



Committed to Community Engagement: President Daniels Meets with East Baltimore Community Representatives

“What is the purpose of a university? What is the purpose of an institution of higher learning? I think once that question is answered you can know how to help the community. . . Invite everyone to the table. That is really what most communities ask for—just an opportunity to be at the table and to talk about our ideas.” John Simermeyer, executive director of the Baltimore American Indian Center, asked this of Johns Hopkins University at the first of two East Baltimore Community Briefings with Johns Hopkins University (JHU) President Ronald J. Daniels.

Mr. Simermeyer was one of over 70 community representatives invited to roundtable briefings with President Daniels. At the request of the president, the UHI, in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins Office of Government, Community and Public Affairs (GCPA), facilitated the briefings, held on July 23 and September 8, 2009. The events provided an opportunity for the president

to learn first hand from members of the East Baltimore community about the challenges and opportunities they see in strengthened community-university partnerships and collaborations.

Participants ranged from leaders of neighborhood associations like Elroy Christopher of the Covenant Community Association and Nina Harper of the Oliver Community Association to East Baltimore nonprofits like Jesus Rivera of the Latino Providers Network and Jinee Burd of Moveable Feast. City agencies and East Baltimore churches and schools were also represented. Leaders from JHU, including deans from the Schools of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing, and elected officials representing East Baltimore districts were invited solely to listen to the successes, challenges and frustrations of their neighbors.

Several themes emerged from the briefings. Participants agreed that there must be greater community-university



President Daniels welcomes community representatives at the first of two East Baltimore Community Briefings

involvement and collaboration, especially in supporting local community initiatives, mentoring and tutoring youth, and responding to health care disparities.

Efrem Potts of the Monument Street Merchants Association described the optimistic sentiments of many community representatives as he summarized his commitment to East

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Meet the UHI’s Community-University Collaborating Committee (CUCC)



Philanthropist, arts patron, educator, business leader, volunteer—Sylvia Brown wears many hats. When asked how she would like to be listed as a member of the CUCC, Mrs. Brown

simply replied “community volunteer.” From her previous career as an educator to her work in property development and management, and now as a community volunteer and activist, Mrs. Brown’s commitment to Baltimore is undeniably the common denominator in all of her work.

She is currently a mentor to elementary school students in Baltimore City and volunteers at the Enterprise Women’s Network, a part of Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. that helps low-income women and children improve the quality of life for themselves, their families and their communities. Mrs. Brown is a Trustee Emeritus of CENTERSTAGE, and serves on the boards of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH), the Walters Art Museum, and Arts Every Day, a non-profit organization that works to make arts education and cultural experiences an integral part of the education of all Baltimore City school students.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM RECENT EVENTS

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Twanda Pickett, assistant principal of Collington Square Elementary/Middle School shares her thoughts on how JHU can better engage with schools.

Baltimore. “The relationship with the University is an important element to serving the surrounding community. However, we sometimes wonder whether the University is friend or foe,” he said. “We wonder about our future. We would like to be an integral part of the future of East Baltimore. We can’t maximize our value to the larger community without an understanding of each segment of the community and its special needs in the new East Baltimore and we’re ready to work with you and the rest of the community.”

In his inaugural address on September 13, 2009, President Daniels formally described his vision for an engaged university. “We are an island of earned privilege in a sea of pressing need. Our ideas, our energies, our passion and optimism can contribute so much to the community of which we are part. How we galvanize our intellectual and moral strengths for the betterment of our community, and for the betterment of ourselves, stands as yet another compelling challenge that we must address,” he said.

The President’s Office, GCPA, and the UHI are grateful to Sojourner-Douglass College and the Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition (HEBCAC) for hosting the events.

Meet the UHI’s Community-University Collaborating Committee (CUCC)

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In early 2002, the Brown family announced the creation of the Turning the Corner Achievement Program (TCAP), an unprecedented education initiative for African-American middle school students in Baltimore. TCAP provides Baltimore’s middle school youth with a unique combination of educational and personal support to prepare them for success in high school and beyond.

The Brown family also generously supports higher education in Baltimore. Most recently, Mrs. Brown and her husband, Eddie C. Brown, established scholarships at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) and JHSPH. Since 2007, the *C. Sylvia and Eddie C. Brown Community Health Scholarship* has been awarded to five exceptional JHSPH doctoral students who are committed to eliminating health disparities in Baltimore. The award provides tuition, a living stipend for up to five years of study and a research grant of \$10,000. The *Eddie C. & C. Sylvia Brown Scholarship* has provided matching funds to fully support four years of study to talented undergraduate students at MICA. According to Mr. and Mrs. Brown the purpose of this scholarship is to “help MICA achieve its goal of diversity; to help the student recipients get an education at one of the premier art institutions in the country; and to engage other donors in the diversity initiative.” Since 2007, four students have been awarded the scholarship.

In addition to her broad humanitarian efforts, Mrs. Brown is the proud grandmother of three grandsons. A Virginia native who has called Baltimore home for almost 40 years, Sylvia Brown is truly one of Baltimore’s greatest cheerleaders. The UHI is privileged to have Mrs. Brown as a guide and advocate for our work.



UHI Welcomes New Post Doctoral Fellow

Dr. Quinn Gentry has been selected as the UHI’s post doctoral fellow in urban health. For the next two years, she will be deeply engaged in examining social and health topics aimed at eliminating health disparities. Specifically, her clinical research areas will include adolescent health and women’s substance abuse treatment. Dr. Gentry’s focus for this urban health fellowship was inspired by her program evaluation work with Jane Fonda’s Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (G-CAPP) and Mary Hall Freedom House, a recovery community for women and women with children. This fellowship will offer an opportunity to continue to build her subject matter expertise on a variety of urban health topics, including teen pregnancy, substance abuse treatment, juvenile delinquency, child maltreatment prevention, childhood obesity, and HIV/AIDS.

Dr. Gentry is a behavioral scientist and program evaluator. She received a BA in political science and history from Texas Christian University, with a minor in international relations. She has an MBA in marketing from Clark Atlanta University, and a PhD degree in sociology from Georgia State University with a concentration in race and urban studies. In addition, she is a licensed minister from the Women’s Institute of Ministry in Atlanta. Dr. Gentry has held clinical research, behavioral intervention positions, and teaching appointments at Emory University and Georgia State University. She has also been employed as a Research Scientist for The MayaTech Corporation and as a Technical Director at ICF Macro (formerly Macro International). From 2005-2007, Dr. Gentry was a National Institute of Health Clinical Research Scholar assigned to AID, Atlanta’s Department of HIV prevention and education. She has also served as a researcher and program evaluator for The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta.

Dr. Gentry is the author of *Rough Living: Black Women’s Risk for HIV*, an ethnographic study of HIV risk and protective factors based on black feminist theory. She also wrote and produced a play about her clinical research titled, “Divine Intervention” in an effort to disseminate HIV prevention messages at the community level.

Highlight on 2008 Small Grants Recipients: South Baltimore Community Cancer Profile

In June of this year, Dr. Mary A. Fox submitted a report to the Baltimore City Health Department recommending specific public health actions for communities in South Baltimore. The report suggested smoking cessation and respiratory disease screening programs in combination with efforts to monitor and improve ambient and occupational environments. These recommendations came in response to findings from Dr. Fox's South Baltimore Community Cancer Profile, a community cancer assessment that revealed elevated incidence and mortality rates of lung and bronchus cancer in South Baltimore communities compared to rates in Baltimore City, Maryland and the US.



Baltimore City neighborhood map.
In blue: South Baltimore study area

Dr. Fox's report comes just over two years after the health department ordered the closure of Swann Park, an 11-acre green space in South Baltimore, after tests showed high levels of arsenic in the soil. The testing was prompted by the disclosure of 30-year-old documents from the files of Allied Chemical, which had operated a chemical manufacturing plant adjacent to the park from 1955 until the plant's closing in 1976. The records included tests done and

not disclosed by Allied Chemical in 1976 that showed Swann Park's soil arsenic levels were 100 times greater than federal health guidelines. Today, Swann Park is undergoing a complete remediation and is set to reopen in 2009.

While the South Baltimore Community Cancer Profile was not designed to examine the relationship between arsenic or other chemical exposures and cancer, Dr. Fox points out that the rediscovery of arsenic contamination at Swann Park is a reminder of the complexity of the urban environment. An assistant professor in the department of Health Policy and Management at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and an epidemiologist with extensive experience in community environmental health assessment, Dr. Fox was approached by Baltimore City health commissioner Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, now FDA principal deputy commissioner, to develop a community cancer profile to assist the Baltimore City Health Department in tracking community health and planning protective interventions. With funding from the UHI Small Grants Program, Dr. Fox and her colleagues calculated incidence rates for lung and bronchus, colon and rectal, female breast and prostate cancers, and mortality rates for lung and bronchus and colon and rectal cancers for three census tracts in South Baltimore (2303, 2401, and 2404). These census tracts, each within zip code 21230, are closest to Swann Park and make up the South Baltimore Community Statistical Area.

Of the cancers assessed, lung and bronchus cancer was the only type of cancer with higher incidence and mortality rates compared to rates in Maryland and the US. South Baltimore lung and bronchus cancer mortality rates were higher than rates in Baltimore City as well. While this work documents good news about lower risk for breast, prostate, and colon and rectal cancers, findings from this study and past assessments indicate that lung and bronchus cancer and other respiratory diseases are persistent public health problems in South Baltimore.

Lung cancers are thought to be largely environmentally-linked and South Baltimore has a history of ambient environmental contamination and is home to major industry and transportation routes. Dr. Fox points out that while no causal links can be made with the data presented in the South Baltimore Community Cancer Profile, the value of such a specific community profile is immense as it helps to guide the planning and delivery of health services, education programs and other interventions. A community meeting is tentatively scheduled for this fall to share the study findings.

For more information about the South Baltimore Community Cancer Profile, or for a copy of the Final Report, contact Dr. Mary A. Fox at mfox@jhsph.edu.

Stay Tuned . . .

This year the UHI invites you to explore how community level interventions can positively affect children and families in Baltimore through a series of symposia, **Building Community Collaborations for Families: What Works?** To kick-off this series, the UHI will bring to campus Richard Catalano, PhD, director of the Social Development Research Group at the University of Washington and co-developer of *Communities That Care*—a landmark prevention-planning system that empowers communities to build positive, healthy futures for youth. This program has been implemented in approximately 25 communities across the country and has been extremely well researched. Join us on **Thursday, October 8 from 3:00pm to 4:30pm** in Sheldon Hall at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health to learn more about Dr. Catalano's work and to hear more about this exciting program. Please RSVP to Catonya Lester at clester@jhsph.edu or 410-502-6155.

Do you want to find out what city agencies and community-based organizations are doing to improve the well-being of Baltimore? Do you want to learn how your research can inform this work and can help to shape health policies in Baltimore? The UHI's **Reverse Research Day** will return on **November 6, 2009**. Through an interactive poster session, city agencies and community-based organizations lead the event by raising questions based on their specific research needs with the goal of connecting with researchers from Johns Hopkins University and universities across the city. Stay tuned for more details about this unique event as well as the announcement of a new annual award to recognize outstanding community-university collaboration.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Date	Event	
Wednesdays 11am – 1pm	Community Health Workers at Northeast Market for blood pressure screenings	Northeast Market 2101 E. Monument Street
Wednesdays 10am – 2pm	Workforce Wednesdays (1 st and 3 rd Wednesday of month)	EBDI Community Center 1731 E. Chase Street
Thursday, October 8 3pm – 4pm	UHI Quarterly Symposium: <i>Communities That Care</i> Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health 615 N. Wolfe Street – Sheldon Hall, W1214	Featuring Dr. Richard Catalano Director, Social Development Research Group Bartley Dobb Professor for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Washington Part of the UHI's series <i>Building Community Collaborations For Families: What Works</i>
Friday, November 6 9am – 12pm	Reverse Research Day	Details to come!
Mid-November	2010 UHI Small Grants for Research, Program Development, and Education	Look for the 2010 RFP/Application!

