

25 profiles

snapshots

OF PHILANTHROPY





Celebrating 25 Years of Philanthropic Impact!

Friends,

With vision and persistence, a group of leading foundations and corporations founded the Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers (ABAG) in 1983 as a forum in which colleagues could address common problems and interests.

Today, ABAG is a high-performing organization with over 140 members and is the Greater Baltimore region's premier resource on philanthropy, dedicated to informing grantmakers and improving our community.

In our 25th year, we are proud to highlight philanthropy's impact on our community with **Snapshots of Philanthropy**. The 25 stories in this booklet are a sample of the many ways that ABAG members make a difference, telling stories of progress and hope made possible by grants large and small.

We applaud our members for their leadership, vision and commitment to making our community better.

This is a dynamic time at ABAG, with many opportunities for learning and avenues for collaboration. As we move forward, we will continue to build on our first 25 years and rise to the next level as an organization serving our growing membership and community.

We hope you enjoy this **Snapshots of Philanthropy** compilation and invite you to visit www.snapshotsofphilanthropy.org.

Sincerely,

Lynn Homeier Rauch
President

Betsy Nelson
Executive Director

Table of Contents

snapshot 1	Coalition Mobilizes to Boost Incomes and Build Hope	4
snapshot 2	Foundations Draw Federal Funding for Literacy Project	4
snapshot 3	Funders, Hospitals Craft Workforce Solution	5
snapshot 4	Funders Help Combat Domestic Violence	6
snapshot 5	Visionary Public-Private Partnership Funds Art School	6
snapshot 6	Funders Partner to Improve the Chesapeake Bay	7
snapshot 7	Community Leaders Help Students Head for College	8
snapshot 8	Leveraging Philanthropic Investment to Expand Community Services	8
snapshot 9	Funders' Efforts Improve Life for Seniors	9
snapshot 10	Funders Fight for People with Disabilities	10
snapshot 11	Funders Partner to Provide Critical Recovery Supports	10
snapshot 12	Funders Help Boys & Girls Clubs Flourish	11
snapshot 13	Funders Help Healthy Neighborhoods Thrive	12
snapshot 14	Funders Teach the ABC's of Money	12
snapshot 15	Funders Support Critical Home Delivery Efforts	13
snapshot 16	Fellowship Helps Social Pioneers Serve the Community	14
snapshot 17	Funders Collaborate to Invest in Neighborhoods	14
snapshot 18	Funders Support Instant Human Services Help Via 2-1-1	15
snapshot 19	Funders Invest Together in Columbia	16
snapshot 20	Funders Help Reform Eviction Process	16
snapshot 21	Funding Community Invests in Children	17
snapshot 22	Funders Invest in Healthier Hospitals	18
snapshot 23	Funders Support Advocacy for Education	18
snapshot 24	Funders Support Local Arts Community	19
snapshot 25	Snapshots Highlight the Impact of Funders	20

snapshot 1

Coalition Mobilizes to Boost Incomes and Build Hope



When funders and community groups put their expertise and resources together to support a common cause, the results can be phenomenal. That's what happened in 2001 when a group of foundations joined together with community-based organizations, government agencies, employers, workforce development agencies, and volunteers to jumpstart the **Baltimore CASH Campaign**.

For a working family struggling to make ends meet, an income boost of a couple thousand dollars can mean a lot. If that extra income opens up opportunities to repair bad credit, receive financial education, begin a savings program, learn about starting a small business or work toward buying a home, it can reshape the family's future for years to come. The Creating Assets, Savings and Hope (CASH) campaign is doing just that for thousands of area residents. Together, the funders and partners have mounted a campaign that's promoted economic stability and empowerment for low-income households in the area by:

- Helping nearly 20,000 low-income taxpayers get free assistance in

completing their income tax returns in order to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and other tax credits for which they qualify.

- Bringing working poor families some \$33 million in total federal tax refunds; more than \$16.7 million in EITC refunds; and more than \$9.2 million in Maryland state refunds.
- Saving residents nearly \$4 million in tax preparation fees through free services at some 15 Voluntary Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites in the city and county.
- Conducting marketing and publicity to help more people learn about the

program; connecting clients to financial counseling and other opportunities to build assets and savings; and advocating for policies and programs to help working families.

Foundations like the **Aaron Straus & Lillie Straus Foundation**, **Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation**, and **Clayton Baker Trust** have helped support and grow the Campaign, and the **Annie E. Casey Foundation** has been instrumental in mobilizing funders, local agencies, community groups, and the Internal Revenue Service to build momentum and collaboration.

"The coalition partners and funders realize collectively that they can leverage dollars so much further when they work in partnership," said Joanna Ramani, the director of the Baltimore CASH Campaign. "They come to our meetings and are active members, questioning, adding their input, and caring for the work. This isn't just a check that gets written every year."

snapshot 2

Foundations Draw Federal Funding for Literacy Project



Helping young children from economically disadvantaged homes "catch up" with their peers in language and vocabulary development is very difficult, but critical in heading off first grade failure and promoting long-term success.

When two local family foundations learned in 2000 that researchers at Johns

Hopkins University had developed teacher training strategies that were helping to bridge this gap, they quickly and generously lent their support.

Funding from the **Zanvyl & Isabelle Krieger Fund** and the **Lockhart Vaughan Foundation** helped the **Johns Hopkins University Early Learning Project** pay for coaches to work intensively with Head

Start teachers. The trainings illustrated new strategies to build language and vocabulary development in economically disadvantaged pre-schoolers. The funds also supported an evaluation that showed Head Start children whose teachers used these methods performed significantly better than those in a control group.

continued on next page

snapshot 2 continued

But the real icing on the cake?

The data gathered with the support of these funders reeled in \$8.9 million in grants from the U.S. Department of Education to help spread these teaching methods to more Head Start classrooms in Baltimore.

“It used to be that if foundations could help demonstrate that an initiative was worthwhile, the government would pick it up and fund it, but that has changed over the years,” notes Pete Powell, the Executive Director of the Lockhart

Vaughan Foundation. “This effort demonstrates that a good pilot project can still attract government funding, even in these days of reduced government funding for social programs.”

In the case of early literacy, the stakes are particularly high, Powell notes. “If kids are not ready to learn to read when they get to the first grade, they’re likely to be failures in school.”

“We would never have qualified for these grants, or even been able to get the literacy project off the ground without the early and continued support of these two local foundations,” says Barbara Wasik, the principal research scientist for the Johns Hopkins Early Learning Project.

snapshot 3

Funders, Hospitals Craft Workforce Solution



Baltimore area hospitals were facing critical staffing shortages in certain high-skill jobs, while many low-income workers were struggling to get by in dead-end jobs with no benefits or hope of advancement. In 2003, an informal network of funders supporting different approaches to workforce development got together and collectively said: “What’s wrong with this picture?”

These funders brought hospitals, public agencies, educational institutions, and community organizations together to map out a plan to train area workers to move into careers in these high-shortage hospital positions. The initial group of funders, which includes the **Abell Foundation**, **Annie E. Casey Foundation**, **Aaron Straus & Lillie Straus Foundation**, and the **Open Society Institute-Baltimore**, surveyed the scene and realized many programs were in place to provide training and support. What was needed was an organization to knit these resources together to prepare workers for these critical hospital opportunities. Hence, the **Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare** was born.

The Alliance integrates several key strategies to help hospitals meet their

current and future labor needs while giving area workers the training and support to develop skills and be successful. These strategies include career mapping, a work-based learning program that trains unskilled hospital employees to be nursing assistants and patient care technicians, and “bridge” programs that help hospitals upgrade the skills and education of employees who need short-term remediation before advancing on the job and/or entering into training or college-level work.

One of the most innovative efforts launched by the Alliance has been instituting career coaches to improve the odds of retention and advancement among workers who start out in entry-level skilled

health care jobs. Career coaches are now serving more than 400 workers across six hospitals, and in the period between September 2005 and May 2007, 40 percent of these employees experienced an average wage gain of 14 percent.

Not only are the original funders still partnering with the Alliance, but additional funders like the **Alvin & Fannie Blaustein Thalheimer Foundation** and the **Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation** are also lending support.

“The funders saw a real gap between what skills the hospitals needed for their workforce and the readiness of residents for these careers, so we created this alliance to leverage our collective resources and create career ladders into allied health for low-income city workers,” said Patrice Cromwell, a senior associate at the Annie E. Casey Foundation. “There was a real alignment of interest between the funders, public partners and the hospitals.”

snapshot 4

Funders Help Combat Domestic Violence



Thirty years ago, the **House Of Ruth Maryland** started as a small, grassroots shelter providing safety for battered women. As a society, we still were in denial about the pervasiveness and destructiveness of this crime, notes Executive Director Carole Alexander. But over the years the funding community, including the **France-Merrick Foundation, Marion I. & Henry J. Knott Foundation, Hoffberger Foundation, Linehan Family Foundation, Wright Family Foundation, Charles Crane Family Foundation, Zanvyl & Isabelle Krieger Fund, United Way of Central Maryland,** and **Verizon Maryland** joined with the House Of Ruth to cast a bright light on this shameful and secret behavior.

Over the past 30 years, philanthropic support of the House Of Ruth's mission to end domestic violence and change the attitudes and behavior that perpetuate it has been firm and enduring. The foundation community helped build a new shelter and create the most comprehensive service delivery system that exists in Maryland. Most importantly, local funders including the **Morton K. & Jane Blaustein Foundation** and the **Fund For Change** have

helped the House Of Ruth advocate for system reform and challenge government practices and policies that harm victims or fail to hold their abusers accountable.

Local funders have focused funding on domestic violence prevention because violence within relationships is prevalent, impacting our families and children. Nationally, one in every four women report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives. Every day, more than 3 children die as a result of child abuse in the home. The effects of physical, sexual and psychological abuse can be devastating for both the victims themselves, as well as those who witness the violence.

The House Of Ruth Maryland offers a range of services for victims, their children, friends and family, teens, and abusers. This year, the House Of Ruth served 8,449 victims, including 1,002 teens and 390 children. In addition to

its professional staff and community advocates program, hundreds of volunteers play a role in helping women and their children remain safe from abuse. House Of Ruth also offers extensive information and referral services and a website that attracts at least 1,000 visitors per month.

Local funders have been critical partners with the House Of Ruth in their growth and expansion, and to ensure that their critical services continue to strengthen.

"The philanthropic community came together to support a total expansion of their services," says Rosanne DiFonzo, Assistant Secretary of the France-Merrick Foundation. "The funds made it possible not only to expand its facilities but to address a whole family's needs through job training, life-skill counseling, and other services to help victims of abuse get back on their feet."

"Domestic violence occurs to families without regard to socioeconomic background. The House Of Ruth fulfills this critical need in the community" says Rosanne DiFonzo, Assistant Secretary, France-Merrick Foundation.

snapshot 5

Visionary Public-Private Partnership Funds Arts School



Founded in 1979, the **Baltimore School for the Arts** was the product of an unusual public-private partnership from the very start, with its charter approved by the Baltimore City School Board and a separate foundation launched to raise funds to supplement an annual school system budget. Its founders envisioned a school that would differ from

other Baltimore high schools by training students with potential for careers in the performing and visual arts.

Today, the school has gained significant private support from many individuals, foundations and corporations, including the **T. Rowe Price Associates Foundation, Wieler Family Foundation, Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Marion**

I. & Henry J. Knott Foundation, Joseph & Harvey Meyerhoff Family Charitable Funds, Reginald F. Lewis Foundation and the **Middendorf Foundation**.

"The Baltimore School for the Arts helped pave the way for private philanthropic investment in the Baltimore City public school system" says Jan Rivitz, Executive Director *continued on next page*

snapshot 5 continued

of the **Aaron Straus & Lillie Straus Foundation**, which also provides funding support for the school. “Mark Joseph, who chaired the school board when the school was founded, had the foresight and wisdom to know that a public school with an arts conservatory model would have expenses that would far exceed what the system could cover.”

The school offers a level playing field for students from all over the city and some surrounding counties who demonstrate artistic talent, while setting high standards that all students must meet. Students are selected on the basis of auditions and not academic performance, but in order to graduate, they must successfully meet rigorous standards in academics as well as the arts.

School enrollment has grown from just 68 students in its first year to 323 in the current school year. The student body is culturally, racially, and socio-economically diverse, and graduates can be found on Broadway, in television, films, nationally known dance companies, orchestras and design firms as well as in business, human services and education. The school also serves the community through its TWIGS (To Work in Gaining Skills) program,

providing free after-school and Saturday classes for Baltimore City children with limited access to arts education in their schools.

Funders of all sizes have an interest in investing in the school, and given that Jada Pinkett Smith is a graduate, it's no surprise that family foundations like the **Will & Jada Smith Family Foundation** are strong supporters!

“The School for the Arts has been able to attract confident philanthropic investors because it produces the kind of results more current high school reform efforts are looking for” says Jan Rivitz, Executive Director of the Aaron Straus & Lillie Straus Foundation.

snapshot 6

Funders Partner to Improve the Chesapeake Bay



A network of funders across Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Washington, DC is helping to ensure the best possible water quality for the area's scenic Chesapeake Bay.

Known as the **Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN)**, this group engages about 30 different foundations including the **Rauch Foundation, Baltimore Community Foundation, Abell Foundation** and the **Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment**, and provides opportunities for grantmakers to network and exchange information about protecting and restoring the health of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

The network offers objective information on the policy and science behind the Bay restoration; a forum to discuss hot issues and project experiences in a funders-only setting; and opportunities for funders to communicate and collaborate on a number of projects.

The Chesapeake Bay Funders Network provides an excellent avenue for funders

from across the Chesapeake area to deepen and sustain Chesapeake Bay improvements by leveraging the resources of many funding institutions, notes Jamie Baxter, Program Director for the **Chesapeake Bay Trust**, a private, nonprofit organization that makes grants to help protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers.

For example, seven of the foundations in the network pooled approximately \$850,000 per year to implement the Capacity Building Grant Program, a special initiative to provide organizational needs assessments and targeted

grants to help watershed improve their capacity.

This effort includes tailored training as well as one-on-one follow-up to help the watershed organizations put the training into action, notes Baxter. By working together, CBFN partners build a critical mass of funds that help move environmental restoration efforts to the next level.

“The Keith Campbell Foundation is very proud to be a part of the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network,” notes D. Keith Campbell, who established the foundation in 1998. “The partnership for the capacity building program in particular will reach many more watershed groups than we could individually and it will result in a stronger environmental network across the entire Chesapeake region.”

snapshot 7

Community Leaders Help Students Head for College



In 1988, a group of leaders in Baltimore City had a startling realization about why more local students weren't going to college: the schools were so focused on the kids getting into trouble that no one was paying attention to the "good kids" who were doing well, but lacked the resources and support to pursue a college education.

The business community and other funders pitched in to create the infrastructure needed, and today the **CollegeBound Foundation** serves more than 15,000 students attending 20 high schools in Baltimore City. It offers more than \$1 million in scholarships and grants along with intensive counseling and support to help motivate students and walk them through the process of applying for college.

The CollegeBound Foundation, an independent nonprofit, gets well over half of its funding from local corporations and foundations. Among the proud supporters of CollegeBound are the **Woodside Foundation, Lockhart Vaughan Foundation, Macht Philanthropic Fund, Abell**

Foundation, Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Rouse Company Foundation, and the Joseph & Harvey Meyerhoff Family Charitable Funds.

Many businesses support CollegeBound because it supports their bottom line and helps address their need for qualified candidates to fill positions. "It is important for the businesses in Baltimore City to recognize the value the CollegeBound Foundation brings to the community" says Thomas V. Brooks, Vice Chairman of the **Constellation Energy Group**. "By enabling low-income children to become members of our region's college educated workforce, CollegeBound is making a significant contribution to regional efforts to protect

Maryland's competitive edge. An investment in CollegeBound is an investment in our community's greatest asset—its children." Companies like **Venable LLP, American Trading and Production Corporation, Legg Mason, IBM, and T. Rowe Price** agree.

Some funders start specific scholarship programs, while others donate to a Last Dollar Grant Program that provides up to \$3,000 a year to help students cover needs not covered by existing scholarships. The foundation has also launched a college retention program to help students succeed once in college. These efforts are producing college graduates at three times the national average for low-income students.

"We help students apply for financial aid and get their fees waived for the SAT and the ACT as well as for the college application process," notes Dr. Craig Spilman, Executive Director at CollegeBound. "We also take them on college tours in and out of the state and hold college fairs at the schools, along with a bevy of workshops to learn about college and financial aid."

snapshot 8

Leveraging Philanthropic Investment to Expand Services



Foundations and corporations have a long history of supporting institutions that fill a critical need in our communities. One such group is **The Family Tree**, a statewide organization dedicated to breaking the cycle of child abuse, which has received support from many funders, including the **Osprey Foundation, Beechmont Foundation, David & Barbara B. Hirschhorn Foundation, Sylvan/Laureate Foundation, and**

the Baltimore Ravens All Community Team Foundation.

Recently, the **Dresher Foundation** took a further creative step by leveraging their long-time funding support to bring critical services and additional funding to The Family Tree efforts in Harford County by issuing a \$50,000 challenge grant. The grant, which is designed to help the organization expand its funding base in the county and requires The Family Tree to raise an additional one third of the \$50,000 from

other Harford County sources, has helped establish several new delivery sites for services in the county in collaboration with the county's health department. It also has helped to support and expand parenting classes and home visiting programs.

"The Family Tree has a well regarded reputation throughout the state" says Robin Platts, executive director of the Dresher Foundation. "But they haven't been very aggressive in fundraising in Harford County." *continued on next page*

snapshot 8 continued

The challenge grant gives them the opportunity to expand their funding base and to sustain their program in the county.”

More than 7,000 children are abused and neglected in our country every day—close to 3 million each year, and sadly, more children die at the hands of their parents than in car accidents, house fires, falls or drowning. It is no surprise that child abuse has serious long-term effects for every community that continue far beyond the suffering of innocent children. For example, more than 90% of prison inmates report being abused or neglected as children. With a budget of \$3 million, a staff of about 48, and a

couple of hundred volunteers The Family Tree serves about 17,000 people a year in Maryland through a variety of community-focused services and a 24-7 hotline called the “stress line.”

Funders of all types and sizes understand the need for support for this crit-

ical issue, including: the **Louise D. & Morton J. Macks Family Foundation**, **Lois & Irving Blum Foundation**, **Henry & Ruth Blaustein Rosenberg Foundation**, **Joseph & Harvey Meyerhoff Family Charitable Funds**, and the **Horizon Foundation**.

Dresher’s funding approach “Helps demonstrate that you can leverage dollars to gather strength in a specific geographic area,” notes Pat Cronin, executive director of The Family Tree. “It has been a magnet for other people to become aware of what we do and to spark their interest in supporting our work to help make families stronger.”

snapshot 9

Funders’ Efforts Improve Life for Seniors

For the elderly, living alone can be isolating and dangerous. But thanks to local funders, hundreds of Baltimore area elderly residents are getting free and low cost transportation, health education and screening, social services, and social, cultural, and recreational activities in the comfort of their own homes and neighborhoods.

The program, **Senior Friendly Neighborhoods**, serves some 900 seniors per month, many of whom are low-income, in several apartment buildings and homes in the Northwest corner of Baltimore City and Millbrook neighborhood in Baltimore County.

It’s coordinated by numerous funders, including **The ASSOCIATED: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore**, with support from the **Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation**, **Baltimore Community Foundation**, **Leonard & Helen R. Stulman Charitable Foundation**, **Jewish Women’s Giving Foundation**, and others.

Senior Friendly Neighborhoods also receives in-kind help from participating

apartment buildings, as well as federal, state, and county funds. Services are also provided by The ASSOCIATED partner agencies such as Comprehensive Housing Assistance (CHAI), Jewish Family Services, the Jewish Community Center of Greater Baltimore, LifeBridge Health Systems, and the Edward A. Myerberg Senior Center.

The results have been life-changing for residents like Gertrude Fine, 93, who was reluctant to impose on her children after she stopped driving and had a hard time even buying groceries. Today, she not only gets bus service to any store in the area, but takes full advantage of health programs, concerts, birthday parties, lectures, and holiday events from Passover Seders to Sabbath gatherings. “I’m elected many times to sing the B’ruchah!” Fine says proudly.

“Living alone can be a little sad, but this takes care of all my needs and I don’t have to depend on anybody else. It’s a happy, happy time and I’m learning new things every day.” —Gertrude Fine, 93, Senior Friendly Neighborhoods Client



snapshot 10

Funders Fight for People with Disabilities



Last year, the Baltimore Sun ran an editorial urging the state to provide “multi-systemic therapy”—an intensive, relatively short-term set of home-based counseling services and family and school interventions that help keep young people with mental health issues from entering or returning to the juvenile system. Where did the Sun draw its inspiration? From a report published by **Maryland Disability Law Center (MDLC)** with funding from the **Jacob & Hilda Blaustein Foundation** and the **Aaron Straus & Lillie Straus Foundation**.

Supported by several local foundations and through federal funding, MDLC has a broad mandate to defend and advance the civil rights of people with disabilities in Maryland and provide legal advocacy services. The group fills a crucial niche by fighting for the rights of vulnerable citizens—many of whom can’t afford traditional lawyers—on issues related to service access and equity for people with disabilities.

Blaustein and Straus support MDLC’s efforts to move the state towards covering multi-systemic therapy, a nationwide model

for treating youth with serious behavioral problems. This therapy is more cost effective than juvenile detention facilities, especially because it is Medicaid-eligible, and is proven to reduce recidivism.

Another project funded by Blaustein and the **Leonard & Helen R. Stulman Charitable Foundation** involves improving the way emergency rooms serve adults having a mental health crisis. The funds helped MDLC conduct extensive research in three area hospitals and produce a report scheduled for release soon to guide hospitals in instituting more appropriate practices.

MDLC provides guidance, referrals, representation, investigation, education,

and training on a wide range of topics and problems—from filing a class action lawsuit to improve transportation services for people with disabilities to helping people with disabilities move out of nursing homes and assisting parents of special education students in accessing services.

“Because our federal funds have gone down and our operating costs have gone up, we wouldn’t be able to tackle all these projects without the foundations’ help,” notes Virginia Knowlton, executive director of the Maryland Disability Law Center

“This is a group of very smart, dedicated lawyers who study legal and policy advances in other states and are able to use that information to benefit Maryland,” says Betsy Ringel, executive director of the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation. “They are able to take advantage of groundbreaking national work, and serve as wonderful experts in our own backyard.”

snapshot 11

Funders Partner to Provide Critical Recovery Supports



Imagine a place where recovering substance-abusers can go late at night or on weekends to attend a 12-step meeting, receive holistic treatments such as acupuncture, or to find a sympathetic shoulder to lean on.

Multiply that times three, and you have **Threshold to Recovery**, a network of three community centers—Dee’s Place, Recovery in Community, and Penn

North—that help Baltimore City residents with current or past drug addiction stay on a healthy path to recovery.

What makes this effort unique is the strong collaborative support of local funders to strengthen this critical but often overlooked part of the substance abuse system, as well as their tireless effort to partner with local government to provide stable funding for these centers.

The **Zanvyl & Isabelle Krieger Fund**, **Annie E. Casey Foundation**, **Abell Foundation**, and **France-Merrick Foundation** worked together to secure a half million dollar matching grant from the Local Funding Partnerships program of the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** to help fund Threshold to Recovery. Other funders who support the individual centers include the *continued on next page*

snapshot 11 continued

Herbert Bearman Foundation, Associated Black Charities, Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, and the Marion I. & Henry J. Knott Foundation.

"We seek opportunities to partner with local grantmakers to fund creative, innovative solutions to health problems facing vulnerable people in their communities," says Curtis Holloman, deputy director of Robert Wood Johnson Local Funding Partnerships.

They also garnered critical city support by placing the project under the auspices of Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, the quasi-public city agency that oversees the Baltimore addiction treatment system.

"This program offers a critical window of support for people who have no place else

to go," notes Karen Kreisberg, executive director of the Zanvyl & Isabelle Krieger Fund. It is very non-traditional and is just starting to be seen as part of the continuum of substance-abuse services, thanks to the vision of our City Health Commissioner and others in city leadership."

For the 2,400 people frequenting the Threshold to Recovery network of commu-

nity centers each year, this is great news. Besides receiving free peer counseling, 12-Step meetings, and treatment referrals, participants enjoy Tai Chi, yoga, recreational activities, and receive HIV/AIDS education. More than 70 percent of visitors come in at least once a week, and many come daily.

"Baltimore area grantmakers brought together a successful coalition of community partners to support Threshold to Recovery's nontraditional approach to substance abuse treatment."

***—Curtis Holloman, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Local Funding Partnerships***

snapshot 12

Funders Help Boys & Girls Clubs Flourish

Kenyatta Rowel is uniquely qualified for his job as teen services director at the Boys & Girls Club at Wiley H. Bates Heritage Park in Annapolis, the newest of five Clubs that are part of the **Boys and Girls Clubs of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County (BGCAA)**.

The sparkling 26,000 square foot facility, which opened in 2007, was made possible through the collaboration of a dedicated group of funders, including the **SunTrust Mid-Atlantic Foundation, France-Merrick Foundation, Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Marion I. & Henry J. Knott Foundation, Northrop Grumman Corporation, CareFirst Blue-Cross BlueShield, and Comcast.**

Rowel spent his own formative years at the area's Bywater Boys & Girls Club in Annapolis, cultivating his many athletic, academic, and creative talents. As a teenager, he took part in leadership development activities and mentored younger children, leading peer mediation groups and chaperoning trips. A polished writer

who now has published a book, Kenyatta vividly remembers being asked to recite his very first poem at a Boys & Girls Club banquet.

"Basically, the Club was my life. I would not have been introduced to things like college, academia, writing, or a professional career," says Rowel, a proud graduate of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore who excelled in school and was active in sports, chess club and film club while continuing to pursue his writing.

"The Boys and Girls Clubs do a wonderful job of bringing children together in a neutral environment where they can become friends, and if you're friends, that

means you don't fight," says Hank Libby, President of the **Carol M. Jacobsohn Foundation**, a long time supporter of the BGCAA and funder of the teen center in the new Bates facility.

The Boys and Girls Clubs offers a broad range of programs for young people from age five age 18, and serve more than 7,000 young people annually. The funding community's support of the new facility and of BGCAA in general "really has shown that it cares about its young people," notes Reginald Broddie, chief professional officer at the Bates Club.



Boys and Girls Clubs of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County mean "the difference between making it or not" for many young people, says Kenyatta Rowel, Boys & Girls Club Teen Services Director. "Without it, I wouldn't be out in the real world working to create positive change."

snapshot 13

Funders Help Healthy Neighborhoods Thrive



Back in 2000, visionary local funders, beginning with the **Baltimore Community Foundation**, **Goldseker Foundation**, and **Abell Foundation**, recognized that many strong Baltimore neighborhoods were losing ground because home ownership was down, property values weren't increasing, and houses in need of repair weren't being fixed. Because these weren't the worst-off neighborhoods, they were being ignored by traditional public sector programs.

These funders created **Healthy Neighborhoods**, an initiative with a mission to help strong but undervalued neighborhoods improve properties, attract home-ownership, forge strong bonds between neighbors, and successfully market their communities. Additional funders include **Bank of America**, **M & T Bank**, **PNC Bank**, **Provident Bank**, **SunTrust Bank**, **Wachovia Bank**, **France-Merrick Foundation**, **Joseph & Harvey Meyerhoff Family Charitable Funds** and the **Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation**.

"At the time this was started, there was no investment strategy in the city for neighborhoods 'on the cusp,' and we

worked with a strong coalition of neighborhood funders, banks, the city, the state, and national funders to raise all the early resources," says Cheryl Casciani, director of community investment at the Baltimore Community Foundation. The goal was to take the strongest blocks, make them look like picture postcards, and attract the strongest buyers.

Thanks to these efforts, the program has helped build the capacity of 15 organizations in 35 neighborhoods to work block by block on neighborhood and home improvement, while offering incentives for rehab and purchase. In the past seven years, Healthy Neighborhoods has yielded impressive gains in increased

housing values, reduced number of days homes stay on the market, and higher numbers of rehab permits.

Healthy Neighborhoods is evaluated every year to document how well it achieves its goals, and its success has enabled the initiative to raise \$38 million in loan commitments from 10 Baltimore banks.

But money tells only part of the story.

The role of local funders and lenders "is not necessarily just about money but about using leadership and convening power to see a problem and actually address it," notes Casciani. "Some set of people had to be willing to invest early when it was really just an idea, and stay in there."

"Measuring results is a very important part of what's attractive to funders about the work we are doing," notes Mark Sissman, President of Healthy Neighborhoods, the organization that was created in late 2003 to expand the program initially piloted by the Baltimore Community Foundation. "The premise is that a healthy neighborhood is one where certain real estate indicators improve over time, and that's what we've been able to do."

snapshot 14

Funders Teach the ABC's of Money



Teaching young people the basics of finance can have a huge payoff later in life.

That's the philosophy behind **Operation HOPE**, a nonprofit founded by John Bryant Hope to provide tools for economic independence to America's urban poor. Operation HOPE supports several efforts to teach finance to students, such as Banking

on Our Future, an innovative program supported by several local funders.

Launched in 1994 as a national nonprofit, Operation HOPE's largest funder in Baltimore is the Citi Foundation, which made a 10-year, \$200 million global commitment to financial education in 2004. Along with **M&T Bank** and **Provident Bank**, Citi trains volunteers to teach Baltimore elementary, middle, and high

school students the basics of banking and finance, checking and savings, credit, interest, budgeting, investing, and avoiding being victims of fraud. The curriculum also offers messages about responsibility, empowerment, and hope to help students see the importance of planning for their future.

Becoming financially savvy is critical, particularly in *continued on next page*

snapshot 14 continued

inner-city areas like Baltimore where many people remain “unbanked” and rely on expensive check cashing and money order services to make financial transactions.

Volunteers like Joel Black Sr., a Senior Corporate Recruiter for Citi, relishes seeing how his charges learn the difference between credit cards and ATM cards, about compound interest, and how to distinguish wants from needs. “At the beginning, they may think they need an iPod or cell phone but by the end they realize they need food, clothing and shelter,” says Black. “It’s a great eye opener.”

“We have always believed that if the community is successful, then our company will be successful, said Atwood Collins III, President of M&T Bank’s Mid-Atlantic region. “Banking on Our Future is the perfect way to introduce students to the importance of saving and to managing their finances.”

“We are proud to provide volunteers to Operation HOPE and work with them to provide quality workshops on managing money,” notes Gary Geisel, Chairman and CEO of Provident Bank. “Our goal is to ensure that financial literacy classes become a mandated requirement for graduation in all Maryland schools.”

“Today’s headlines underscore the importance of financial literacy in our country. Working with Operation HOPE, our employees have taught several thousand Baltimore City Public School students the basics of personal finance over the past few years,” notes Mary McDowell, President and CEO of CitiFinancial.

snapshot 15

Funders Support Critical Home Delivery Efforts



People with HIV/AIDS and other life-challenging illnesses often suffer from a combination of poor appetite and physical weakness that keeps them from making nutritious meals for themselves. Especially for low-income victims of disease and those lacking support, this creates a vicious cycle that worsens their condition. Thanks to the support of many local funders, a program called **Moveable Feast** is breaking that cycle by delivering meals and groceries to hundreds of homes in Baltimore City and in 13 Maryland counties.

Moveable Feast, a nonprofit founded in 1989 by dedicated volunteers, draws generous support from many local funders including the **T. Rowe Price Associates Foundation, Clayton Baker Trust, Marion I. & Henry J. Knott Foundation, Zanvyl & Isabelle Krieger Fund, CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield,** and the **Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation.**

Baltimore City is second in the nation in the incidence of HIV/AIDS among major metropolitan areas. To meet this great need, Moveable Feast provided 675,000

meals to 850 people in 2007 and also delivered around 650 meals a week to four drop-in centers in Baltimore.

The program has expanded over the years to meet the needs of a growing and changing population. For example, Moveable Feast provides nutritional counseling, meets special dietary needs, teaches culinary skills, offers employment opportunities, and provides transportation to help participants get to the doctor and conduct other business.

The program courageously stepped up to provide meals for the families of those with HIV/AIDS and women undergoing breast cancer treatment, as well

as the individuals—even though doing so resulted in the loss of some federal grant money. As a result, Moveable Feast received support from funders like the **Annie E. Casey Foundation.**

“Moveable Feast recognized that if you are a mother with limited means, you might give the meals to your children and forego them yourself,” says Scot Spencer, Manager of Baltimore Relations at the Annie E. Casey Foundation. “Casey believes kids do well when families do well, and Moveable Feast also knows that a person with a chronic illness does better when his or her family does better.”

Moveable Feast Executive Director Tom Bonderenko says the funding community has helped fill needs as diverse as the people the organization serves. “The funders and the funding reflect the diversity we see in our work serving people from young single women to families to older people,” he reflects. “Even though the funders have their own missions and procedures, they work with us to make it work for our clients.”

Fellowship Helps Social Pioneers Serve the Community



A philanthropist's dream is the gift that keeps on giving, and that's just what the Baltimore Community Fellowship program does. Besides helping social pioneers to finance their dream programs, the fellowship creates the opportunity for these efforts to take hold and improve the lives of community members.

The **Open Society Institute-Baltimore** established the **Baltimore Community Fellowship** program in 1998 to help people with passion and expertise, but limited time and resources, to carry out a vision to help marginalized communities. Each year, up to 10 applicants receive about \$48,000 to work full-time for 18 months implementing their strategies in Baltimore.

Today, this program is supported by additional funders, including the **Alison & Arnold Richman Fund at BCF, Cohen Opportunity Fund, and Hoffberger Foundation.**

"People come to us with an idea to address a pervasive problem in an underserved community," notes Pamela King, director of the Baltimore Community Fellowship program. "These projects are

not necessarily related to what they do in their day job, but they are related to what the fellows have experienced in life and something they've tried on a small scale and have had success at."

Aisling McGuckin, a 2006 fellow, was a Peace Corps volunteer working with villagers in Madagascar who earned nursing and public health degrees upon her return. She volunteered for the International Rescue Committee's Resettlement Center in Baltimore, assessing the health needs of Somali Bantu women, while working as a nurse manager in the city's prison system.

The fellowship helped her develop a program that trains refugees and asylum seekers living in Baltimore as liaisons between their communities and the health care provider community. They then teach

their neighbors everything from how to avoid unfamiliar household hazards to how to tap available services. It also improves "the awareness of the health care providers" about how to best serve this community, McGuckin notes.

This project is one of 94 developed by fellows since 1998; 75 percent of the fellows' projects have continued in some form.

"The program gives many people the opportunity to see their vision come true, which would never have happened if they didn't get the funding for it," notes supporter Lois Feinblatt of the Lois and Irving Blum Foundation. "After the 18 months, very often they are able to parlay that into a real community project that lasts forever because it's been so successful."

"Baltimore Community Fellows are seeking the opportunity to commit to their project full-time and to impact a much greater number of people" says Pamela King, director of the Baltimore Community Fellowship program at OSI-Baltimore.

Funders Collaborate to Invest in Neighborhoods



In the mid-1990s, a group of Baltimore-area grantmakers, concerned that a growing number of city neighborhoods were showing signs of decline, joined forces to create a special funding pool. Their goal was to attract new funding partners and strengthen local community development organizations so they could better serve Baltimore's neighborhoods.

Housed at the Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers, the **Baltimore Neighborhood Collaborative (BNC)** pools funding from banks, including **Provident Bank, Bank of America, SunTrust Bank, PNC Bank** and **Citi**; foundations, such as the **Hoffberger Foundation, Enterprise Community Partners, Goldseker Foundation, Abell Foundation, Baltimore**

Community Foundation and **Annie E. Casey Foundation**; and local businesses, including **Black & Decker Corporation** and the **Baltimore Equitable Insurance Foundation.**

The opportunity to work with local funders has also drawn substantial

continued on next page

snapshot 17 continued

support from national funders including the **Ford** and **Surdna Foundations**.

Since 1996, BNC has raised \$7 million to strengthen communities across Baltimore. Unlike many individual funders, the collaborative is willing to take risks, commit to multi-year grants, and work closely with grantee organizations to respond to new opportunities and challenges.

With BNC's support, local organizations have stimulated homeowner investment in undervalued communities, created new homes that are affordable to low and moderate-income families, and provided housing counseling to people thinking of buying a home or trying to save their home from foreclosure. BNC

is promoting the idea of transit-centered community development to attract new investment and create opportunities for residents in neighborhoods surrounding transit hubs.

"One of BNC's biggest contributions is in helping to fund the 'soft costs' that corporations have less interest in funding," notes Rahn Barnes, vice president and community development

manager for Provident Bank, one of BNC's founding banks and a long-time supporter. "Community organizations need to keep competent and professional staff and they need to keep the lights on," Barnes says. "BNC has been able to help build infrastructure for a lot of groups that then went on to do bigger and greater things" notes Barnes.

"What's unique about the Collaborative is that members pool their resources and ideas and jointly decide how to best use them toward revitalization" notes Ann Sherrill, BNC director.

snapshot 18

Funders Support Instant Human Services Help Via 2-1-1

Each day thousands of Marylanders search for information about health and human services. From food and shelter to medical care, protection from domestic violence and disaster relief, the list is endless.

Thanks to a diverse and committed group of funders, including **United Way of Central Maryland**, **Constellation Energy**, and the **France-Merrick Foundation**, getting help is as easy as dialing **2-1-1**.

2-1-1 is a confidential information and referral service that links people in need with community resources through First Call for Help™. 2-1-1 references a database of more than 4,000 health and human service agencies, government programs and other community resources that can assist Marylanders facing a wide range of problems.

It's easy, free, statewide and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

2-1-1 currently has four pilot centers in Baltimore, Hyattsville, Salisbury and Frederick that also work in partnership with the Maryland Department of Health and

Mental Hygiene and county governments. In the first year, the four 2-1-1 centers received 222,707 calls for assistance.

In addition to answering questions, trained social workers read between the lines and direct callers for help on other underlying problems. For example, a woman called seeking winter coats for her children, but revealed that she had escaped an abusive marriage and would soon be homeless. The woman not only received coats, but got help accessing social service funds and a referral to a program to develop workforce skills.

2-1-1 systems are active in 44 states and the District of Columbia and have been effective in disaster response and

homeland security, helping to handle calls in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks; Hurricanes Katrina and Charley; and California wildfires.

"The funding community recognized that bringing a proven national model to Maryland to provide instant help will benefit all residents" says Martina Martin, senior vice president at United Way of Central Maryland and 2-1-1 Maryland Initiative Leader. "This is an initiative that undergirds our whole health and human services system and provides access to any individual, family or professional."



"Constellation Energy is a proud supporter of 2-1-1" says Leanne Posko, managing director, Constellation Energy Community Partnerships. "We place great value in supporting organizations and programs that work to improve the quality of life within our communities."

snapshot 19

Funders Invest Together in Columbia

Forty years ago when visionary urban planner, real estate developer and philanthropist James W. Rouse built the planned community of Columbia, he intentionally set out to create a small-town atmosphere through the development of ten self-contained villages around which day-to-day life would revolve.

Decades later, Rouse's vision of community spirit has clearly taken hold. Several years ago, community leaders sprung into action when they learned that the state might declare the **Oakland Mills Village Center** in Columbia a "hot spot" due to a surge in crime. Funders, local government, residents and other stakeholders came together to discuss the issue and concluded that the special sense of community and civic purpose that characterized James Rouse's vision for Columbia had been eroding in Oakland Mills.

Soon after, Oakland Mills residents received a mailing that contained a placemat-sized document with a collage of colorful photographs and maps, which outlined an ambitious plan to revitalize the village center and asked for their support. This new plan already had the backing of funders like the **Columbia Foundation,**

Horizon Foundation, Rouse Company Foundation, Enterprise Community Partners, and United Way of Central Maryland, in partnership with the **Columbia Association.**

"The biggest thing was reconnecting the community to itself," notes Dana Bourland, Senior Director of Green Communities for Enterprise Community Partners. "There were so many strengths and assets in the community, and yet so many people had retreated to their own homes."

A community-wide engagement process surrounding this new plan soon followed and after two town-hall meetings that combined high-tech polling and grass-roots organizing, four priority areas were identified: safety, housing, education and community vibrancy. "Energizing residents to get involved is what made it attractive to funders," says Barbara Lawson, President and CEO of the Columbia Foundation.

"The sense of buy-in and ownership among the funding community made all the difference," says Dana Bourland, Enterprise Community Partners. "The funders were digging into their own best practices toolkits, they were open to new ideas, and they really wanted to see it work."



Richard Krieg, President and CEO of the Horizon Foundation, says the collaboration brought unique insights and marked "the first attempt to build a community development capacity in a mature Columbia village." Other accomplishments include a new supermarket in the village center, after-school choices for kids, active community watch programs, increased owner occupancy and senior housing, more family involvement in schools, and a rich array of community events and cultural activities. In addition, a green multi-use office complex is in the works.

Those who carry James Rouse's vision forward—including the funding community—are succeeding in encouraging community and civic engagement and enhancing residents' quality of life.

snapshot 20

Funders Help Reform Eviction Process

In philanthropy, getting a law changed for the better is a "win" with very significant and long-lasting impact.

That's what grantmakers like the **Abell Foundation** and **Maryland Legal Services Corporation** helped accomplish by funding the work of the Public Justice Center (PJC) and Citizen's Planning and Housing Association (CPHA) to give tenants proper notice of evictions and prohibit landlords from dumping their belongings in the streets through the **Tenant Advocacy Project.**

A 2003 Abell Report drew attention to this issue by demonstrating that Baltimore renters received less notice of eviction and were more likely to be evicted than other tenants nation-wide. The study also highlighted the egregiousness of Baltimore's practices in leaving tenants' belongings or "chattel" out in the street. The city employed three full-time crews to follow every eviction and pick up and dispose of items, costing taxpayers about \$800,000 a year.

With the support of the local funders, the PJC worked to compare legal prac-

tics and analyze solutions used in other cities and states, and to pull together the Rental Housing Coalition, a diverse coalition including 25 tenant groups and advocacy organizations. CPHA played a complementary role organizing neighborhood groups around the neighborhood effects of eviction.

When Mayor Sheila Dixon took office, she supported legislation based on the coalition's work. *continued on next page*



snapshot 20 continued

Baltimore's "Clean Street" bill was passed in August 2007 requiring landlords to provide tenants with a two-week advance notice of the exact date of the eviction. It also prohibits tenant belongings from being placed in the street and requires landlords to dispose of items remaining in the unit.

The law has been "wonderfully successful" in eliminating the dumping of belongings and reducing the huge public cost associated with that, notes John Nethercut, Executive Director of the Public

Justice Center. And by giving tenants notice of scheduled eviction dates, it has helped tenants make appropriate arrangements, reducing evictions by 34 percent.

"This victory wouldn't have been possible without the funding community—not just those who support PJC, but all those who support members of the Rental Housing Coalition," Nethercut says.

"The project owes its success in reducing eviction, providing relief to tenants and eliminating neighborhood blight to PJC, CPHA and the many groups in their coalition," says Robert C. Embry Jr., President of The Abell Foundation. "These groups worked to clearly identify the extent to which rental eviction is a community problem and advocated for specific solutions that led to public sector action."

snapshot 21

Funding Community Invests in Children

What if instead of trying to penalize children and families who are struggling, communities gave them the opportunity to succeed? That's the philosophy behind the Safe and Sound Campaign's Maryland Opportunity Compacts.

Launched in 1995 as part of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's five-city Urban Health Initiative, the **Safe and Sound Campaign** works on priorities developed through a broad collaborative effort and voted upon by city residents. The Campaign's goals are to ensure babies are born healthy; children live in safe and nurturing families, enter school ready to learn, and are successful in school; young people make healthy choices and live in safe neighborhoods; and adults value and appreciate young people.

Over the past 12 years, the Campaign has received broad support from funders, including: **Associated Black Charities, Bank of America, Aaron Straus & Lillie Straus Foundation, France-Merrick Foundation, Jacob & Hilda Blaustein Foundation, Alison & Arnold Richman Fund, Suzanne Cohen's Fund for Populations at Risk at the Baltimore Community Foundation (BCF), and United Way of Central Maryland.**

The Safe and Sound Campaign has forged Maryland Opportunity Compacts

with the Maryland State Government to dramatically change the way our state delivers social services. Maryland Opportunity Compacts are binding agreements between state government and local partners that give incentives for diverting troubled kids and families from expensive and punitive placements to cost-effective home and community-based treatment. Initiated as an innovative financing tool in 2004, the Compacts reduce excessive spending on last-resort programs like juvenile confinement and foster care and expand investments in opportunities that promote success, without new government spending.

For example, through an investment of \$400,000, the Baltimore County Multi-Systemic Therapy Compact has kept young people out of institutional care and has saved the state \$250,000 in just four months. This early success exceeds

expected targets and predicts even better long-term results.

The **Annie E. Casey Foundation, BCF, Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Abell Foundation, Open Society Institute-Baltimore,** and the **Charles Crane Family Foundation** have specifically joined public and private sector partners to invest in the development of these Opportunity Compacts.

"What's most important about the work we've done in partnership with local funders is to redefine what the problem is and create new and much more positive solutions that produce measurable results," says Hathaway Ferebee, Executive Director of the Safe and Sound Campaign. "Bolstered by the philanthropic community, we have advanced the notion that there should be just one track: the Opportunity Track".



"These path-breaking agreements have the potential to reorient our whole approach to vulnerable families and troubled kids away from enormously expensive and wasteful deep-end system responses toward a more humane and effective emphasis on prevention, early intervention and positive supports," says Douglas Nelson, President of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and President of the Board of the Safe & Sound Campaign. "We are on the cusp of a real break-through here."

Funders Invest in Healthier Hospitals



Ironically, while providing health care and saving lives, hospitals can be major contributors of toxins into the environment, negatively affecting the public health of the communities they serve. Thankfully, dozens of Maryland hospitals and health care facilities are reducing toxins by instituting greener, safer health care practices due to funding from the **Jacob & Hilda Blaustein Foundation, Aaron Straus & Lillie Straus Foundation, Abell Foundation, Clayton Baker Trust, and the Zanvyl & Isabelle Krieger Fund.**

Maryland Hospitals for a Healthy Environment, also known as MD H2E, was launched in 2005 with a mission to hold the state's health care industry accountable to its pledge to "do no harm" through better environmental stewardship. The initiative helps hospitals, clinics, and other health care facilities form "green teams;" purchase products and services that reduce negative impacts on the environment; and recycle or responsibly dispose of batteries, light bulbs, cleaners and foods.

This effort began when Betsy Ringel, executive director of the Jacob & Hilda Blaustein Foundation, heard a presenta-

tion on the health care industry's role in environmental pollution and realized local funders had been investing in hospitals with little awareness of their environmental impact. She brought the presentation to her colleagues at the Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers. Equally struck by the irony and severity of this problem, several funders responded.

Building on the expertise of Barbara Sattler, a professor at the University of Maryland School of Nursing who had been doing cutting edge work in environmental health, MD H2E emerged from partnerships with national players such as Health Care Without Harm and National Hospitals for a Healthy Environment, and state groups like the Maryland Nurses Association and the Maryland Hospital Association. Renewed interest in the environment

and the media's focus on environmental causes of disease made the timing right for a statewide movement that has become a national model, to move health care facilities toward healthier, cleaner practice.

Since MD H2E started, Mercy Medical Center, one of more than 50 participants in the project, has closed its on-site incinerator, reduced regulated medical waste by 60 percent, begun a food waste composting program, started a less toxic pest control program, and implemented recycling for beverage containers, paper, and batteries.

"This is an example of the 'perfect grantmakers' storm,' with the right constellation of elements in place to create a successful initiative," notes Ringel.

"This movement has gained tremendous momentum in the last two years because the funders believed in our work and believed it was the right thing to do," notes Joan Plisko, technical director of MD H2E. "That's thanks to ABAG and its members."

Funders Support Advocacy for Education



The tenacity of the **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Maryland** in fighting for more equitable funding for Baltimore schools has brought more than \$1 billion into the city school system and for at-risk children across Maryland in the last decade.

This wouldn't have been possible without funders like the **Jacob & Hilda Blaustein Foundation, Abell Foundation, Morton & Sophia Macht Foundation, Struever Bros., Eccles & Rouse,**

Alvin & Fanny B. Thalheimer Foundation, Lockhart Vaughan Foundation, Clayton Baker Trust, Aaron Straus & Lillie Straus Foundation, Open Society Institute-Baltimore and The Fund for Change. These funders have not only supported the ACLU but stayed deeply involved in the nitty-gritty work needed to follow through on the state's commitments to a more equitable school system.

Initial investments by Abell and Blaustein in the ACLU's Bradford lawsuit, which

defended the right of Baltimore city school children to a quality public education in accordance with the state constitution, helped jumpstart a 13 year school reform effort. ACLU's successes in court led to the Thornton Commission on Education Finance, Equity, and Excellence and the Bridge to Excellence in Education Act.

With each success, more foundations came on board to lend support, forcing a re-examination of the way state funds are allocated and setting *continued on next page*

snapshot 23 continued

in motion many strategies to improve public education, particularly for the city's poorest students.

"The stability of the funding has allowed the ACLU to keep an incredible lead organizer, Bebe Verdery, on board through many different administrations," notes Lara Hall, senior program officer with the Blaustein Philanthropic Group. The funders constantly share information and support ACLU in its watchdog role to monitor enactment of the key legislation and to keep school reform funding from being reduced or not increased as much as it should be.

"But money alone is not enough; it must be spent wisely and well," observes Susan Goering, executive director of the ACLU of Maryland, noting that the other half of ACLU's work is pressing government offi-

cial at all levels for good education practices and policies.

For example, by this year, Thornton called for every school district to offer half-day pre-Kindergarten to all low-income children, but state-wide the school systems are far short of that goal. The ACLU, with foundation support, has been working intensively with school systems and the State Department of Education to make

sure that happens. "If we can ramp up the numbers of poor kids getting early childhood education," notes Goering, "wouldn't that be an incredible contribution?"

"Our investment in the ACLU has paid off many times in increased funding and accountability that their excellent work has brought about for the children of Baltimore City," says Betsy Krieger, The Fund for Change.

"The funders have been phenomenal," says Susan Goering, executive director of the ACLU of Maryland. "What's great is that they're deeply involved. They read the papers and know in great detail what is going on with the schools; they initiate reforms and roll up their sleeves to implement them; they've been involved with everything from early childhood education to high school reform."

snapshot 24

Funders Support Local Arts Community

Looking for something to do by yourself, with your children, or with friends on a Sunday afternoon—or for that matter any day or evening of the week? Interested in plays, films, music, nature, art, history, and museums? Want half price tickets?

You can find a great deal of information on art and culture in the broadest sense when you visit www.baltimorefunguide.com, an effort of the **Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance (GBCA)**.

The GBCA works to create a cohesive cultural community that strengthens the livability and economic vitality of the Greater Baltimore region, and has broad support from funders like the **William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, Harry L. Gladding Foundation, Baltimore Community Foundation, M&T Charitable Foundation, T. Rowe Price Associates Foundation, and The ASSOCIATED: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore**.

The GBCA's Baltimore Fun Guide website illustrates the thoughtful and collaborative approach the organiza-

tion has taken to introduce people of all ages and backgrounds to the arts—and streamline the marketing process for arts organizations.

By publicizing such a diverse menu of activities in an easy online format, GBCA has been attracting a younger audience to the arts and culture scene. "Typically 70% of our culture patrons were over 40, but with the website it's the reverse" says Nancy Haragan, GBCA executive director.

The website is just one example of how GBCA works with its funding partners to be a unifying voice and resource to improve the region and draw resources to the arts.

Another pivotal project is the Maryland Cultural Data Project, a web-based system



for collecting financial and marketing data based on the latest standards in nonprofit accounting. Built into the system are reports organizations can use for their own internal reporting and data that can be pulled to produce annual reports, compare organizations, or view trends over time.

"GBCA is the closest strategic partner we have in working on issues of importance to the arts and culture community in Baltimore," says Melissa Warlow, program officer at the Baltimore Community Foundation and coordinator for the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund.

"It is very satisfying to work with our local funders" says Nancy Haragan, executive director of the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance. "Because they stay on top of the field, we frequently find ourselves drawn to the same program ideas independently. This kind of synergistic think-ing, I think, stimulates a deeper process and better decision making for both parties."



When Sheldon Goldseker, ABAG's first president, was starting the Goldseker Foundation in the 1970's, "It didn't take me long to realize that Baltimore lacked a professional philanthropy presence," he says. "There were philanthropies here and there but very few people were talking to each other. It's both rewarding and exciting to see how meaningful ABAG has become to Baltimore philanthropy in the past 25 years."

Snapshots Highlight the Impact of Funders

With vision and persistence, a group of leading foundations and corporations founded the **Association of Baltimore Area Grant-makers (ABAG)** in 1983 as a forum for colleagues to address common problems and interests. Twenty-five years later, ABAG is a high-performing organization with over 140 members comprised of foundations and corporations working together to have a greater impact in the region.

The *Snapshots of Philanthropy* series highlights this impact of the last 25 years. The 25 snapshots represent the many ways that ABAG members make a difference in the community and tell stories of progress and hope made possible by grants both big and small.

"Founding members believed that they could work more effectively if they knew others in the broader funding community, knew the issues surrounding different program areas, and worked together to solve problems," notes Betsy Nelson, executive director at ABAG.

With its numerous opportunities for one-on-one help, professional development, networking, and skill-building, ABAG has become the premier resource for local funders seeking additional knowledge, connections, collegiality and collaboration, sponsoring more than 70 educational programs a year.

"At ABAG we have charged ourselves to have an impact on our members so that ultimately, they will have a greater impact on the community," explains Nelson. "Our interest is not philanthropy for philanthropy's sake. We strive to be transformative in the community for issues people truly care about."

"Philanthropy for a lot of us can be a solo business," notes Lynn Rauch, newly elected president of ABAG and president of the Kentfields Foundation, a small family foundation focused on education. "Just having other funders to talk to and hear from is extremely helpful. You hear about good programs as well as mistakes that have been made, and people are very open, honest and nonjudgmental."

Besides serving such a useful networking function, she adds, "I have always relied on ABAG to learn about the background, the policy arena, what's going on, who the big players are and what's been successful."

The testament of words and pictures offered in these 25 Snapshots of Philanthropy shows what can be done when passionate people and organizations work together with a savvy network like ABAG behind them to make a difference for the Baltimore region.

"This series illustrates what our members collectively can do and the changes that are made when philanthropic resources are directed in a thoughtful, purposeful manner," says Nelson. "This is a dynamic time at ABAG, with many opportunities for learning and avenues for collaboration. As we move forward, we will continue to build on our first 25 years and rise to the next level as an organization serving a growing membership and community."



Informing Grantmakers, Improving Our Community

2 East Read Street, 2nd Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21202-2470
410-727-1205 | 410-727-7177 *fax* | info@abagmd.org *email*
www.abagmd.org