



Urban Health Research Day

On May 9, 2008 from 1pm-5pm, the UHI will convene an Urban Health Research Day. This event, co-chaired by Drs. Bernard Guyer, Zanvyl Krieger Professor of Children's Health, and Joshua Sharfstein, Baltimore City Health Commissioner, will focus on the policy impacts of urban health research. Faculty, students and staff at Johns Hopkins University and any community partner throughout Baltimore are encouraged either to attend and/or submit an abstract to showcase their research and its policy implications. To learn more about this event, including how to submit an abstract, visit our website or contact Amy Gawad at agawad@jhsph.edu.

HIGHLIGHTS AND NEWS

- ♦ This winter the UHI will be announcing its first small grants recipients (see page 2)
- ♦ Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Maryland and the UHI are looking for volunteers to spend one hour a week with a child in the East Baltimore Community. (see page 3)
- ♦ The Urban Health Institute is looking for outgoing members of the community, who love helping people and who are willing to work hard, to join our team and become Community Health Workers (see page 6)

New Community School and Health Campus

The Urban Health Institute has spear-headed the Johns Hopkins University collaboration with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, East Baltimore Development Inc. and a network of community organizations to lay the groundwork for a new East Baltimore Community School. The school, when fully populated will serve 600 children in pre-kindergarten through grade 8. It is currently slated to open in a renovated Elmer Henderson School until the new school campus is completed in 2011. The initiative will link with a Family Resource Center providing a child development center for tots from birth through age 3 and a family support program for their parents that will

include both job training and skill building as well as parenting support. The health component of the community school will coordinate in-class health education, a school climate improvement initiative and a network of clinical services that will include primary health care, family planning, dental health, mental health and referral services. In addition, there is a network of four neighborhood schools who are exploring the opportunities to partner with this initiative and in so doing access a parallel set of services. The planning and development work has been done through a planning grant from Atlantic Philanthropies.

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Third Tuesday Seminar

In late 2007, the UHI initiated a monthly seminar series for faculty and students working on urban health and development issues. The program is chaired by Phil Leaf, Sr. Associate Director of the UHI. The goal of these discussions is for faculty to generate ideas, share information about ongoing research and activities, as well as to foster collegiality and collaboration. For the past few months, the focus

of these meetings has been on school-related issues, including multiple pathways for over-age students, safe and supportive learning environments, and the development of the community school and health campus in East Baltimore. To be notified of the upcoming seminar series or for more information, please contact Amy Gawad at agawad@jhsph.edu.

NEWS AND UPDATES

Exploration of Women's Lives:

Understanding the factors impacting the lives of women and children in Baltimore

Alan Green Ph.D., Associate Director at the Urban Health Institute, and Nadra Tyus DrPH, MPH, the UHI post-doctoral fellow have been involved this year in an exciting and important project with a group of women affiliated with Agape House. These nine women have been faced with severe adversity and although many are still bouncing from crisis to crisis, they have been able to overcome multiple barriers in their lives. The goal of the initiative is to learn from them what it takes to survive and make it.

Some of the major challenges they have faced include: abuse (sexual, physical), violence and death of loved ones, rejection, depression, body image problems, drug abuse and addiction, poverty, lack of parenting skills, obesity and hypertension. The women noted that rarely are the supports they have needed (e.g. mental health services for themselves and their children) been available. Safe houses (like Agape), job training, and spirituality have mattered most in positively altering their trajectory. Although parenting classes and social services were sometimes helpful in averting crisis, they were singled out as being unhelpful in identifying strategies to overcome the challenges they faced. The researchers are planning to expand their work to assist the women participating in this project to achieve their goals as well as help other women become empowered to address the issues they face.

UHI OPEN FORUM

The UHI Open forum, held at the Bloomberg School of Public Health in November, was an opportunity for students and faculty of the East Baltimore campus to come together and learn about some of the initiatives and priorities of the UHI.

Topics covered included:

- ♦ The announcement of the UHI small grants program
- ♦ The East Baltimore Communities School and Health Campus initiative
- ♦ A program involving women of Agape House
- ♦ Community-University collaborations on violence prevention

See related articles in this issue that discuss each of these items in more depth. The next Open Forum will be scheduled at the Homewood Campus this spring.

Updates from the CHW Program

It has been almost seven months since the CHW's began working as part of the medical team in the OB/GYN Clinic of the East Baltimore Medical Center. Since that time they have worked with almost 400 women! Early feedback has been very positive. According to Dan Bitzel, site administrator at EBMC, the CHW's are doing a fantastic job. Preliminary results from 150 of the 400 women who have worked with a CHW and delivered their babies suggest that the CHW's are helping to 1) increase the number of pregnant women who stay in prenatal care, 2) increase the number of women who choose to breastfeed their newborns and 3) decrease the number of babies born early (preterm births). That means the CHW's may be helping newborns begin their lives healthier, helping moms have better pregnancies and helping EBMC to save money all at the same time. A formal evaluation of this intervention is starting this spring at the Urban Health Institute. The role of the CHWs is twofold; encouraging mothers to stay in prenatal care, and to provide them with both education and emotional support. Part of the educational effort is to raise awareness of the benefits of breast feeding, and increase the number of young urban women who breast feed their babies. Breast feeding lowers the risk of many childhood illnesses including; obesity, asthma, ear infections, and bladder infections. Breast feeding also lowers the mother's risk for cancers of the breast and ovaries. Most of our Community Health Workers are AmeriCorps members.

UHI Small Grants Program

This winter the UHI will be announcing its first small grants recipients. The grants program is intended to advance university-community collaborations in three categories: student-community research or program development, faculty-community research and new course development. Applications closed on January 11, at which time we had received seventeen proposals representing a diversity of issues from housing and environmental health to women's issues and HIV/STD prevention. Both exciting interventions and evaluations of existing programs were proposed. The next newsletter will announce the awardees.

Program Evaluation Workshop

In November, the UHI held our first capacity building workshop, *How to Write the Program Evaluation Section of Your Grant Proposal*. Clea McNeely, with the Center for Adolescent Health taught the course to a group of 30 participants from a variety of local community based organizations. Attendees learned about three simple evaluation strategies, how to choose which strategies are best for their program as well as how to justify that choice. The PowerPoint presentation as well as additional resources from this workshop can be found on our website at www.jhsph.edu/urbanhealth. The next workshop, on Grant Writing, will take place on April 4, 2008. If you're interested in learning more or attending upcoming workshops, please contact Ebony Pittman at epittman@jhsph.edu.

Community Recognition Working Group

The UHI is working with a group of Hopkins faculty, staff and community partners to identify ways in which we can honor the many contributions that have been made by members of our East Baltimore community. Community partners include: Ralph Moore, Nia Redmond, East Baltimore Development, Inc., and MICA. We are currently exploring a variety of options, including developing three separate monuments to recognize the tireless efforts of community advocates, educators, and individuals in East Baltimore who have contributed over the years to the health sciences and clinical services at Hopkins as well as to building the community through education, advocacy, community development and organizing and a wide range of other approaches. For information on how to get involved, contact Amy Gawad at agawad@jhsph.edu.

Bigs in Schools – Become a Volunteer

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Maryland has teamed up with the UHI to recruit Hopkins faculty, staff, and students to spend their lunch hour volunteering with kids at the Tench Tilghman elementary school. Volunteers spend one day a week having lunch with a child where they get a chance to talk, tell jokes, help out with homework, be silly and generally spend time with a child looking for a positive adult contact. This "Bigs-In-School" program creates partnerships between organizations and local schools to help children do better socially and academically. Big Brothers Big Sisters manages the program and works alongside volunteers at the school. Generally, the first 30 minutes is spent on an area of academics where the child needs assistance, while the last 30 minutes are spent having fun. Volunteers commit one hour a week for one year. There are Bigs-In-School programs in over 20 elementary and middle schools in Maryland. If the lunch program does not work for you, consider being a community volunteer where you will be trained and matched 1:1 with a child in the community. Community matches speak to each other on a weekly basis and do activities together twice a month. Big Brothers Big Sisters offers many and free events-so you are never at a loss for something to do. For more information or to become a Big Brother/Big Sister, please contact Leon Henry at lhenry@biglittle.org or 410-243-400 x223.



Ebony F. Pittman recently joined the UHI team as our Information Specialist. Ebony is responsible for gathering as much information as possible on Baltimore-based Hopkins projects, as well as ensuring that our website, particularly the service finder, is as up-to-date and useful as possible.

Prior to joining the UHI, Ebony worked at the Johns Hopkins Center for Summer Learning, where she supported a variety of projects, including their Summer Learning Day, multiple research studies, and assisted with onsite evaluations of summer programs. Before coming to Hopkins, she was a case manager for the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services, working primarily with children in the foster care system.



Roopa Kalyanaraman, MPH is a researcher at the Urban Health Institute, where she is a member of the Health Strategy Group for the East Baltimore school initiative. She recently received her MPH from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, where she studied so-

cial and behavioral interventions for HIV prevention in urban settings. Before moving to Baltimore, she worked at the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center in New York City, where she conducted research towards the development of HIV vaccines and microbicides. She has contributed to research that has been published in *The Lancet*, *AIDS*, and *The Journal of Virology*.

STAFF NEWS

HIGHLIGHTS FROM RECENT EVENTS

Faith Forum

On November 27, 2007 in Feinstone Hall of the Bloomberg School of Public Health, the second Clergy United for the Renewal of East Baltimore (CURE) – UHI East Baltimore leadership dialogue was held. Panelists included Rev. Marshall Prentice (Zion Baptist Church), Rev. Harlie Wilson (Israel Baptist Church), Deans Ed Miller, Mike Klag, and Martha Hill, and Mr. Ron Peterson. There were over 75 participants at the forum with representation from faith organizations, the East Baltimore community, and Hopkins faculty and staff. The main topics for this forum were youth violence prevention activities in Baltimore and improving health care services in East Baltimore. The panel members also discussed initiatives that they have been involved in since the last forum and some of the upcoming activities focused on youth violence prevention. In addition to those topics, other areas of concern mentioned at the forum regarding East Baltimore residents included employment opportunities and ex-offender programs.

At the session, Phil Leaf, UHI's Senior Associate Director, reported that Baltimore City Public School System approved the updated Comprehensive Plan for Creating Safe and Supportive Learning Environments. The plan will enable the BCPSS to create and sustain safe and supportive learning environments utilizing three interrelated sets of activities. Dr. Leaf is co-chairing implementation of the Plan, which is overseen by a City-wide Steering Committee that includes the Mayor, the BCPSS CEO and the Health Commissioner. Leaf also

announced the publication of *Hands Off: Strategies to Combat Youth Violence*, a book written by Sara Hassan, Program Coordinator for the Johns Hopkins Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence and LaMarr Darnell Shields, Co-Founder and President of Urban Leadership Institute. The aim of *Hands Off* is to educate students, teachers and parents about youth violence, its consequences and preventive interventions; to facilitate positive youth development; to teach positive conflict resolution strategies, and to save the lives of young people so that they can become successful and productive citizens.

A Planning Committee including Pastor Marshall Prentice and a Baltimore Clergy Collaboration Committee has organized the 56th Institute for Spirituality and Medicine to be held May 12-14, 2008. The Institute, which will address the topic of violence as a public health problem through a theological and social ecology lens, is being sponsored by the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, the Johns Hopkins Hospital Department of Pastoral Care, the Institute for Johns Hopkins Nursing, and the Johns Hopkins Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence.

These CURE-UHI faith forums provide a platform for the university and the faith community to begin a dialogue and share ideas on topics of that are particular importance. The next forum will be held in Spring 2008 and will focus on afterschool programs.

Panelists (from left to right): Mike Klag, Ron Peterson, Martha Hill, Ed Miller, Harlie Wilson, Marshall Prentice



HIGHLIGHTS FROM RECENT EVENTS

International Congress on Urban Health

The 6th annual conference of the International Society on Urban Health (ISUH), co-hosted by Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland, Baltimore, was held in Baltimore, MD from October 31 -November 2, 2007. Dr. Chris Gibbons, Associate Director of the UHI, is the immediate past president of the ISUH and was the chair of the conference. This year's theme was "Harnessing the Power of Technology to Achieve Behavior Change and Improve Urban Health", reflecting recent improvements in health technologies and their effects on behavior and urban health. In a brilliant opening plenary, Hans Rosling, from the Karolinska Institute presented innovative ways in which data can be used to visualize social change and demonstrated an information system, developed by his Gapminder Foundation that converts international data into animated graphics. This interactive data can be further explored at www.gapminder.org.

For three days, conference attendees presented, listened to, and discussed urban health research relating to new technologies. The conference was attended by over 400 delegates from more than 25 different countries ranging from the United States and Canada to Nepal, Lebanon and Nigeria. With support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 35 scholars from developing countries were able to attend.

The conference was opened by Provost Kristina Johnson from Johns Hopkins and Dr E. Albert Reese, MD, president of University of Maryland School of Medicine. The Honorable Dr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, outlined the case for a focus globally on urban health in his opening address. A complete agenda can be found at www.icuh2007.com.



Left: M. Chris Gibbons, Conference Chair

Middle: Prime Minister Douglas; Conference Participants Nilmini Wickramasinghe and Rajeev Bali

Bottom: M Chris Gibbons and Health Commissioners: Josh Sharfstein, Peter Bielenson, Pierre Vigilance

Photographer: Rich Herard



INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Over the past 6 months UHI staff has been invited to give local and national presentations that include:

- ◆ Kennedy Krieger Institute
- ◆ University of Pennsylvania Department of Medicine
- ◆ Montgomery County Public School System
- ◆ World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization Forum for Urban Health in the Americas
- ◆ Anne Arundel County Department of Health, Minority Health Summit
- ◆ Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland Annual Legislative Meeting
- ◆ American Public Health Association

DID YOU KNOW?

The Urban Health Institute is now looking for outgoing members of the community, who love helping people and who are willing to work hard, to **join our team and become Community Health Workers**. Individuals with an interest (or those who know someone who might be interested) should contact Dr. Chris Gibbons at mgibbons@jhsph.edu as soon as possible since enrollment will close for the next class of CHWs in the near future.

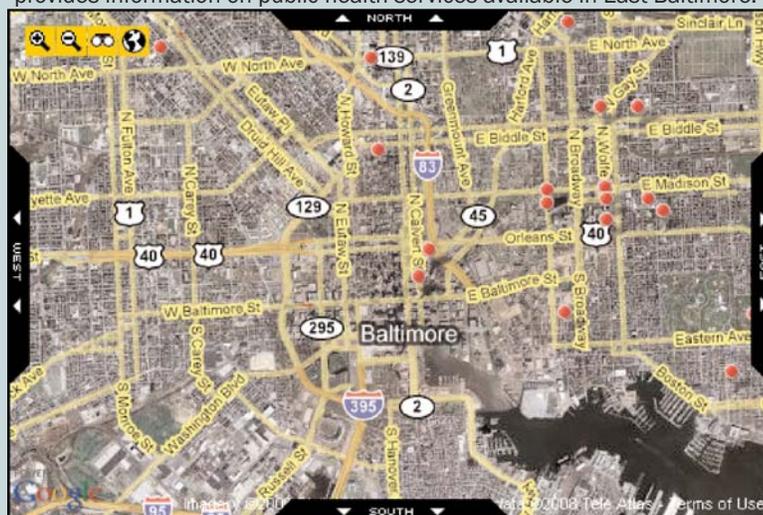
Congratulations Nia Redmond! In October, the Maryland's Women and Philanthropy Collaborative held the SHERO Awards, an evening of celebration, created by, for and about women. More than 1,500 people gathered together to honor women for their contributions of time, talent and treasure. Nia has given her time, talent and resources to make a difference in East Baltimore for the past twenty years through her contributions to "Kid Scoop", a newsletter designed and developed by kids for kids. Nia works with the children to help them seek out and cover critical local issues through the children's lens. Nia also works diligently to advocate for community improvements in her service on the East Baltimore Development Corporation.

SOURCE (Student Outreach Resource Center), the community service and service-learning center for the Johns Hopkins University Schools of Medicine, Nursing, and Public Health, **has won an international award from ACPA** (College Student Educators International). SOURCE won the Program of the Year award for the Connection Community Consultant Program (known as "The Connection"). The Connection is a program that puts together interdisciplinary consultant teams to work on short-term projects that are identified by SOURCE's partnering community-based organizations. The program, now in its 2nd year of operations, was created by SOURCE Director Mindi Levin and JHSPH doctoral student and SOURCE Governing Board Member Lainie Rutkow.

<http://www.jhsph.edu/source/Students/Connection>

The **Baltimore Public Health Service Finder** uses an interactive map of Baltimore to locate nearby resources that can provide assistance with employment, housing, health care, children-and family-oriented issues in addition to available services in other public health areas. The Urban Health Institute would like to acquire information from our current and potential partners on any services and/or resources that can benefit the citizens of Baltimore. Please forward all information to Ebony Pittman at epittman@jhsph.edu.

This map, available at <http://www.jhsph.edu/urbanhealth/research> provides information on public health services available in East Baltimore.



DATES TO REMEMBER

Third Tuesday Seminar

Topics TBA

Upcoming seminar dates:

February 19, March 18, April 15, May 20

All faculty and students interested in urban health and development issues are encouraged to attend.

CONTACT: Amy Gawad, agawad@jhsph.edu

Friday, April 4

Grant Writing Workshop

CONTACT: Ebony Pittman, epittman@jhsph.edu

Friday, May 9

Urban Health Research Day

Faculty, students and staff at Johns Hopkins University and any community partner throughout Baltimore is encouraged either to attend and/or submit an abstract to showcase their research and its policy implications.

CONTACT: Amy Gawad, agawad@jhsph.edu

Monday, May 12 - Wednesday, May 14

56th Institute for Spirituality and Medicine

The Institute will address the topic of violence as a public health problem through a theological and social ecology lens.

UHI FACULTY AND STAFF

Robert Wm. Blum, Director

rblum@jhsph.edu

Philip Leaf, Senior Associate Director

pleaf@jhsph.edu

M. Christopher Gibbons, Associate Director

mgibbons@jhsph.edu

Alan Green, Associate Director

agree@jhu.edu

Amy L. Gawad, Program Director

agawad@jhsph.edu

Roopa Kalyanaraman, Researcher

rkalyana@jhsph.edu

Pamala Martin, Administrator

pmartin@jhsph.edu

Ebony Pittman, Information Specialist

epittman@jhsph.edu

Nadra C. Tyus, Postdoctoral Fellow

ntyus@jhsph.edu



Johns Hopkins

Urban Health
I N S T I T U T E

2013 E. Monument Street
Baltimore, MD 21205
(410) 502-6155