistics show that once these juveniles get their court hearing, nearly 70% are released outright or sent to the juvenile justice system.

WE SHOULD BE THINKING DIFFERENTLY.

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ON THE MOVE: STAFF CHANGES



SHEA



TAYLOR

Christopher W. Shea, former clinical director of Father Martin's Ashley, a private, Maryland-based alcoholism and drug addiction treatment center, has joined OSI-Baltimore as Program Director for the Tackling Drug Addiction initiative. He replaces **Kimá Joy Taylor**, who has been appointed Addiction Treatment and Harm Reduction Program Director for the national Campaign for a New Drug Policy of the Open Society Foundations. Taylor's work will include overseeing the Closing the Addiction Treatment Gap initiative launched by the Baltimore office, which comprises nine state sites working to expand drug addiction treatment as well as a national advocacy effort. She will remain at the OSI-Baltimore office.

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 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.



CONTRIBUTE ONLINE AT WWW.OSI-BALTIMORE.ORG
OR CALL US AT 443-909-7373.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In his best selling book, Wes Moore* says that the difference between him and “the other Wes Moore” was expectations. Taking attendance at school – and following up on absences – are straightforward examples of adult expectations for a child. **Roll-call, that early morning ritual in homeroom that many of us can remember, helped us emerge from a groggy state and shift into focus.** But it also allowed us to internalize the message that our teachers and parents expected us to be at school every day.

Baltimore City Schools CEO Dr. Andres Alonso has made the importance of regular school attendance one of his chief messages for the current academic year. The message is no platitude. OSI-Baltimore has spent several years studying the impact of school absence and publicized the relationship between good school attendance and academic achievement. **Shockingly, more than 40% of our high school students miss a month or more of school.** Chronic absence has predictable results – kids who don’t come to school regularly don’t do well. Worse still, when chronic absence is pervasive, the achievement

of all students suffers. Teachers must slow down to “catch up” students who were absent, and they are unable to cover the curriculum fully. And, regularly attending students become bored by frequent review sessions and they, too, disengage.

There are many reasons for poor attendance. As identified through a citywide task force on school attendance that OSI launched and co-chaired last year, inadequate transportation, asthma and other illnesses, poor decisions about school-going, the need to care for siblings and ailing parents, and out-of-school suspension all contribute to high rates of absence.

But another factor contributes to this epidemic as well: the lack of an explicitly stated expectation that students will attend school every day. Research shows that missing 20 or more days of school in kindergarten and first grade lowers achievement throughout elementary school. Yet, when asked, many parents felt that attendance in these grades was not important. Similarly, when student focus groups discussed attendance, **even those from the City’s most competitive high schools felt that regular attendance was optional – that they could be on the “four-day-a-week plan” and still get passing grades.** What students didn’t recognize was that regular attendance is the difference between getting by and succeeding and inculcates habits that employers will expect and insist upon.

Unclear expectations for school attendance have clear consequences. **That is why OSI-Baltimore has made them a chief target for change.** Working closely with our City School partners, other key agencies, and students and parents, we have identified and are working to remove barriers to attendance. And, we have encouraged City Schools to collect data and put practices in place that address poor attendance. **Simultaneously, following Dr. Alonso’s lead, each of us should state clearly to young people around us that school attendance matters and that we expect every student to attend school every day.** Please join us in this campaign.

DIANA MORRIS, Director of OSI-Baltimore

*Wes Moore is the acclaimed author of “The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates.”



BROWN and BERNARD

KEY CITY LEADERS JOIN THE OSI-BALTIMORE ADVISORY BOARD



Three powerhouses in the areas of business, philanthropy and literature – **Eddie Brown**, **Ed Bernard**, and **Taylor Branch**, have joined the board of directors of OSI-Baltimore.

Bernard and Brown both have distinguished themselves in business, public service and philanthropy and will bring the rigor of their extensive finance backgrounds and commitment to building a robust, inclusive city to OSI. Bernard serves as vice chairman of the board of directors of the T. Rowe Price Group, Inc. and is chairman of the

T. Rowe Price mutual funds. Brown is founder and president of Baltimore-based Brown Capital Management, one of the country's oldest African-American-owned investment management firms. Branch is the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of the trilogy "America in the King Years." More recently, he published "The Clinton Tapes: Wrestling History with the President."

Branch's longtime work with the civil rights movement helped influence his decision to join OSI's board.

**"I am drawn to people who find the bright side
despite all the evidence and cynicism to the contrary.
OSI does that." - TAYLOR BRANCH**

"What inspires me is to see people transcending their own fear, taking something that was quite fearful and turning it into something positive. Their actions changed not only them but radiated throughout the whole country," Branch says of those involved in the historical movement. "I am drawn to people who find the bright side despite all the evidence and cynicism to the contrary. OSI does that."

Many citizens, potential volunteers and donors get discouraged by chronic issues in Baltimore, such as drug addiction and struggling schools. But "hopeless" is not a word Brown would use to describe Baltimore's future or the future of philanthropy in the city, he says.

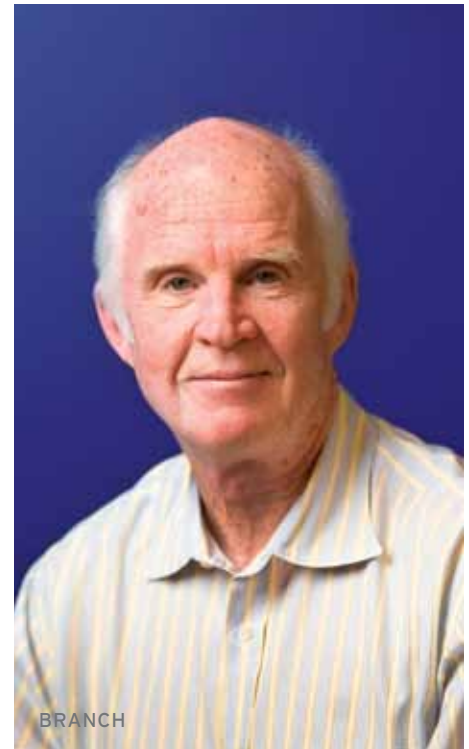
"There are obvious problems, several of which OSI is focused on, which is why I'm interested in pitching in. They're not easy or quick solutions. That's why it's going to be challenging, but not hopeless. And it's going to take awhile to turn the corner," says Brown. **"I think the key is for citizens of goodwill and good intentions not to become discouraged, but to keep their shoulders to the plow and keep pushing ahead."**

Bernard decided recently to become one of those "citizens of goodwill" because he says he was inspired by OSI's vision and approach to Baltimore's most intractable problems.

"They're helping people in very difficult circumstances who need the help. And they're doing it in a way that I think can be self-sustaining. They're trying to break the cycle," Bernard says. "The issues they focus on are things that eat away at the fabric of society. **I think they have an inspired approach to tackling those problems with a combination of resources and expertise. I view it as a privilege to be a part of that.**"

Each new board member brings to the board expertise from his respective field, as well as creative thinking and a broad understanding of the issues OSI tackles.

"It's really an affirmation of OSI's mission that we are continuing to attract people of such stature to our board," said William Clarke III, chair of the OSI-Baltimore board and former executive vice president of research at Campbell & Company, Inc. "They're joining us because they know OSI is here to stay and believe its work is worthy of their time and commitment. OSI engages distinguished community members as local partners in its work, and these three leaders are perfect for that role."



BERNARD, though he now lives in Towson, is a southerner at heart and makes a mean pecan pie. He lives with his wife and two dogs, Lily and Sweeney Todd.

BRANCH lives in Mount Washington with his wife and two Corgis, Zoe and Zora. He enjoys a wide range of music and has been in a rock and roll band, as well as the Atlanta Boys Choir.

BROWN, who lives with his wife in Glen Arm, is a collector of limited edition cars and loves to drive performance cars. When he came to T. Rowe Price in 1973, he was the first African-American investment professional to join the company.

A portrait of Dr. Geoffrey Greif, a middle-aged man with thinning hair, wearing a dark suit, blue shirt, and red patterned tie. He is seated on a dark couch, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. Behind him is a large abstract painting with muted colors and dark lines.

PROFILE OF AN OSI-BALTIMORE INVESTOR:

GEOFFREY GREIF

DR. GEOFFREY GREIF'S WORK as a Professor at the University of Maryland School of Social Work has focused on weighty topics such as race, sexual orientation, child kidnapping, and raising African-American boys. So it's no surprise then, when deciding where he and his wife, Maureen Lefton-Greif, Ph.D. – an associate professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine – would give some of their time and resources, they chose OSI-Baltimore.

"OSI has its finger on the pulse of key issues in Baltimore city, such as incarceration, drug abuse and race," Greif said recently, speaking from his home in Ruxton. "Many of those issues touch on work I've studied and focused on in my own social work and practice."



In 1984, after earning a master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a doctorate from the Columbia University School of Social Work, Greif – a fourth generation Baltimorean – came home to work at the University of Maryland. Since then, he was written or co-edited 11 books, including “Single Fathers; Beating the Odds: Raising Academically Successful African American Males,” with Drs. Freeman Hrabowski and Ken Maton, and his most recent book, “Buddy System: Understanding Male Friendships.”

In 2001, he chaired then-Governor Parris Glendening's Commission to study sexual orientation discrimination in Maryland, and he has received both the Educator of the Year award from the Maryland Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and the Board of Regents Excellence in Teaching Award. He has appeared on numerous television and radio programs, and his work has been cited in major news outlets worldwide.

Now, he is bringing his wealth of expertise – and his support, to OSI-Baltimore.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO BE A SUPPORTER OF OSI-BALTIMORE?

OSI combines a great top-down and bottom-up approach to key issues in Baltimore city and approaches these issues systematically and patiently. They do it through educating the public and intervening in the community, with both micro and macro interventions. And they've been here for a number of years. They've shown that they're staying the course on these issues, which I like.

WHY NOW?

I suppose it's too obvious to say that this is a critical time. Everyone believes that the time they're living in is a critical time. But this is an important time. And I think that OSI has been in Baltimore long enough to establish itself as a leader and as a voice for the underserved. The cumulative amount of time that they've spent here makes them a prime place for philanthropists to give their support.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU MOST ABOUT BEING A PART OF WHAT IS GOING ON AT OSI-BALTIMORE?

What inspires me most about OSI is their attention to social justice issues, and the fact that the issues they've selected to tackle really cut across race and gender and, in some cases, sexual orientation. I think that the intersection of race and sex, along with class, is what inspires me in my own work. And OSI is interested in these issues, too.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE BIGGEST ISSUE FACING PHILANTHROPY IN BALTIMORE TODAY?

Everybody is trying to chase the same dollars. There are so many wonderful groups and, if you're an agency working on social justice

issues, everyone's looking for support. I think the greatest challenge, in addition to supporting the issues that are most important to the city, is that we need to grow the next generation of philanthropists as well.

HOW CAN YOU AND OSI-BALTIMORE HELP TO DO THAT?

Part of the giving that anyone does has to be of money and of time – both are extremely important. And people who give their time or their money should be aware that we are standing on the shoulders of those who gave before us. So organizations like OSI-Baltimore can help by providing mentoring opportunities and make sure there are ways to let new people know that they can make a difference, and provide opportunities for them to make that difference. No matter what ways they give, they're going to make a difference.

All I can do, with Maureen, is hope that what we are able to do will make some small difference toward chipping away at these problems.

YOU SOUND HOPEFUL. HOW DO YOU SEE BALTIMORE'S FUTURE?

I think current education trends are positive, and that is central to the long term growth of an involved and successful citizenry. You can't make it as a society unless people can get an education. Hopefully, a living wage and affordable housing will follow if education levels improve.

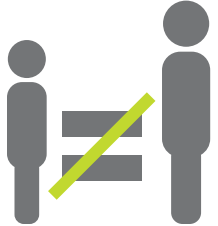
WHAT DO YOU AND MAUREEN DO WHEN YOU'RE NOT WORKING TO MAKE THE CITY A BETTER PLACE?

We like to go for bike rides on the NCR trail. How's that for being true Baltimoreans?



Leesa Hatcher's son was held in an adult detention center for nearly two years and, as a result, is having a hard time getting over the experience, which has negatively affected his personality.

TIME TO END PROSECUTION OF YOUTH AS ADULTS



BERNARD,* age 17, had never been in trouble with the law until he came to visit his father in Baltimore in December 2009. During his visit he attended a New Year's Eve party with his sister. At midnight, several adults fired guns in the air, a celebratory tradition in some parts of Baltimore City, even though it is illegal. When the police arrived, they did not find a weapon on Bernard, although they did find four weapons in the house. Bernard was arrested with three of the adults and charged as an adult for firing a gun in the air. He was held in jail for a few days until his family was able to pay the \$15,000 bail. He pleaded with the adult court judge to send him to the juvenile system to deal with the charge there. The judge was hesitant to grant his request because she was concerned that he was too old for juvenile court. Although the prosecutor opposed Bernard's request, the adult court judge eventually granted it, largely due to Bernard's clean record. The juvenile court required him to get a job or be in school. Bernard is currently living with his mother, working at a restaurant seeking opportunities to re-enroll in school, and staying out of trouble.

Bernard's story is repeated daily behind the walls of the Baltimore City adult jail, where nearly 100 boys and girls are held each year, waiting to be tried for certain crimes. Many (68%) will sit for six months or more waiting for trial, only to have their cases dismissed or sent to the juvenile system. Meanwhile, they are subjected to harsh conditions and separation from family, limited school time, few interventions, such as counseling, and even fewer opportunities for rehabilitation.

These are just some of the findings in the recently-released report, "Just Kids: Baltimore's Youth in the Adult Criminal Justice System," which was funded by OSI-Baltimore.

The Just Kids Partnership to End the Automatic Prosecution of Youth as Adults, composed of three nonprofit organizations – Public Justice Center, Community Law in Action and United Parents of Incarcerated Children and Youth – spent a year conducting research for the report

*Not his real name.

NOTE: MARYLAND OFFICIALS HAVE NOW INDICATED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO RECONSIDER THEIR ORIGINAL PLANS FOR THE JAIL.

The Partnership found that “get-tough-on-crime” policies that put youth into Baltimore’s adult criminal system are counter-productive.

and interviewing dozens of youth and their family members. The Partnership found that “get-tough-on-crime” policies that put youth into Baltimore’s adult criminal system are counter-productive. The report shows that nationwide, youth who are prosecuted, convicted and incarcerated with adults become hardened and are more likely to commit more crimes when released from incarceration than youth in the juvenile justice system.

West Baltimore’s Leesa Hatcher can also attest to the destructive effect of adult jail on children. Her son, Brian, also was held in the detention center for nearly two years as he awaited trial for attempted murder. Brian, who was in middle school when he was charged, eventually saw his case dismissed. But Brian is having a hard time getting over the experience, which has changed his personality for the worse, Hatcher says.

“I’m glad he’s home now,” Hatcher says. “But the sad thing is, jail has turned my son into a monster. He was so humble ...and he was just a jolly kid. Now he doesn’t even find a reason to smile.”

At a time when state officials plan to spend over \$100 million to build a new jail for youth charged as adults, the “Just Kids” report

makes recommendations on how the state may more effectively deal with youth crime. The Partnership suggests that policymakers, among other things, should:

- Stop automatically charging youth as adults and instead allow juvenile court judges to decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not a youth will respond to rehabilitative services offered by the juvenile justice system;
- Stop placing youth in adult jails while awaiting trial, and instead place them in juvenile detention centers; and
- Ensure that the juvenile justice system offers rehabilitation and treatment opportunities for older youth (17-20), including youth who are charged and convicted of serious offenses.

“We recognize that these youth are accused of committing serious crimes and that public safety concerns are sending them into adult criminal court. But, instead of any real treatment or rehabilitative services, serious physical and psychological harm awaits youth in adult jail,” says Diana Morris, director of OSI-Baltimore. “This is an unconscionable situation for children who are only awaiting trial, especially as the juvenile justice system can equally well protect public safety.”

For a copy of the report, please go to www.justkidsmaryland.org.



WHY WE FUND IT

“When we learned that state officials were planning to spend \$104 million to build a 180-230 bed jail for youth charged as adults, we knew that we had to act quickly to learn more about what happens to these youth. As suspected, many of their cases are sent to juvenile court or dismissed, which begs the question of whether they should have been automatically charged as adults in the first place. We hope that this report will lead to smarter and more effective ways of addressing youth crime.”

MONIQUE DIXON, Director of Criminal and Juvenile Justice

MAKING TREATMENT ACCESSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

INTEGRATING BUPRENORPHINE IN THE DOCTOR'S TOOLKIT



As part of its Tackling Drug Addiction initiative, OSI-Baltimore has supported buprenorphine as a successful and safe treatment for heroin addiction. Taken in pill form, buprenorphine can be prescribed for at-home use, under the supervision of a doctor and other medical professionals. It can be used effectively in a variety of settings, as demonstrated by Project Connection, a pilot program in East Baltimore funded by OSI.

Project Connection, an initiative of the Behavioral Health Leadership Institute (BHLI), provides community-based mental health services in many locations across the city. While providing mental health services at Dee's Place, a 24-hour, seven-days-per-week counseling

and recovery center, staff noted the co-occurrence of addiction disorders. With OSI support, BHLI began a project to offer integrated substance use disorder treatment, including buprenorphine.

Offering buprenorphine in a setting like Dee's Place marks a real step forward in OSI's efforts to make the drug more widely available for those battling heroin addiction. At Dee's Place, patients are able to get mental health treatment as well as addiction treatment. This model – recognizing that patients need holistic care – is an example of good practice and promises much more lasting results.



Dee's Place
tel. 410-276-4035



MAKING TREATMENT ACCESSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST



Deborah Agus, executive director of BHLI, says her group selected Dee's Place for buprenorphine treatment because "people are comfortable going there and are more open to getting treatment. Even those with insurance are coming in because this is in the community and they feel that it is friendlier and more open."

Integrated buprenorphine treatment began at Dee's Place in June 2010, where the team is treating up to 20 people at a time. Already there is a waiting list.

Dr. Michael Fingerhood, an associate professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and the project's physician, was excited about the pilot site because he says that there are people who would only come in to a setting like Dee's Place, one of the few 24/7 centers of its kind in the nation.

"There are a lot of people starting off uninsured or engaged in health care settings where there is no one who is prescribing buprenorphine," Fingerhood says. "It's also really hard to reach addicts who are isolated and alienated from traditional treatment settings. It's great working with the Dee's Place's counselors because they have first-hand knowledge of who's already engaged and getting their lives together. They support people who are trying hard."

For the buprenorphine project to work, Project Connection also had to overcome bias against using medication by counselors who are committed to the 12-step model.

Once patients are enrolled, Fingerhood says, "We try to individualize the therapy. Some people do great with 12 steps but, for people who are in a relapsing state, they have a hard time remaining abstinent. Using medication-assisted therapy is a way to change their lives. Not everybody can succeed drug free. And, for this population, who are virtually all injection drug users, getting people the help they need helps them to avoid jail time, HIV and hepatitis C infection, and death."

*"We try to individualize the therapy...
Using medication-assisted therapy is a way
to change their lives."* - MICHAEL FINGERHOOD

Project staffers report that patients are pleased with the program because of the respect and attention they receive, along with professional care from committed nurses and a first class doctor, all in their community. Anecdotal results from the project indicate that, of the individuals who go through the protocol, 80-to-90 percent test negatively for opiates, showing the program's success.

Meeting a desperate need, Project Connection staff now is looking to expand the buprenorphine program to two other sites in the city.



CHRIS SHEA, Director of Tackling Drug Addiction

WHY WE FUND IT

"The best kind of drug addiction treatment is delivered when doctors and practitioners recognize that the patient needs to be treated holistically. Often mental health issues and addiction issues need to be addressed simultaneously. Dee's Place does that."



GIN FERRARA and WIDE ANGLE YOUTH MEDIA STAFF



By Jennifer (Gin) Ferrara

OSI-Baltimore Community Fellow
Class of 2001

LOOKING BACK AND FORWARD

Sometimes you gotta leap before you look.

That's how I felt the day I decided to be Executive Director of Wide Angle Youth Media – the fledgling organization I was founding with Paul Santomena* and Rebecca Yenawine.*

Paul and I were returning from the National Alliance for Media, Art, and Culture Conference in the fall of 2000. With the ink still wet on our articles of incorporation, we had traveled to Minneapolis to gain resources and partners for our new community media nonprofit. We had spent the week with media arts leaders from around the country, learning just how broad the field was, and just how challenging the work could be. Driving on Route 295 back from the airport with the windows rolled down, Paul told me he wanted to be board president, not executive director, as we had initially discussed.

While I didn't know whether or not I would be up to the task of being the organization's director, my heart sunk at the idea of waiting a moment longer to get started.

Our dream of creating a sustainable organization that gave regular people the tools to tell their own stories was attainable, as long as we kept moving. I knew Wide Angle had to happen – right now. My heart racing as fast as our car down the highway, I said, "Okay, well then I'll be executive director." And with that, I leapt into the next ten years of my life.

I had no idea what I had gotten myself into but, fortunately, I had no time to worry about it, either. The one day per week that was wholly dedicated to Wide Angle, I shot out of bed at dawn and, still in my pajamas, walked the ten feet to my computer. The rest of the day was spent figuring out how to write grants, develop partners, and design curricula to teach youth and community members how to use media technology to talk about issues that matter to them. Around 3 p.m. I'd realize I had to get dressed to teach at Rebecca's youth arts organization, Kids on the Hill, and would rush out the door, borrowed video camera in hand. I met regularly with our new board members, community partners, and Paul and Rebecca as we planned projects, developed our mission statement, and built Wide Angle's structure.

*Both Paul Santomena and Rebecca Yenawine are also OSI-Baltimore Community Fellowships Alumni. Although Paul Santomena recently moved to Maine, Rebecca continues to live in Baltimore and recently founded New Lens to carry on her social justice work.



There is little time for reflection when something is just beginning, and you are just trying to keep all the wheels spinning. It wasn't until six months later, when we held our very first event at the Creative Alliance, that I could step back and see what we were accomplishing.

The standing-room-only crowd of 100 watched our first three videos: two PSAs directed to parents, "Practice What You Preach" and "Set an Example," and our playful narrative, "I Dream of Ghetto Genie." The audience cheered for the young genie, as she taught lessons of cooperation and compassion to her friends. Then the actress, Tabatha, walked on stage with her co-producers, youth from Kids on the Hill, the Rose Street Community Center, and Youth Entrepreneur Associates. They spoke enthusiastically about making videos about their own ideas. Another youth producer, Charday, gave an interview off-stage to a local TV station, saying, "This is for us, it's by and about us."

That word "us" was very important. Even when I was working alone in my office, I spoke on the phone about "our programs" and "our students." I might have been the person willing to take the lead day-to-day but, if we were not a community, Wide Angle wouldn't last. The fact that our students were taking ownership so quickly gave me confidence and hope.

That same year I was awarded an Open Society Institute-Baltimore Community Fellowship to grow Wide Angle. **In addition to having more time and resources to develop the organization, I now had a circle of folks just like me**—people who were willing to take a leap and make something happen. These individuals didn't just want to make something for themselves. They too were trying to build communities or support existing ones. Our shared faith in our efforts strengthened our individual resolve.

The 18-month fellowship accelerated my work, helping to overcome the hurdles of building lasting community partnerships, creating visibility, and developing the daily patterns and year-long goals that would make Wide Angle sustainable. Before long, we had a core group of people that came back each year to make their own videos, teach their skills to others, and share their stories with a dedicated audience. And the work they created—videos and media projects about youth advocating for education, the re-development

of their neighborhood, and their quest to be recognized and valued for who they are—was being used in schools, by advocacy groups, at public hearings, and on broadcast television to inject the voices of the under-represented into public discourse.

Five years later, Wide Angle moved into an office in Charles Village, a collaborative space shared with Goucher College, Megaphone Project (founded by Paul a few years after Wide Angle), and the Baltimore Algebra Project. We served hundreds of youth each year, who created videos, media projects, a youth-run television show, and a city-wide media festival. We had two full-time staff, and several dedicated part-time media instructors, such as Cy, Bea, Sheila, David, and former students Lendl and Charday, who worked with us year after year. We had even changed our name to "Wide Angle Youth Media," to better reflect our mission, which had focused solely on youth media education since 2004.

At the same time, I had grown up too. I was comfortable writing a grant, making a speech, managing staff, and even wearing proper business attire when necessary. I no longer got ill with worry when I had to resolve a dispute or defend a position. One day I heard one of our media instructors call me her "boss," and I realized that while I still didn't see myself as "in charge," **I was driving the truck, and taking that responsibility seriously. And I was propelled forward by an unshakeable belief in the power of story to spark compassion, encourage compromise, and promote change.**

When I leapt into my position at Wide Angle, I didn't look far ahead, but over time I began to see a future when a different kind of leader would be desirable. The energy and risk that is needed to start something is not the same as what is required to maintain it. While I was willing to sit in the driver's seat, I knew that over time I was keeping the seat warm for the next driver, the long distance one.

The good news is, by building a community from the beginning, we had a crew of potential leaders ready for more responsibility. We made a decision to promote from within, planning it out over years, but truly making the transition happen in the last 12 months. Wide Angle is now led by Susan Malone, who has been a leader in the organization for seven years and the creator of our annual

GIN FERRARA, an OSI-Baltimore Community Fellowships alumna, is the co-founder and former executive director of Wide Angle Youth Media. Over a 10 year period, with grit and determination, she built the non-profit organization to help young people make their voices and issues heard through multiple media. Having built a dynamic organization and served thousands of young people in Baltimore, Ferrara recently stepped down from the executive director position (although she remains on staff as Professional Development Coordinator). Here she talks about her audacious decision to start the organization and her equally audacious decision to begin a new chapter in her life.



Who Are You? Youth Media Festival. She is the right person for the organization right now – a balance of entrepreneurial spirit and disciplined management. And to be fair, she has been driving right alongside me for a long time.

I said goodbye this June at our end-of-year screening at the Enoch Pratt Free Library. In Wheeler Auditorium we screened every video made this year, including the exciting titles “Recycle Man,” “Textaholic,” “Junk Fool,” and “JailED.” When they saw themselves on screen, some youth laughed, others covered their mouth with their hands, hiding a smile. A red curtain on the stage pulled back to reveal a table of shiny awards, given to the Most Dedicated, Most Improved, and Best Technical youth producers. Murmurs of excitement could be heard as students waited to hear their names called. Program Coordinators Sarah and Siobhan called their students on stage, and proudly spoke of each young person’s accomplishments, handed them their awards, and gave them a hug or handshake. They were applauded by their families, teachers, peers, and Wide Angle alumni – young adults who had moved on to college, teaching English, serving in the military, and their own media production companies. The youth on stage grinned and shuffled their feet, both pleased and embarrassed at the attention.

Seeing a young person feel recognized and valued always moves me deeply. **This day, the poignancy of the moment was amplified, as I knew it was the last time I would be here in this role.** Finally, it was my turn to speak. As I got up to say my goodbyes, I found myself surrounded by former students, young adults now, who were in college, working, and living great big lives. Kyle, one of my first students with whom I worked for seven years, read an amazing poem by Marge Piercy called, “The Low Road.” It tells how easy it is to be hurt when you are alone, and how adding one person after another allows for organization, safety, strategy, and change. It ends with the following:

“It goes on one at a time, / it starts when you care / to act,
it starts when you do / it again after they said no, / it starts
when you say We / and know who you mean, and each /
day you mean one more.”

Building Wide Angle was a community effort from the start, and will be long after I am gone. I look forward to finding my next place, hopefully with people as committed, passionate, and strong as those I leave behind now.

GEORGE SOROS MEETS WITH OSI-BALTIMORE BOARD AND INVESTORS

On October 7, 2010, George Soros visited the OSI-Baltimore office to discuss the city's progress with advisory board members and investors. In a small seminar, Making Real Progress for Youth in Baltimore, Dr. Andres Alonso, City Schools CEO, and others talked about how efforts to increase attendance, reduce suspensions and expulsions, and interrupt the schoolhouse to jailhouse track have markedly improved Baltimore schools. A reception followed.



TOP

Deborah Callard, OSI-Baltimore board member, and George Soros

BOTTOM

Diana Morris, director of OSI-Baltimore, David Warnock and George Soros



OPPOSITE PAGE

TOP

Bob Meyerhoff, Rheda Becker, George Soros

LEFT

Bill Clarke, chair of OSI-Baltimore Advisory Board, and George Soros

RIGHT

Maurice Haywood and Otis Rolley, OSI-Baltimore board member





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TALKING ABOUT RACE

Our Talking About Race series continues in January. Joining us for a discussion is **Isabel Wilkerson**, author of "The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration."

January 12, 2011, at 7 PM
Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central Branch
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