



## 2015 Small Grants Awards- Funded Partnerships

### STUDENT- COMMUNITY PROJECTS

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Undergraduate Student: Jasmine Kaneshiro, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing BSN student

Community Partner: Leon Purnell, Executive Director, Men and Families Center

#### **Equipping Community Leaders to Address Trauma in East Baltimore**

The deleterious physical effects of community-level psychological trauma, especially on individuals living in urban poverty, have been well documented. We propose to address trauma in East Baltimore in two related ways: first, we would like to offer training on Risking Connection, an evidence-based curriculum on trauma-informed care, to staff of the Men and Families Center and the Charm City Clinic, two organizations in East Baltimore. We will provide food at these trainings to facilitate and encourage attendance. Second, we will use principles and information from the trainings, as well as the expertise and insights of other community organizations and individuals, to create a “trauma toolkit,” a guide to Baltimore City resources that will help users know where to find help in healing from and preventing trauma. The toolkit’s audience will be social workers, case managers, others who work with people who have experienced trauma, and community members. These two parts of the proposal represent significant and feasible ways of filling in the community’s gaps in knowledge of how to deal with trauma. Overall, this project will equip individuals and organizations with better, more evidence-based, and more positive approaches to working with those who have experienced trauma.

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Graduate Student: Paige Cantlin, Full-Time Graduate, Carey Business School

Community Partner: Jennifer Tan, MPH Alumnus, JHSPH, Founder, Shine Foundation, Inc.

#### **Building Financial Capacity of Homeless Survivors of Domestic Abuse, One FEAT at a Time (FEAT = Financial Education and Training)**

Baltimore City, unfortunately, is no stranger to domestic violence, with key groups of women reporting as high as a 30% lifetime prevalence of intimate partner violence. Often intertwined with domestic violence is some form of financial abuse. Past research corroborates this, showing that victims who were more economically dependent on their abusers were less likely to leave. Yet, few formal programs today target the financial health of homeless domestic violence survivors or innovate in this space. Not to mention, preliminary findings on the impact of these programs remain sparse. We strive to change this, by developing, delivering and evaluating a two-part program for Shine Foundation to assist homeless

survivors of domestic abuse achieve financial independence. The program will strive to enhance survivors' intentions to financially plan, coach them through any potential barriers to a change in their financial habits and mentor them to sustain the change. Above all, the program will strive to make financial planning fun and accessible to survivors!

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Graduate Student: David Olawuyi Fakunle, Pre-doctoral Fellow, Mental Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Community Partner: Kay Lawal-Muhammad & Rashida Forman-Bey, WombWork Productions Inc.

### **Baltimore's Emotional Emancipation Arts Initiative**

WombWork Productions, Inc. (WWP) has developed "Baltimore's Emotional Emancipation Arts Initiative" to address the emotional and psychological impact of racism among African Americans. This most timely program provides the rare opportunity for community stakeholders (teens, parents, adults and elders) to come together and engage in an honest, cathartic, cross-generational dialogue toward healing and conflict resolution. The program will involve WWP's youth ensembles, adult and elder performers, residents of the Walbrook community, and other organizations serving families in Baltimore City. We plan to replicate this model in other West and East Baltimore communities from 2016 – 2020.

Key program components include:

1. Arts-based student activities (creation of 3 productions)
2. Community discussion groups
3. Emotional Emancipation (EE) CirclesSM

The program's implementation will take place after-school, on weekends and designated weekdays beginning in September 2015 – June 2016. We estimate the total number of participants for year one will include 50 performers; @ 450 audience members at performances; and @ 360 participants in Emotional Emancipation groups. We will also present productions on Baltimore Cable TV for an estimated audience of 50,000 viewers. Program evaluation will be conducted JHU Pre-doctoral Fellow David Olawuyi Fakunle, and an outcome and process evaluation design will be used.

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Graduate Student: Christina Rodriguez-Hart, Graduate Student, JHBSPH

Community Partner: Leon Purnell, Men and Families Center

### **Healing and Empowering Our Youth: A Community-Based Project to Address Trauma Among East Baltimore Youth**

Youth are especially affected by trauma and can suffer in ways that affect their future opportunities and success. The Men and Families Center (MFC), a community-based organization in East Baltimore, proposes to develop and provide a holistic trauma informed training to 45 youth in its community that will aid these youth in processing trauma in a healthy manner and be able to communicate about trauma with their friends and family. This grant builds off of another grant, which will train MFC staff in trauma. Following the training of staff and youth, a select number will be chosen to form staff youth pairs as trauma prevention and response teams. These teams will conduct trauma presentations at local schools

and provide rapid response to violence in schools in order to assist youth and adults involved to speak of the trauma, be screened for signs of trauma, and make appropriate referrals. Through this pilot, the MFC hopes to halt the process of re-victimization from trauma of its youth and community and to reduce trauma in the East Baltimore community long-term.

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Graduate Student: April Joy Damian, PhD Student, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Department of Mental Health

Community Partner: Ali Smith, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Holistic Life Foundation, Inc.

### **Advancing the Mental Well-Being of Baltimore through a Trauma-Informed Workforce Development Program**

Chronic community-level trauma in the context of urban poverty has been well documented. Moreover, structural barriers regarding employment, earnings, and health persist for Black communities, particularly young Black men. For over 14 years, the Holistic Life Foundation (HLF) has been addressing public health challenges facing urban cities, particularly Baltimore, through trauma-informed yoga and mindfulness programs, with a focus on youth and schools. HLF runs a Workforce Development Program to train instructors, many of whom are Baltimore natives from low-income neighborhoods who participated in HLF's classes as students. The aims of the proposed project are to evaluate the psychosocial impact of HLF's Workforce Development Program on trainees and to assess trainees' perceived readiness to serve as instructors. This project will utilize in-depth individual interviews with current and past Workforce Development trainees, as well as brief surveys on stress and resilience factors at the start and end of training for participants entering the training program. Findings will be used to refine HLF's trauma-informed Workforce Development Program curriculum and manuals. Findings will also be disseminated to key stakeholders, including Baltimore City School administrators and funders, highlighting a strengths-based, trauma-informed workforce development program that can serve as a model for other underserved urban areas.

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Graduate Student: Charvonne Holliday, PhD, MPH, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, Community Public Health Department

Community Partner: Latisha Carter, CEO, My Covenant Place

### **An Exploration of Community-Level Influences on Perpetration of Partner Violence**

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a significant community health concern. The goal of the proposed community research collaboration is to gain an in-depth understanding of the social determinants (i.e., peer violence, built environment, social injustice) of IPV perpetration from the perspective of men in Baltimore, MD. Men (n=25) enrolled in the *Alpha Project*, a 24-week abuser intervention program (AIP) hosted at My Covenant Place, will be recruited for participation in a sequential mixed methods study. Concept mapping, a mixed methods approach, will be used to identify community experiences that may contribute to or serve as protective factors against male perpetration of IPV, first through group discussion. Multidimensional scaling and hierarchical cluster analyses will be used to measure the

connectedness of major themes and individual community factors or subthemes. Subsequently, findings from the concept mapping will be used to guide in-depth interviews, which will be conducted to explore community-level contributors to IPV throughout one's life-course. To our knowledge, this is the first study to use a comprehensive, longitudinal approach to explore IPV perpetration among men enrolled in an AIP. The results will inform the refinement of existing violence prevention efforts and can be used to foster appropriate community development.

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Graduate Student: Lauren Rocco, School of Public Health, Master's Program

Community Partner: Aaron Velky & Josh Massey, Ortus Academy, Sharicca Bolden, Strong City Baltimore

**Financial Literacy Game in Inner City Schools: Lauren Rocco, SCB & Ortus Academy, a Graduate Student and Community Partner Objective**

Hopkins Strong City Baltimore, a partner of four elementary/middle schools and a community center and Ortus Academy (a 501 (c) 3), would like to improve financial decisions in middle school students over the course of the spring, summer, and fall. With the support of the Urban Health Institute, Ortus Academy's program gives 120 middle school students access to a game called NumisMatters, designed to teach the basics of healthy financial behavior. Students play through 10 turns, representing 10 years of life, and interact with a variety of financial heroes and villains, representing real-life financial decisions. The student with the most assets after 10 turns wins a prize.

NumisMatters better the financial decisions and attitudes of students- a pre and post-test tracks attitudes, and each decision that is made (including any late payments, penalties, etc.) is recorded.

By allowing students to gain handling money, making decisions, preparing for the future, and understanding the impact of decisions. We will statistically support the importance of strong financial understanding at an early age, and how critical that is for the community, the school, and Johns Hopkins UHI.

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Graduate Student: Allison Weigel, Graduate Student

Community Partner: Sarah Tooley, Better Waverly Community Organization/901 Arts

**901 Arts- Building an Infrastructure for Inclusion**

901 Arts serves a population of primarily low-income, African American families in Better Waverly. Poverty and structural racism can be contributing factors to stressors many of our youth face. Research shows that the effect of chronic stress and trauma on young minds can often manifest in symptoms similar to those of learning disabilities-impaired executive functioning and self-regulation abilities (Blair, 2012). 901 Arts-Building an Infrastructure for Inclusion is a project designed to assess and evolve the current operating space and routines of 901 Arts to become more inclusive for its youth in need of

support in developing organization and self-regulation skills. 901 Arts has already partnered with several education consultants, including Allison Weigel, a Johns Hopkins school of Education graduate student, to conduct a needs assessment. Allison is currently with 901 Arts to secure funds for the implementation phase of the project, which would include purchasing materials needed to better organize the 901 Arts environment and aid student self-regulation. We will measure the outcomes of this project through documentation of the center's behavior incidents and through volunteer end-of semester surveys.

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## **FACULTY- COMMUNITY PROJECTS**

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Faculty Member: Joyce Harrison, M.D., Assistant Professor, Dept. of Psychiatry, Div. of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Community Partner: Kenneth Tellerman, M.D., Chair, Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics Emotional Health Committee

### **Children's DEPOT Project: Improving Parenting of Young Children in Poverty**

The recent riots in Baltimore City have brought national attention to the diverse needs and struggles of impoverished communities. To address the emotional needs of young children in poverty, the proposed project aims to develop a comprehensive educational program to enhance the knowledge and skill base of parent leaders who run educational and support groups for parents from high risk families in Baltimore City. The Maryland AAP Chapter Emotional Health Committee will develop the program in partnership with the Family Tree, a local non-profit organization that provides support and education to predominantly low income families with the main focus of preventing child abuse and neglect. The content areas will focus on providing effective strategies for promoting infant attachment and positive parenting among parents attending their support groups. The program will also provide parent leaders with an overview of early brain development and the health effects of chronic and acute stress in young children. After the program is developed with the Family Tree, it will be offered to other regional non-profit agencies that provide parenting skills training to high risk families, as well as to state agencies that oversee child care workers, early childhood educators, child caseworkers and juvenile justice professionals.

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Faculty Member: Michelle Kaufman, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Health, Behavior and Society, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Community Partner: Aaliyah Muhammad, JD, Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City

### **Best Practices for Trauma-Informed Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in Baltimore**

Numerous factors converge to make Baltimore a hotspot for human trafficking: its harbor and major highways have enabled its development as a pass-through and destination trafficking city, while high rates of homelessness and thousands of children in foster care make for vulnerable populations. The goal of this proposal is to conduct a rapid assessment regarding the scope of human trafficking in Baltimore and surrounding counties and to identify best practices for trauma-informed service delivery for survivors.

The specific aims are as follows:

**Aim 1.** Compile publicly available data on potential trafficking cases and related statistics in Baltimore City and three surrounding counties.

**Aim 2.** Conduct a qualitative study to identify the best practices in trauma-informed care being used by those working with trauma survivors in the Baltimore area.

This research has strong potential to generate future funding for the Baltimore Human Trafficking Initiative and its partnering service organizations. Furthermore, the formative research conducted under this proposal will allow the Initiative to effectively plan programming that will have a positive impact on the health of those who have been trafficked, potentially allowing Baltimore to serve as a model for community engagement in trauma-informed care for survivors of trafficking.

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Faculty Member: Elizabeth Sloand, PhD, CRNP, FAAN, Associate Professor and Chair, Acute and Chronic Care Department Johns Hopkins School of Nursing

Community Partner: Katrina Foster, Principal, Elmer A. Henderson: A Johns Hopkins Partnership School

### **Cultivating a Trauma Sensitive School Environment**

Studies show that nearly every school in the United States has students who have been exposed to overwhelming experiences of trauma and adversity. Childhood traumatic experiences can lead to a cascade of social, emotional, and academic difficulties that can interfere with a child's ability to learn. Cultivating a Trauma Sensitive School Environment will partner Henderson-Hopkins School with the Trauma Learning Institute to follow established methods in the process of becoming a trauma informed school. Henderson-Hopkins will form a leadership team designed to work with the entire school staff in raising awareness and understanding about the impact trauma has on learning and to cultivate a sense of urgency regarding the implementation of trauma-informed practices at our school. This will be accomplished through a variety of communication strategies and professional development opportunities. The result of the process will be the identification of priorities and areas of need as they relate to the provision of trauma-sensitive practices. These priorities will serve as the framework for an action plan designed to create a trauma-sensitive environment school-wide that will enhance the educational experience and improve the social-emotional competence of all children at Henderson-Hopkins.

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Faculty Member: Sarah Polk, MD, Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Medical Director, Children's Medical Practice

Community Partner: Eric Haber, LGSW, Baltimore City Public Schools

## Teen Testimonios

There has been a large influx of immigrants from Central America into the Baltimore City Public Schools in the last year and a half. Almost all of these Central American immigrant youth have been exposed to violence and other forms of trauma before, during or after their immigration. In addition to trauma exposure, Latino immigrant students report high levels of stress due to both personal and familial factors such as documentation status, acculturation, poverty and neighborhood violence. For all of these reasons these youth are at high risk of mental health problems. Some immigrant Latino students are presenting with mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder and self-injurious behaviors. There are few mental health support services available to limited English proficiency, immigrant Latino students. There are very few Spanish-speaking clinicians in the schools and few community resources for uninsured/uninsurable patients. To equip immigrant Latino school students with coping skills and stress-reduction strategies in order to prevent mental health problems, the current proposal is to offer regular support groups to new immigrant Latino/a students in several Baltimore City Public Schools.

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Faculty Member: Marcelo Batkis, MD, Assistant Professor, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center

Community Partner: Derek Miller and Aida Medina, Gallery Church- Patterson Park

### **Managing Psychological Stress Caused by Community-Level Violence: Baltimore Latinos Moving from Vulnerability to Empowerment**

**Introduction.** Latino immigrants in Baltimore are frequently victims of neighborhood level crime. Such traumatic exposure can result in significant psychological stress with dominant feelings of vulnerability and fear for both individuals and communities. Research shows, however, that with appropriate supports and intervention, communities can move toward healing from such trauma.

**Objectives.** Our program for Baltimore Latinos shares practical tools to recognize the negative psychological effects of criminal victimization, enhances awareness of existing community supports, imparts strategies to increase self-confidence, and promotes community cohesion, an important component of trauma-informed systems.

**Methods.** This program targeting Latino adults, will be guided by mental health professionals and include 1) education about the neurobiological effects of traumatic experiences paired with specific coping strategies, 2) ecological mapping of community assets, 3) practical skills for environmental awareness and self-defense, and 4) discussions to promote solutions for neighborhood cohesion and community healing. A neighborhood church serving the Latino community will be the primary community partner.

**Dissemination.** Collaborative ecomaps and written policy suggestions will be shared with the broader community and city officials.

**Significance.** This innovative interdisciplinary program should help engender a shift in Latino immigrant collective sensibility from vulnerability to confidence and cohesion with the broader Baltimore community.



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Faculty Member: Caroline Vidal, MD, MPH, Clinical Associate, Johns Hopkins Medicine

Community Partner: Briony Hynson, MA, Then Neighborhood Design Center

**Re-claiming Public Spaces for Play: The Effects of the Built Environment on the Levels of Hyperarousal Children and Collective Efficacy in the Community, in a Neighborhood Exposed to High Levels of Community Violence**

The environment is a broad term used by many different disciplines. In health, Last has defined the environment as “all that which is external to the human host.” This would include physical and biological, but also social and cultural factors that influence the health of populations. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) includes Community Design under the scope of emergency and environmental health services and defines “Healthy Places” as “those designed and built to improve the quality of life for all people who live, work, worship, learn, and play within their borders.” Children’s mental health is especially vulnerable to the environment. They are physiologically more vulnerable because they are still developing; they are unable to respond to threats, as they are not able to change their living location or have political influence; and they are also more exposed to the barriers of the built environment (i.e: physical activity in car driven neighborhoods). Environmental interventions have proven effective in targeting diseases such as obesity through the promotion of physical activity and healthy eating habits<sup>4</sup> and they also have a place in mental health.

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Faculty Member: Roni Neff, PhD, Assistant Professor, Environmental Health Sciences, Program Director, Food System Sustainability, Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future,

Staff Partner: Erin Biehl, Senior Program Coordinator, Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

Community Partner: Holly Freishtat, Baltimore City Food Policy Director, Baltimore City Office of Sustainability, Kristin Baja, Climate and Resilience Planner, Baltimore Office of Sustainability

**Building Food System Resilience in Baltimore: Stakeholder Perspectives**

23% of Baltimore residents are food insecure. The trauma of food insecurity can have lifelong consequences detrimental to physical and mental health. The food system serving Baltimore’s communities is vulnerable to natural hazards such as extreme weather or infectious disease, and to human-caused hazards such as civil unrest. These events may severely disrupt food access, heightening and retriggering experiences of food insecurity trauma for city residents. The Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future and Baltimore City Office of Sustainability are partnering on a trauma-informed policy project aimed at building the city’s food system resilience. The Baltimore uprising demonstrated the city food system’s lack of preparedness. In-progress short term emergency planning activities improved the



anti-hunger response following winter storm Jonas. The full Food System Resilience Plan requires community engagement and in-depth input from stakeholders including community members. We seek funds to support staff time for performing, analyzing and incorporating interview findings into the plan. We will also prepare a peer-reviewed manuscript analyzing the interviews and contributing to scholarship on trauma-informed policy. Improving the Baltimore food system's resilience means strengthening pre-event community functioning, with collateral benefits for food security and community development, both social determinants of health.

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