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From the desk of ...

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Professor, Department of Mental Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Director of the Center for Prevention of Youth Violence.

The Health and Well Being of Baltimore's Children, Youth, and Families: Opportunities and Challenges 2012

If Baltimore City is going to meet Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake's goal of increasing the number of City residents by 10,000 families by 2022, it will be important that the City be a place where children, youth, and families are healthy and successful in life. Although the Urban Health Institute is engaged in a number of projects to identify assets, social factors affecting health, and factors related to access to and use of health services, we also recognize that most people know little about data already in existence. Under my leadership, the UHI recently completed a report, *The Health and Well Being of Baltimore's Children, Youth, and Families: Opportunities and Challenges 2012* that demonstrates how existing data can be used to describe trends in Baltimore and the extent to which assets, health, and well being varies among the residents of Baltimore's 55 Community Statistical Areas (CSAs).

For example, we found that the substantial differences in income and employment in Baltimore's communities were related to substantial variation in neighborhood health and well being. Although there were many similarities in the distribution of violence and other health problems, there were important differences. In addition, the health of some neighborhoods showed changes over time

while others were more stable. These data in conjunction with City efforts to consider health in all policies and City School efforts to reduce health-related impediments to school attendance and achievement suggest important opportunities for Baltimore. The opportunities are not likely to be actualized without increased public understanding of the social determinants of health and advocacy.

Our report can be found on the UHI Website, urbanhealth.jhu.edu along with a number of reports from other agencies that were identified while developing the Health and Well Being Report. Based on the work already done and ongoing efforts to incorporate data that became available since the report was written, the UHI plans to host a series of discussions so that we can achieve a better understanding of the assets and social factors affecting the health and well being of Baltimore's children, youth, and families and to support efforts to reduce the inequities identified in addition to efforts for promoting health and well being.

If you have comments on the data presented or suggestions for future reports, please contact Phil Leaf at pleaf@jhsph.edu or 410-955-3962.

The Urban Health Institute serves as a catalyst that brings together the resources of Johns Hopkins Institutions with the City of Baltimore, and especially East Baltimore to improve the community's health and well-being, and in so doing serves as a model of community-university collaboration regionally and nationally.

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MEET THE UHI's COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY COORDINATING COUNCIL: DR. CHERYL HOLCOMB-McCOY

by Meron Solomon, Administrative Coordinator



Dr. Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy

A distinguished scholar, educator and mentor, Dr. Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy currently serves as Vice Dean of Academic Affairs and Professor of Counseling and Human Development at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education.

Dr. Holcomb-McCoy's research interests include factors which influence the training of school counselors in multicultural self-awareness, college and career readiness, and advocacy of social justice in education.

With a rich background in teaching and counseling, she is now a part of a broader scope of work in higher education and she states that it has been an exciting journey so far.

Her early love of writing led her to want to pursue an education in journalism. Through a series of events, however, she was led to the world of education which had already existed in her family's history. Dr. Holcomb-McCoy studied early childhood educa-

tion at the University of Virginia (UVA) while gaining real-life experience interning with her father (an elementary principal), at an elementary summer school program for students with reading difficulties. During this early experience she realized she loved to teach. She earned her Early Childhood Education degree and became a Montgomery County (MD) kindergarten teacher in an area of the county that was becoming increasingly diverse with strong international demographics. Dr. Holcomb-McCoy was then able to observe the ever-prevalent language nuances and communication misalignments between educators and the community as well as the cultural insensitivity that so often emerged in relationships between students, parents, and educators. Her keen awareness of the disconnection between educators and the community and her passion and dedication toward her students was not unnoticed. The principal of her school encouraged Dr. Holcomb-McCoy to continue her education and pursue a graduate degree... this was the next step in her journey.

Dr. Holcomb-McCoy then went on to a graduate counseling program at her alma mater, UVA, where she graduated with a graduate degree in School Counseling. She states, "I thought if I could be a counselor that I could do more work with communities, kids and educators. I wanted people to hear one another and work more collaboratively for the betterment of students". During her time at UVA she interacted with professors who often discussed the impact and influence of culture in education, nurturing her growth and passion to take part

in bringing awareness of the social injustices that are embedded in the U.S. educational system and the harm that results rippling throughout a student's life. Dr. Holcomb-McCoy mentioned how unintentional biases can alter the way decisions are made for students such as who should apply for college and who should not. She emphasizes that "education is so important because we shape lives and futures through education."

Dr. Holcomb-McCoy continued to observe the frustrating gaps and biases and in response went on to receive her Doctorate degree in counseling and educational development at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in hopes of gaining even more in-depth understanding. In doing so, she came to realize that she had a strong interest in research as she continued to enrich her knowledge and experience. Her growing passion led her to want to prepare counselors to do some of the work she discovered would produce positive impacts on students.

Counselors' self-evaluation and awareness of racial perceptions have been key parts to Dr. Holcomb-McCoy's research, finding these factors to be possible influencers in how an educator interacts with and perceives a student. In her professorship at the University of Maryland College Park, she integrated the exploration of students' ethnic identity development into her courses and the program became well-known for its emphasis on counselor preparation for work with "at risk" students and multicultural competence. Although discussing race and racism

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MEET THE UHI'S COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY COORDINATING COUNCIL: LINDSAY THOMPSON

by Haley Daniels, UHI Summer Intern

If you walk by 101 South Exeter Street at 7am or 7pm on any day of the week, you'll catch a glimpse of Lindsay Thompson, watering tomato plants and pulling pesky weeds from the garden adjacent to her home. Through thick and thin Thompson cares for the budding garden and invites anyone and everyone to join her.

Recently, Thompson was appointed to serve as the university co-chair of the Urban Health Institute's Community-University Collaborating Committee (CUCC) and works alongside community co-chair Reverend Debra Hickman to carry the committee's mission forward, providing guidance and assistance to ensure the UHI priorities are in line with those of the university and community. Thompson currently works as an Associate Professor at the Johns Hopkins Carey Business School where she uses her business background to inform public health decisions and is involved in a plethora of community projects, including tending to the garden.

Other undertakings include continuing to work on the social determinants of health initiative, neighborhood asset mapping and developing a Baltimore-based urban health observatory. She stressed the importance of providing real time mapping of key health indicators in the city.

"One of the major determinants of health is whether or not you are employed or have a source of income. Toxic neighborhoods coerce people into making choices that are morally reprehensible. So my work in the business school has to do with economic development in urban neighborhoods."

But the garden remains the project Thompson is currently most passionate about. When she moved into her home in 2005, the view from her bedroom window left much to be desired. To the right of her home sat an old bar turned warehouse turned heap of trash. The roof burned out and the structure was beginning to crumble. In Thompson's words, "it didn't take much imagination to realize I had to do something. The place was a rat trap."

When the property owner of the lot next door was unreachable, Thompson didn't give up and reached out to the City. When the city responded exceedingly slowly, Thompson persevered. Over time, Thompson was able to secure the lot herself and adapt it into the beautiful, green garden it is today.

The "delicious" goal of the project is to restore the original, diverse ethnic food culture to the neighborhood, which was once heavily populated by communities of orthodox Jews and Italians. Kids from the City Spring Charter School, which runs kindergarten through 8th grade, will work with Thompson to look after the produce and learn about health and nutrition. Knowing how to garden, Thompson said, can open these kids up to a whole host of other occupations — urban design, street and yard scape, property management, food service and food technologist.

Thompson also believes in the power of gardening to teach consistency. She makes a point of caring for her crops each and every day because the certainty of her arrival can be comforting to her neighbors.

"Everything about gardening, from the seasons, sun up and sun down, the rhythm of the day and the night, the dependability of the crop -- if you don't water it, it'll die -- demonstrates a lesson about life and care-taking and the importance of stewardship."

Though Thompson is currently joined each day anywhere from 0-5 different helpers, she hopes to start seeing some regulars.



Lindsay Thompson (in green)

"It takes time," she said. "People have to see if I'm really going to be there and trust me. There are no recurring players -- yet."

Stop by and visit Thompson as she clears away dry soil and harvests watermelon. She'd surely welcome your company!

DR. CHERYL HOLCOMB-McCOY

(continued)

proved to be a difficult task for her students, they would come out of it stating that they are better people who look at the world and interact with people differently. “Just that acknowledgement changes everything” Dr. Holcomb-McCoy states, and strongly suggests that a lack of this type of acknowledgment and training of educators creates a negative impact on students. More specifically, in her research she has found that counselors of all ethnic and cultural groups have gaps in communication and cultural “blindness” when interacting with students and parents of diverse backgrounds. Dr. Holcomb-McCoy further mentions how counselors often make decisions based on unintentional, faulty assumptions and/or biased perceptions of students. For instance, her most recent research focuses on the influence of counselors’ perceptions and biases on students’ college and career readiness. (“Who is college material and who is not?”) Her goal is to ensure that educators understand the power of their voice and actions, preparing them to engage in more effective interaction methods while keeping in mind the racial and socioeconomic biases, indifference and low expectations that they may possess.

“Research shows if you want to really have a significant impact on whether or not a student would like to apply and go to college is if you intervene in the 6th or 7th grade”, Dr. Holcomb-McCoy states as she explains a funded project called PACE, (Pursuing and Attaining a College Education) that together with a colleague, Michael Scott, was developed and proved to be a successful pilot program for children in a West Baltimore middle school. The program was centered on preparing middle school children for college, providing them with small groups and individual counseling as well as a variety of other interven-

tions. Dr. Holcomb-McCoy states that she would like to revisit this program looking ahead.

Currently, Dr. Holcomb-McCoy is working with the Southern Regional Education Board and is in the beginning stages of discussing the potential of a certification program for counselors to specifically train them in college and career readiness. Dr. Holcomb-McCoy is no longer teaching but often speaks fondly of her past graduate students mentioning how she has precious memories of teaching and mentoring them. Meanwhile, she is continuing to further her scholarship as she is working on writing a book, serves as a journal associate editor, and is writing several journal articles.

When we're talking about wellness or well-being of Baltimore residents, education is a part of it. The connection between public health and education is that we can't improve public health without including education.

Dr. Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy

Dr. Holcomb-McCoy is an outstanding example of one who provides a voice for education, from a higher education perspective, as part of the Community-University Coordinating Council’s collaborative effort to promote public health. Her rich knowledge, compassion, and strong advocacy for the health and well-being of individuals are told by her relentless efforts to educate and prepare educators, students, and the general public about biases and

inconsistencies that exist in education. Dr. Holcomb-McCoy is an integral part in the communication between the community and university entities and she takes part in bridging the gaps that are so prevalent in urban areas such as Baltimore city but that are also just as relevant in suburban settings. Her dedication to educators, students and the community is extremely valuable to the health and well-being of our future leaders.

Dr. Holcomb-McCoy has a variety of research publications and has written a book titled *School Counseling to Close the Achievement Gap*. Moreover, she has received the Mary Smith Arnold Anti-Oppression Award and The National Advocacy Award for Family and Community Empowerment in 2009. She is known as a notable speaker and leader and has won many grants and awards for her research.

Dr. Holcomb-McCoy also loves to spend time with her husband, two children (Niles and Nia) and dog (Niko), and has a fascination for the arts, as she has a collection of international art pieces in her office, including numerous gifts from her previous students. She loves music and has played the violin for years as well as the flute. She is an avid reader and writer and loves to garden in her spare time.

HIGHLIGHT ON 2011 SMALL GRANTS RECIPIENTS: A SEXUAL-ABUSE AWARENESS PROGRAM, USING PUPPETRY FOR MIDDLE-SCHOOL STUDENTS

by Haley Daniels, UHI Summer Intern

Maya Nadison created more insect puppets than can fit comfortably in her apartment.

Why? When she's not working to finish her dissertation, Nadison spearheads a sexual abuse education program, which, through the use of puppetry, engages kids on the topics of personal safety. With a colleague's assistance, Nadison wrote a script entitled, "Insectual," which presents the journey of an insect who was sexually abused. Nadison brings the script to life with a cast of intricately crafted insect puppets.

In close collaboration with the Baltimore Childhood Abuse Center (BCAC), Nadison instructs the kids on how to build their own puppets and piece together a story, culminating in the class's very own end-of-the-year performance. The program started in a classroom at Franklin Square Middle School. Nadison began the session by discussing personal safety through role-play. Sometimes exercises such as these can cause very emotional reactions from the kids. Therefore, the school's social worker is always present in order to prepare for this and talk kids through their own personal stories. Next, Nadison and the kids sit down to work on the structure and design of the puppets.

"These kids are so open to creative work, especially when I bring the sewing machine into the classroom. I sit behind the kids and help them, manipulating the pedal. It's really amazing to watch what they come up with," Nadison said. "The experience of having access to a sewing machine and nice fabric really engages the kids." One of Nadison's students, a

young boy, picked up sewing diligently, even though he was scared his friends would tease him about it and asked Nadison to close the classroom door and windows while he worked.

Nadison says that though it's hard to measure the direct success of the program, it's worth the time and effort if even one kid gains something from the experience. Because of confidentiality concerns, school staff members can only give Nadison so much feedback. Nadison often relies on speaking with past students to determine the outcome of the program. Bumping into one, an 11 year-old girl at a local food distribution program, Nadison learned about another student who took extra supplies home, which she used to craft a new puppet. She proudly brought this puppet to school every day.

Through the BCAC, Nadison has the opportunity to expand the program to many more schools. However, since she is currently the sole full-time member of the operation, Nadison doesn't believe further expansion is in the near future.

"I really need a team," she said. "If I could multiply myself, great. But right now that's not a possibility."

The UHI grant equipped Nadison with the tools she needed to set her on the right path. The majority of the funds were spent on puppet supplies. In creating the puppets, Nadison, with a



set and prop design background, uses a variety of techniques, including 3D printing and vacuum forming. Utilizing sophisticated computer technology from her dad's laboratory, Nadison created very realistic pairs of eyes for each of her insect puppets. The kids she instructs use fabric, cable ties, sculpey and hot glue to construct their puppets, which range in size and design.

Distinguished by members of the Pikesville Jewish Community Center, the elaborate insect puppets were put on display in an exhibition called, "Puppets, Portraits and Public Health." Next to the puppets were illustrations Nadison drew of the kids who participated in her workshops. Nadison said the three-month exhibition was a wonderful culmination of her work.

Nadison's projects were also featured in two recent articles.

1. <http://schweitzerfellowship.wordpress.com/2013/04/11/in-baltimore-employing-puppetry-to-talk-about-sexual-abuse/>
2. <http://hub.jhu.edu/magazine/2013/spring/puppets-child-health-nadison>

HENRIETTA LACKS MEMORIAL AWARD WINNERS UPDATE

by Haley Daniels, UHI Summer Intern

This year the UHI will be presenting the third Henrietta Lacks Memorial Award. The award, established in 2011, was created to honor Mrs. Lacks and her family and is intended to be an enduring reminder of her contribution to medical science and to her community. The award celebrates exceptional collaborations between community-university partners working together to improve the health and well-being of the city of Baltimore. The award carries with it a monetary gift to the community entity that is the central partner in that relationship.

We wanted to check in with the past winners to see all that's happened since their collaborations have been honored.



Newborn Holistic Ministries collaboration with Johns Hopkins was the first winner of the newly created award in 2011. The collaboration began through student internships and providing resident physicians who serve the clients at Martha's Place.

Newborn Holistic Ministries is a triple threat -- the program services the needs of three distinct populations in Baltimore, supporting Martha's Place, Jubilee Arts and a newer venture to keep ex-offenders off the streets.

After 13 years in operation, Martha's Place is the longest standing Holistic Ministries venture. The program works tirelessly to encourage women in Maryland struggling with drug addiction and homelessness, aiding them in recovery and providing them with a skill set that allows them to maintain a sustainable lifestyle. Martha's Place borders the Baltimore's communities of Sandtown-Winchester and Upton and offers both six-month transitional housing as well as long-term Single Room Occupancy (SRO) housing.

The women are enrolled after detox clinics or as part of the drug court system. At Martha's Place, they adhere to a strict schedule, attending three narcotics anonymous meetings a day on top of work (or job hunting, if they're unemployed). Once a month the group goes out for roller-skating or dinner and a movie.

"What's important to us here at Martha's Place is a more substantial kind of transformation," President of Newborn Holistic Ministries Todd Marcus said. "We've seen ladies that have moved over to the long term phase to be permanent residents of our community, to be our eyes and ears on the streets, to stay clean and help inspire a broader change in our community."

Another program in the Newborn Holistic Ministries family is Jubilee Arts, established eight years after Martha's Place. Jubilee Arts caters to neighborhood residents of all ages, providing classes in dance, visual arts, creative writing, ceramics and fashion. They work in partnership with the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore Clayworks and artists/dancers in the area. The students of Jubilee Arts work not only on individual projects, but also on neighborhood beautification undertakings, like murals, gardening and displaying work on the street.

Recently, the director of Jubilee Arts resigned and filling the position has been difficult, said Marcus.

"We've received over 70 applications already," he said. "It's wonderful that there's so much interest in the position."

Jubilee used their share of the grant to fund classes and special events -- the program

hosts a huge Spring fundraiser that's just as jubilant as the name suggests, with dancing and an artist's gallery.



Newborn Holistic Ministries Community Event

Another one of the program's goals is to showcase the relevance of art as an income source for people in the area.

"There's almost a negative stigma against art stuff in the neighborhood, you'd be surprised," Marcus said. "Folks don't get out a lot, and we try to plan fieldtrips to the Maryland Institute College of Art to show people that's an option for them. We want to give people exposure to different outside institutions, new terrain, we want to broaden the horizon and awareness."

Finally, Newborn Holistic Ministries is attempting to expand their reach even further by starting a pilot program aimed at helping ex-offenders restart their lives. "People coming back to the neighborhood straight out of jail, with no resources or support systems, are primed for failure," Marcus said. The pilot program, called Strength to Love II (after a Martin Luther King saying), partners with Big City Farms to work on urban farming -- cultivating crops from 6 greenhouses in the neighborhood.

Newborn Holistic Ministries as a whole aspires to continue providing services

that enable residents of the community to meet “material, social and spiritual needs.”

“One of our major goals is to revitalize the whole community,” Marcus said. “When we started the whole area was abandoned buildings and decaying lots. One of the missions for this program is to renovate it and turn the vacant spaces into green ones.”

Marcus also hopes to change the pre-existing stereotypes associated with poor, predominately African-American neighborhoods in America. He says that when the majority of news is negative, a few “fluff” pieces can’t counterbalance the stigma that’s created against communities like his.

“I want people to come by, to meet the ladies at Martha’s place, to sit in on a class at Jubilee Arts,” Marcus said. “People build up such negative stereotypes, so when we can get them here on site to break those down, so much good can happen. In spite of poverty-related challenges, you have good people here trying to do the best for their families and communities, just like you and me.”



The collaboration between Moveable Feast and the Hopkins based bike team Fierce Chicks Rock was the 2012 award recipient. Good nutrition vastly improves the well-being of HIV/AIDS and cancer patients. Without it, one can suffer extreme weight loss, leading to a weaker immune system and increased susceptibility to infection. Moveable Feast, a program started in 1990 to deliver nutritious food to patients in need, knows the power of a balanced diet and devoted support group in strengthening HIV/AIDS and cancer patients. As the recipient of the 2012 Henrietta Lacks Memorial Award, Moveable Feast used the monetary prize to expand

their services and create healthier and more hopeful individuals and communities, where no one must battle their disease alone or on an empty stomach.

Specifically, the \$15,000 prize provided 13 cancer patients with an average of 15 meals per week for six months, accelerating recovery for these individuals once outside the hospital. In addition, funds went to supporting staff time and food and travel costs.

“Most people know someone, family, friends, a whole network of people to step in and bring you a casserole when you’re sick or watch your kid,” Moveable Feast Grants and Communications Coordinator Hanna Mast said. “But many of our clients don’t have anyone. We’re their family, their friends. We’re the people they call when they have no one else.”

What’s next for Moveable Feast? The program hopes to expand even further by spreading awareness. To do so, they have established a key partnership with Sharon Crum, head of Oncologic Nursing at Johns Hopkins. Together, they are developing a plan to make sure every eligible patient at Hopkins is informed of Moveable Feast services. Moveable Feast is working to strengthen community partnerships, especially with Johns Hopkins, and diversify funding.

Additionally, the organization is working to offer their 12-week Culinary Training Program on a year-round basis to underemployed adults. After 10 years, Moveable Feast is proud to provide the longest consistently operating food service training program in Baltimore City.

Another dream of the operations is to open an Eastern Shore location in order to create easier access to clients far from home base. Currently, drivers spend



Volunteers in the Moveable Feast Kitchen

almost 5 hours, round trip, delivering food to some clients located 140 miles away. That’s why bikers who participate in Ride for the Feast, a charity bike ride geared towards raising money for the organization, pedal 140 miles over two days -- to represent the longest distance travelled by deliverers.

To date, the organization has delivered over 11.7 million meals in their 24 years of service, averaging 8,000 a week. A whopping 3,400 volunteers help out in the spacious Moveable Feast kitchens. The percentage of cancer patients treated with these services has risen 6% in the past year alone.

“We’re doing a lot, we’ve got a lot on our plates,” Mast said. “But it’s the most gratifying experience to know that through us, people have a community to reach out to and find support and strength.”

Please join us when we present this year’s award at the Annual Henrietta Lacks Memorial Lecture presented by The Johns Hopkins Institute for Clinical and Translational Research on October 5, 2013. Advanced registration is required, please register at ictr.johnshopkins.edu/lecture or call 443-287-4287.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Date	Event	Location / Details
Monday September 30, 2013	Baltimore Dialogue with Marisela Gomez	Author of "Race, Class, Power and Organizing in East Baltimore". See UHI website for details.
Saturday, October 5, 2013 9:00 am	Henrietta Lacks Memorial Lecture and UHI Henrietta Lacks Memorial Award Presentation	Please visit the following website to register and for more information: http://ictr.johnshopkins.edu/event/henrietta-lacks-memorial-lecture/
Date to be confirmed: Fall 2013	Forming Sustainable Partnerships: Hopkins and Baltimore in the 21st Century	Please check our website for dates and registration.
To receive our weekly listserv announcements and event information please email urbanhealth@jhsph.edu and request to be added to the listserv.		
Like the UHI on facebook- https://www.facebook.com/pages/Urban-Health-Institute/177147905635210 follow us on Twitter: JHUrbanHealth		

Please visit our website home page "Highlight and News" section to view more information about events.
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