

2024 Baltimore Health Equity Impact Grants Award – Funded Partnerships

Graduate Student – Community Grants

- **Research Grants**
 - Exploring Teacher Buy-In of School-Based Outdoor Learning
- **Program Development Grants**
 - Partnerships in Equity, Advocacy, and Community in East Baltimore (PEACE)

Undergraduate Student - Community Grants

- **Program Development**
 - Peabody at the Shelter

Faculty – Community Grants

- **Program Development Grants**
 - Fostering Durable Well-Being Among Under-Served Baltimore Residents via an Interactive, Longitudinal, In-Person Wellness Program
 - Fostering Health Equity in Youth: A Community-led Implementation of the Stay Active Program for Children and Youth
 - Integrative Health and Healing in Southwest Baltimore: A Pilot Program
 - Understanding Overdose Prevention Sites in Baltimore Harm Reduction Programming
 - Wellness for the Whole Black Girl Safety Promotion Intervention

Graduate Student – Community Grants

Research Grants

Exploring Teacher Buy-In of School-Based Outdoor Learning

Graduate Student: Lisa Nehring, PhD candidate, Johns Hopkins University School of Education

Community Partner: Laura Genello, Farm to School Specialist Baltimore City Public Schools - Food & Nutrition Services

While the relationship between time outdoors and a host of physical, mental, behavioral, and cognitive benefits is well documented, both adults and young people increasingly spend most of their time indoors. Due to systemic inequalities and historical discrimination, students from minoritized backgrounds are far more likely to live in areas with limited access to greenspace, a major contributing factor to longstanding health disparities across the United States and in Baltimore City. In partnership with Baltimore City Public Schools, I aim to explore how to increase teacher adoption of outdoor learning so that students can take advantage of the immense health benefits of outdoor time. Through qualitative methods, I will elevate the voices of City Schools teachers to understand the barriers to outdoor learning. Using an iterative improvement process, I will engage a community advisory board to co-develop interventions and monitor rates of outdoor learning experiences at City Schools. Outdoor learning is an innovative and scalable approach to addressing a host of environmental and health inequities in Baltimore City and beyond. This project considers how schools might strengthen the relationship between learning and place for the wellbeing of students and teachers in Baltimore City.



Program Development Grants

Partnerships in Equity, Advocacy, and Community in East Baltimore (PEACE)

Graduate Student: Sydney Wade, Nurse Clinician, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

Community Partner: Cynthia Gross, President of the C.A.R.E Community Association, Inc.

The alarming rates of childhood obesity in Baltimore, where one in three high school students is obese, propelled Johns Hopkins Preventive Medicine faculty and residents to develop a Baltimore community-based partnership focusing on obesity prevention through nutrition and culinary education in 2016. The program's success in Remington has led to expansion into a second weekly program called the Youth Cooking Club. The Youth Cooking Club brings a new neighborhood partnership: Margaret Brent Elementary and Middle School. Both weekly programs are located in the Remington neighborhood community of Baltimore, where unhealthy food choices are in abundance. Twelve elementary and

middle school students are enrolled in the club for the academic year 2018-2019. Students in the program receive a formalized nutrition curriculum, including grocery shopping, food storage, kitchen safety, and meal preparation of low-budget, healthy recipes. In addition to the educational objectives of the program, the physician program leaders plan to create a cookbook based on the recipes generated from their culinary collaboration with the program's students and their families. A 30-recipe cookbook will be distributed to participants of both the youth and family cooking programs and a wider neighborhood community and inform culinary education classes in future academic years.

Undergraduate Student – Community Grant

Peabody at the Shelter

Faculty Partner: Taylor Wang, Student, Peabody. Institute of the Johns Hopkins University

Community Partner: Cris Flack, Grant Coordinator, Helping Up Mission (HUM)

Peabody at the Shelter brings together two impactful and diverse organizations from a shared community with a desire to increase the quality of life and well-being of Baltimore's vulnerable population through the healing and restorative power of music. Peabody Institute, established in 1857, and Helping Up Mission (HUM) in 1855, combine a wealth of experience, knowledge, data and understanding in working with each other, the community, and residents of Baltimore City and beyond.

We hope to enhance past and current projects, while developing and outlining key data points and measurements to demonstrate the healing and growth that both HUM and Peabody students encounter from writing, playing, teaching, and performing music.

At our conclusion, it is our intent that this program will validate empirically, and in a meaningful way, the therapeutic and meditative value of music in the lives of HUM clients; further strengthen the relationship between JHU and HUM; and provide a foundation for further research, collaboration, and understanding between our institutions.

Our project team is led by Taylor Wang, a Peabody Institute undergraduate student majoring in Classical Piano; Cris Flack, Grants Coordinator and Director of the HUM Band and Choir; and Khandeya Sheppard, Manager of Community Partnerships, Peabody Institute.

Faculty – Community Grants

Program Development Grants

Fostering Durable Well-Being Among Under-Served Baltimore Residents via an Interactive, Longitudinal, In-Person Wellness Program

Faculty Partner: Debraj Mukherjee, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Neurosurgery, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center

Community Partner: Yale Partlow, Maryland Community Engagement Center (CEC)

Social isolation and depression are increasingly recognized as important, modifiable drivers of poor mental health and well-being. These factors are particularly pervasive among at-risk members of inner-city neighborhoods, such as those served by Maryland Community Engagement Center (CEC) in Lexington Market. In partnership with Officer Yale Partlow of CEC, we seek to bring a well-established 10-module wellness curriculum entitled the Peace Education Program (PEP) to at-risk populations including veterans, the homeless, addiction/recovery program members, and recently incarcerated youth through 4 different CEC community affiliates. We will establish the efficacy of this program through a survey-based assessment of participants using the Schwartz Outcome Scale (SOS)-10, a validated instrument for assessing self-reported well-being, and the Tilden Interpersonal Relationships Inventory (IPRI)-13, a validated instrument for assessing for connectivity and social support. Additionally, we will train participants to become facilitators of the program to allow for sustainable continuation of the program in the community even beyond the period of initial funding.



Fostering Health Equity in Youth: A Community-led Implementation of the Stay Active Program for Children and Youth

Faculty Partner: Nada Lukkahatai, PhD, MSN, RN, Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing

Community Partner: Tina Brown, Clinical Research Consultant/Co-PI, Health and Fitness Coach at Divine Fitness

In response to the prevalent multiple chronic health conditions (MCCs) among low-income and ethnic minority populations in Maryland, Divine Fitness and Health Services, Inc. (DFHS, Inc.) and the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing have embarked on a collaborative initiative commencing in January 2023. This partnership aims to introduce the Stay Active Program for Youth, a community-engaged approach addressing the impact of MCCs on vulnerable children. DFHS, Inc., a woman, minority, and veteran-owned organization, brings its extensive community experience to the fore, focusing on fitness camps and life skills programs for children. The program, underpinned by a Community Engagement in Research (CErR) framework, seeks to surmount barriers to physical activity identified in low-income and ethnic minority families. The phased strategy includes partnership development, program evaluation, and the formation of a Community Youth Advisory Board (Youth CAB) comprising program participants.

Through training, the Youth CAB collaborates with community partners and researchers to co-create the Stay Active program for Youth. The initiative concludes with a research study plan, exploring feasibility, challenges, and long-term adoption. This community-driven initiative empowers youth to tackle health challenges early, emphasizing culturally sensitive and sustainable approaches for improved health in underserved communities.

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Integrative Health and Healing in Southwest Baltimore: A Pilot Program

Faculty Partner: Lan Angela Li, Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

Community Partner: Edna Manns-Lake, Founder, Fayette Street Outreach

This project aims to pilot integrative wellness workshops in partnership with Fayette Street Outreach (FSO), a Southwest Baltimore grassroots organization that has been serving the community since 1993. Our pilot workshops will coincide with FSO's initiative to refurbish their community garden, fostering "self-care sovereignty" for residents impacted by environmental injustice and generational trauma. This program will feature skills-based sessions focusing on plant medicine, foraging, nutrition, and home remedies that further interweave conversations on oppression, empowerment, and community healing. Four seasonal workshops will center on a particular illness relevant to residents, such as hypertension and diabetes.

This program builds on an existing network of herbal medicine, farming, and food experts associated with non-profits and for-profit businesses in the DMV area. It furthermore connects with a larger community of national and international healers working to educate and improve access to knowledge about plant knowledge as a mode of self-care sovereignty. Programming will further nurture intergenerational knowledge exchange, youth leadership, and plans for sustainability through plant product sales. We will create a digital library compiling interviews with patient activists and scholar-physicians into a public art exhibit. This will encompass an interactive map locating community centers, a podcast series, and essays on non-biomedical public health movements in the history of Baltimore. In collaboration with faculty in the school of medicine, this initiative seeks to help Southwest Baltimore remediate the local environment and transform sites of racial trauma to support community health and autonomy.

Understanding Overdose Prevention Sites in Baltimore Harm Reduction Programming

Faculty Partner: Susan Sherman, Professor, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Community Partner: Anne Langley, Executive Director, Charm City Care Connection
Charm City Care Connection and Dr. Susan Sherman are requesting support for a program development project seeking to understand the local knowledge and perceived needs of overdose prevention centers (OPCs) among people who use drugs and are impacted by drug use in the city of Baltimore. OPCs are a widely-recognized public health tool which is experiencing growing support in the United States, and it is likely that in the coming years, Baltimore will join the next “wave” of municipalities that will host OPCs. It is important that the voices and needs of people who use drugs – the people who will utilize these services – are included in the planning and design of these interventions, however, little is known about how much people who use drugs in the area know about OPCs, how likely they are to use them, and what specific services or programming they would need to include. The proposed project pairs JHU experts with peers with lived experience to facilitate focus groups and provide critical information on OPCs so that when they are authorized in Baltimore, the people on the ground will be prepared to act.

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Wellness for the Whole Black Girl Safety Promotion Intervention

Faculty Partner: Dr. Kamila Alexander, PhD, MSN/MPH, BSN, BS, RN, Associate Professor, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing

Community Partner: Nazaahah Amin, Co-Founder and Program Director, Bmore Empowered

The "Wellness for the Whole Black Girl Safety Promotion Intervention" is a collaborative project between Bmore Empowered and Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, seeking a \$20,000 grant from the Urban Health Institute's Baltimore Health Equity Impact Grants. This project, led by Nazaahah Amin and Dr. Kamila Alexander, aims to improve the well-being of young Black girls in Baltimore through a unique combination of yoga therapy, art therapy, and education focusing on violence prevention, safety promotion, and reproductive health.

The methods employed include conducting four six-week sessions from February 2024 to February 2025, each accommodating up to 10 girls (total N=40 girls). These sessions blend yoga and art therapy with educational modules to enhance body consciousness, mental health, and social connections. Additionally, they focus on creating safe and healthy spaces and relationships, while equipping participants with coping and stress management skills.

Results from this initiative are expected to show an improvement in the participants' mental and physical health, social well-being, and personal safety awareness. The intervention is specifically designed to empower young Black girls, providing them with tools and knowledge for personal growth and resilience, laying a foundation for their long-term empowerment and well-being.