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## **STUDENT-COMMUNITY GRANTS**

**Vignetta Eugenia Charles, PhD Candidate, School of Public Health  
Ross Pologe, Fellowship of Lights Youth and Community Services**

### **Understanding the Younger Face of Homelessness: Baltimore's Homeless Youth**

Understanding the magnitude of any problem is a fundamental way that research contributes to policy and practice. Baltimore's homeless youth are a hidden population for which there are no reliable estimates. Without an approximate number, advocacy, needs assessments, and service delivery are challenged; it becomes difficult to advocate for resources or know how to use them most effectively. Ms. Charles proposes to use this funding to undertake qualitative research to inform a community-based participatory research partnership with the Baltimore Homeless Youth Initiative (BHYI\*) to estimate Baltimore's homeless youth. Specifically, Ms. Charles in collaboration with BHYI (represented by lead agency: Fellowship of Lights Youth and Community Services) proposes to conduct focus groups to explore: how youth define homelessness, pathways to youth homelessness, how homeless youth access services, and how to formulate research and survey questions in the language and format best understood and most accessible to young people in Baltimore. This information will have immediate programmatic and research application. It is the formative stage of a comprehensive estimation strategy being conducted by the BHYI. It will also offer valuable information to aid in the development of interventions and housing options for a vulnerable population in Baltimore.

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**Jenna Colagiacomini, Undergraduate, Arts & Sciences  
Mary Slicher, Project PLASE (People Lacking Ample Shelter and Employment)**

### **Computer Classes for the Homeless**

Computer skills are necessary when applying for most jobs, and unfortunately many homeless people do not have much or any experience with computers. In order for them to be better equipped in the workplace, I would like to start a computer program which will encompass Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point), navigating the internet, registering for an email address, and getting signed up with an employment website (i.e. www.monster.com). I would like to include any homeless people (by posting flyers) in the area, in addition to those being helped at Project PLASE. I'm interested in inviting high school and/or college students to volunteer with the computer classes. I think giving the homeless the opportunity to increase their computer literacy will greatly add to their resume and increase their probability of getting a decent job. I also believe the computer skills will enable them to better keep in touch with their family and friends, thereby strengthening their support network. If I can recruit student volunteers the interaction will benefit both parties, and will give the students a chance to do some community service hours.

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**LaPrincess Brewer, Graduate, School of Public Health  
Rev. Michael Palmer, New Friendship Baptist Church**

**FAITH! (Fostering African American Improvement in Total Health) Nutrition Education Program**

The ultimate goal of our partnership with a local African American church is to implement an effective nutrition education program in the form of an educational seminar with healthy food displays/samples to increase awareness of the critical importance of a healthy diet in prevention of chronic diseases such as Hypertension and Diabetes. For this reason we plan to address the colossal health problem of chronic disease management/prevention through modification of ill-suited dietary patterns. Concurrently, we will also address one of the goals of Healthy People 2010, the elimination of health disparities. Our program will provide appropriate, culturally sensitive food and nutrition services customized to a population of adults. Our community church-based program will further enhance the delivery through which effective communication of healthcare issues and interventions are accessible to the African American community. We propose to focus on the behavior of eating healthy food in order to prevent and reduce risks associated with Hypertension and Diabetes. Race, location/SES, and religious/spiritual involvement all appear to play important roles in regard to healthy diet behavior. The African American church plays a vital role in serving as the portal through which this program will be implemented. We believe that a successful partnership with a local African American church along with vital and useful information that provide examples of good nutrition, diet, exercise and overall healthy living behaviors will increase awareness within the African American community.

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**Birju Patel Undergraduate, Arts & Sciences  
Dr. Andre Humphrey, Reaching the Unreachable Outreach Ministries**

**Hopkins4Playgrounds @ Barclay**

Hopkins4Playgrounds is a student-initiated project to build and develop programs in urban spaces. Inspired by our experiences of working in the east Baltimore community, we have realized that elementary school-aged children need more open spaces and afterschool programming to create opportunities to live safe and healthy lifestyles. In essence, we believe we can bridge the gap between idealizations for open spaces and the realities of Baltimore city life by doing real work on the ground. We are currently in search of funds for building a playground and community pavilion at the Reaching the Unreached Ministries in the Barclay community. There are open lots available to us, and our contact in the community, Reverend Dr. Andre Humphrey, has been a close affiliate with the Center for Social Concern at Johns Hopkins University and works intimately with the children of his community. After the construction phase, Hopkins4Playgrounds will continue its investment in Barclay by encouraging students to become stakeholders in this community and develop afterschool programs at the site, as well as evaluating the success of the project and planning for further development.

## **FACULTY COMMUNITY GRANTS**

**Mary A. Fox, Assistant Professor, Health Policy & Management**  
**Joshua Sharfstein, Commissioner of Health, Baltimore City**

### **South Baltimore Community Cancer Profile**

The legacy of past industrial practices looms large in all urban areas. This aspect of the urban environment may contribute to disparities in exposure and health outcomes across communities within a city. Examining these health impacts can be a difficult task. In Baltimore, for example, the types of surveillance data typically used for community health assessments (vital statistics, cancer registry) are collected by the state and not the city health department. Lack of direct access to important data may limit a health department's ability to develop assessments that subsequently inform programs to improve health. This proposal describes the development of a community cancer profile to assist the Baltimore City Department of Health in tracking community health and in planning health protective interventions. The community cancer profile proposed complements other work ongoing between the health department and the Bloomberg School of Public Health, namely the "Neighborhood Indicators Project". The Neighborhood Indicators Project will provide health data at the neighborhood level, but does not include cancer outcomes.

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**Nan Astone, Associate Professor, Population, Family and Reproductive Health**  
**Ross Pologe, Fellowship of Lights**

### **Augmenting the 2009 Census of Homeless**

The Baltimore Homeless Youth Initiative (BHYI) and the Center for Adolescent Health (CAH) request support for a service provider based enumeration of homeless people between the ages of 10 and 24 who are not accompanied by a caretaker adult in Baltimore. We proposed to conduct this enumeration on the same day as the 2009 biennial Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mandated Census of Homeless People. The proposed enumeration is a scaled up version of a pilot parallel count conducted by the BHYI in January 2007 in conjunction with the latest HUD mandated Homeless Census. Results from the enumeration will be disseminated widely with the aim of improving our understanding of homeless young people in Baltimore in order to serve them better.

## **FACULTY-COMMUNITY COURSE DEVELOPMENT**

**Kathleen Schwarz, Professor of Pediatrics, School of Medicine**  
**Allison Stewart-Hammerer, Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition**

### **Medical Student Elective: Healthcare Issues for Homeless Children**

There are currently ~2500 homeless children in Baltimore City. Recent studies conducted by course faculty of homeless in East Baltimore families demonstrate low Hepatitis B vaccine coverage, high rates of obesity and frequent exposure to domestic violence. These findings are consistent with existing literature which documents that homeless children have poorer overall health than their housed peers. This application proposed to develop a medical school elective related to health issues for homeless children. Specifically, the goal of this service-learning curriculum is for medical students to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to address the complex healthcare needs of homeless families. There will be two 4 week electives offered by pediatric and nursing school faculty with experience in urban health, children's health consequences of domestic violence

and homelessness. The course will be developed and implemented in collaboration with the director of Ark (a day care for homeless children), the director of residential programs at House of Ruth Maryland (a domestic violence shelter) and the director of neighborhood services of HEBCAC, Inc. Medical students will spend time at The Ark and House of Ruth learning firsthand about health issues of homeless children and will work collaboratively with these organizations to implement a health education program. HEBCAC, our primary community collaborator which is well known for its consistent, exemplary advocacy for the homeless will teach the students about how to develop and execute this type of community-based health advocacy project and will identify additional sites. It is our hope that this educational, hands-on experience will empower and motivate the students to continue to advocate for these vulnerable children throughout their careers.