



Newsletter

Fall-
Winter 2021

WHY ARE HEALTH DISPARITIES EVERYONE'S PROBLEM?

June 29th our director, Dr. Lisa Cooper, released her new book "Why are Health Disparities Everyone's Problem? In this book Dr. Cooper helps readers understand how policy, aspects of our health care system, genetics, and more significantly impact the health and wellbeing of communities. Dr. Cooper explores disparities that contribute to inequities many communities face, specifically communities of color. Recounting her experience growing up in Liberia and her 30+ years as a clinician and health equity researcher, Dr. Cooper uses her life experiences and research over the last few decades as examples and guides for how we can create a more equitable health care system for everyone. Dr. Cooper shares, "From delving into the complex roots of structural racism, dynamics of physician-patient relationships, recognizing health inequity as a global struggle, and identifying the many forms of bias and racism, there are lessons for us all."

To order your copy please visit [amzn.to/35ZeWXB](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B091388888)



UHI COMMUNITY VOICES: BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF COMMUNITY LEADERS



Rachel Brooks is a member of the UHI's Community-University Coordinating Council. *At the time this article was written, she was the lead organizer for BUILD, the nation's oldest and largest network of community organizations with over 65 organizations globally. Born in South Korea into a military family, Rachel has spent her entire life influenced by the resiliency and community organizing of her loved ones. Now she has dedicated her career to helping other communities do the same. Read her story below.

“Every single apartment, rowhome, community is full of all the talent that we possibly could need to to change our city.”

Rachel Brooks, lead organizer for Baltimoreans United in Leadership (BUILD), has dedicated the last 15 years of her life to providing and connecting neighborhood leaders with the tools and resources needed to make effective and sustainable change in their communities.

Her passion for community

organizing started long before her beginnings in Chicago at BUILD's collective of sister organizations. Rachel recounts her family's roots in Alexandria Virginia dating 10 decades back when Alexandria City became the first city for Black people.

“I had a bad ass grandma and bad ass grandpa. I saw two kids who grew up in Jim Crow Alexandria, VA. They were active in their community, congregation and always taught me to never give up. They would not be alive if it were not for black institutions organizing their people and money to create the communities we deserve [...] I've always had

these examples -we know no one is coming so we are going to do it ourselves.”

Since Rachel's start with BUILD, then as their senior associate organizer in 2017, she has worked diligently to develop and train the next generation of talented Baltimorean leaders at the 40+ BUILD affiliated institutions seeking to make change.

“I see more people becoming radicalized but have no place to belong. What we are trying to do is get all these folks together and reconsolidate their power, so they have the ability to act and win for generations, versus



Rachel's grandfather and dad at a school in Alexandria being renamed after her grandmother.

just one campaign”, shares Rachel.

Rachel’s focus is building up the next generation of leaders. She spoke with us about the joy she feels when those who feel voiceless recognize the power of their own voice and take their seat at the table.

“I love seeing someone go from feeling really powerless, alone and isolated and they get invited to a community conversation or listening session. They feel

heard for the first time, and they aren’t alone anymore. They get trained in how to develop their own power and have a team that will fight alongside them for the first time. That changes a person. It’s not about the win, though we want that, but it’s about the leader who went from being alone and feeling nothing was possible, to dreaming about what’s possible as part of the most powerful citizens’ organization in the city.”

When Rachel isn’t community organizing you can catch her building and crafting in her basement. She enjoys reclaiming items and repurposing them into beautiful pieces. She has a dream to open an in-home ceramic studio teaching people how to do the same.

To read past Community Voices stories: visit bit.ly/UHCommunityVoices

REMEMBERING BISHOP DOUGLAS MILES

“Pioneer for the unjust, undeserved, and underprivileged”



Those are the words spoken by many as news broke about the passing of our beloved Bishop Douglas Miles in August. The Urban Health Institute (UHI) has been honored to be on the receiving end of Bishop Miles’ endless support and friendship through the years. As we mourn this loss, we reflect on his legacy of leadership in Baltimore as a co-chair emeritus of BUILD, community organizer, and pastor.

We are reminded of the countless words of wisdom and love he poured in to the UHI during his time with us. Bishop Miles was much more than a Bunting Neighborhood Leadership instructor and committee member, he was also a dear friend and mentor to many of us. He was a familiar face at the UHI, including our annual holiday parties, community meetings, and Social Determinants of Health Symposiums. We invite you to take a look at some of our fondest memories with him over the years by clicking the button and photos below.

We will miss him dearly and take comfort in knowing that the legacy he leaves behind in Baltimore will continue through the lives of those he touched.

2021 HENRIETTA LACKS MEMORIAL WINNER



Chosen family can be important to helping someone grow, evolve, and achieve their goals. These mentors and peers play a critical role in guiding someone to reach their full potential. At Thread, their mission rests on the importance of developing these meaningful relationships and establishing support networks. The Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute is proud to announce that Thread has been selected to receive our 2021 Henrietta Lacks Memorial Award. Thread has been working since 2004 to provide at-promise youth with robust support systems to guide them through their high school careers and young adult years.

“Thread builds relationships across lines of difference throughout Baltimore City [...] Each young person has up to four volunteers and their lives become intertwined. [...] It’s not just about showing up but it’s about showing up vulnerable, when you move from the place of matter to, I need you. That transition starts to impact the way a young person feels about themselves”

Thread's value and uniqueness as a program lies in how they work to create a "new social fabric". The students in the program begin as high school freshmen whose academic performance indicates that they are at a risk of not graduating. To address this, Thread provides each student with a "family," or a group of up to 5 volunteers, who are committed to helping the student be successful in high school and beyond. The volunteers then work together to understand why the student is struggling and what they can do to help them. This family stays connected with the student during high school

"Thread really showed me another side of myself that I didn't know I had. I didn't know I could be a leader. Thread was my voice"

— Thread student Tahj

and for a few years into young adulthood for a total of 10 years.

The organization has been incredibly successful at changing the trajectory of these youths' lives. 79% of students in Thread have graduated high school, 100% stay for the full 10 years of the program, and 62% pursue a 4- or 2-year degree or certificate program. They also gain a long-term support network that they can lean on even after they finish their time with Thread.

Thread plans to use their support from the Urban Health Institute to expand the Diversity and Academic Advancement Summer Institute (DAASI) partnership between JHU SOM's Office of Student Pipeline Programs and Thread, providing more summer employment opportunities to Thread students.

To learn more about Thread and watch the official Henrietta Lacks Memorial Award video, please visit bit.ly/2021HLMA



United Way
of Central Maryland

**ON TRACK
4 SUCCESS**

The Urban Health Institute would also like to congratulate our runner-up "On Track 4 Success". A program by the United Way of Central Maryland working in partnership with The Center for Social Organization of Schools at the Johns Hopkins School of Education for their dedication to getting Baltimore City students at risk of not graduating back on track.

MEET OUR NEW TEAM MEMBER!

In September the Urban Health Institute welcomed a new member to our team, **Emily Carletto**. Emily is a recent graduate from the University of Maryland graduated with a B.S in Neurobiology and Physiology and minored in Human Development. As a program assistant, Emily will work closely with our programs team to help execute all UHI programmatic activities. Get to know a little more about Emily below!



UHI Spotlight: Get to Know Emily

Where are you from?

I am originally from Long Island, New York. I have recently moved to Federal Hill Baltimore for the upcoming year.

What is your area of study interest?

Throughout my past experiences working as a medical assistant and shadowing an OB/GYN, I have developed a strong interest in women's healthcare. I am currently applying to medical school to pursue this interest working directly with women as an OB/GYN and academically to pursue research related to women's healthcare.

What are you most passionate about?

I am extremely passionate about learning how to provide adequate and equitable healthcare to all, but especially medically underserved women. I hope to become a doctor who can research related topics, serve my community, and work with future patients to provide such healthcare.

As a program assistant, what are you looking forward to most?

As a program assistant at the UHI, I am looking forward to getting involved with the programs and events directed by the UHI to promote health and health equity. I am most excited about learning some skills throughout my time

here that I can take with me throughout my career in healthcare.

When not working where can we find you?

On the weekends, you could find me out to eat! One of my absolute favorite things to do is go to an interesting restaurant with some friends and try new food. If I am in a bit of a lazier mood, you can find me on my couch binging a Netflix series or reading a book.

Favorite book?

I really enjoy reading about science, medicine, and healthcare. I have to say my favorite book is "Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story" by Dr. Ben Carson.

What is an interesting/fun fact about yourself?

A fun fact about myself is that I love making jewelry and I have been doing it since I was a little girl!

A message from Emily:

To my new friends at and of the UHI, I am so excited to get to know all of you throughout my time here! I am always willing to help anyone in anyway, so if I can be of service to you just reach out and I will do my best. I am excited to be a part of the team and I am very much looking forward to my time here!

UPCOMING EVENTS!

INTRO TO FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COMMUNITY CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP

April 2022

2022 SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH SYMPOSIUM

May 2022

CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP: PROGRAM EVALUATION

May 2022

To learn about our upcoming events and funding opportunities please visit www.urbanhealth.jhu.edu

Get In Touch



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