



BEARING WITNESS:

BALTIMORE CITY'S RESIDENTS GIVE VOICE TO WHAT'S
NEEDED TO FIX THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



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Contributing Organizations

The following organizations contributed to this project. Descriptions of each organization can be found at the end of this publication.

Alternative Directions	The Maryland Restorative Justice Initiative
Asbury United Methodist Church	Mayor Sheila Dixon's Office of Criminal Justice
Baltimore City Police Department	Mothers-in-Charge Baltimore/Joy for Healing
Baltimore's Safe and Sound Campaign	National Women's Prison Project
The Community Conferencing Center	Open Society Institute
Drug Policy Alliance	Out for Justice
Families Against Injustice	Power Inside
Freedom Advocates Celebrating Ex-Offenders	Prisoners Aid Association of Maryland
Jericho, ECSM	Project SERVE, Living Classrooms
Justice Maryland	Safe Streets/East
Justice Policy Institute	State's Attorney Patricia Jessamy
Legal Aid of Baltimore	Struever Bros. Eccles & Rouse, Inc.
Marion House	United Workers Association
Maryland Citizens Against State Executions	Violence Prevention Program
The Maryland Justice Policy Institute	

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EXECUTIVE Summary

Bearing Witness is the culmination of interviews with people from Baltimore City about their experiences with the criminal justice system. Compared to the rest of Maryland, Baltimore City faces a concentrated impact of the criminal justice system. Approximately 61 percent of newly-incarcerated people in Maryland's prisons were from Baltimore City in fiscal year 2008.

Five themes emerge from the narratives and include: the unique needs of women; the impact of parole and probation policies; the need for a public health approach to drug addiction; the cost investing in prisons over other social institutions; and the potential that restorative justice has for healing communities. Of particular note:

Meeting the Unique Needs of Women

When women are imprisoned, they are not the only ones punished. According to a Maryland Commission for Women (MCW) Status Report, in 1998, 80 percent of women in Maryland prisons were mothers, with the average age of their children being eight years old.¹ Lack of contact with their mothers can have damaging effects on children. Children commonly experience sadness, anger, confusion, grief or depression due to the separation from their parents.² Children whose mothers are or were imprisoned are more likely to have low self-esteem, impaired achievement motivation, and poor peer relations, with up to 30 percent developing mental health problems.³

“I lost everything when I got arrested –my home, my car, I had to go back to depend on my mother – I had nothing. Because of my conviction, I had to leave nursing school where I was nearly finished with my degree. Now I’ve graduated with a degree in psychology and health education. But it took me two years to find a job. You know the statistics were bad for me: young black teenage mother with a criminal record, going to drop out of school, be on welfare, not going to make it to college. Now my daughter can go to school and say ‘my mommy’s working on her graduate degree.’ But it didn’t have to happen like this.”

—Rasheeda Alford

To improve Baltimore's response to the needs of women in the community, interviewees suggested services to strengthen families, more mental health services, and an adjustment of enforcement strategies to take into account the reasons women might be engaged in certain illegal behaviors.

Closing the Revolving Door: Reforming Parole and Probation

Parole and probation guidelines are often onerous and inconsistent with rational expectations of behavior, setting up individuals for failure. One condition of parole and probation—maintaining employment—may be difficult for someone who is unskilled or undereducated, especially when they have a criminal record, and especially in a struggling economy. As the system is currently organized, one in five people released on parole in Maryland will return to prison, and over half of these are for technical violations such as missing appointments with parole officers, not paying fines or failing drug tests.⁴

“I’m talking to my parole officer from work and he says I need to leave work and go see him. I punch in at 8am and leave at 4pm. Conditions of my parole are to remain employed and have employment at all times on parole. To leave a job is termination or grounds for suspension. My parole condition says I must work 40 hours a week. If I’m only clocking 37.5 hours, I’m in violation. Every time I go see my parole officer I wait four hours! If I don’t show up you can violate me and my job can terminate me at any given time for leaving work. It’s about communication. They’re barking orders but not helping.”

—Michael Deminds

In order to better ensure that people who get out of prison stay out of prison, community members suggested encouraging parole and probation to provide more services and support by developing a system of alternative sanctions, reducing caseloads, and reducing or eliminating fees associated with parole and probation. Community members also suggested creating incentives for parole and probation officers that encourage support for people on parole or probation.

A Public Health Approach to Drug Use and Addiction

Maryland's decades-long “War on Drugs” has resulted in more people in prison for drug offenses at an ever-increasing cost to the state. Between 1998 and 2007, the number of people in Maryland prisons for drug offenses increased 20 percent.⁵ However, research shows that increased imprisonment does not necessarily make communities in Maryland or Baltimore safer.⁶ Instead, evidence suggests that community-based treatment not only improves life outcomes for individuals, but also preserves public safety.⁷

“All my charges pertained to drugs and alcohol, my addiction. I’ve got no violent crime on my records. When I finally got caught, I told the probation officer, ‘I’m not a criminal, I’m an addict and I need some help! I don’t believe me going to prison is going to solve my problem. If I go to prison, when I come out I will have even more reason to get high and never get help for my addictions.’ With tears literally running down my face I begged, ‘Please, can you help me get into some kind of treatment program?’ ”

—Marlo Hargrove

Shifting the entire response to drug addiction away from incarceration and toward treatment is critical to Maryland’s reducing the number of people in prison and improving life outcomes for the people who are addicted to drugs. Specifically, the people interviewed for this report recommended that treatment be available in the community and on demand, parents should be able to take care of their children while they recover, and mental health services should be included.

Seize the Opportunity for Change: Investing in Solutions

Every dollar spent on prison is a dollar not dedicated to education, employment training, housing and other social institutions that have been shown to preserve public safety. The Maryland Department of Public Safety & Correctional Services (DPSCS) had a \$1.20 billion budget in 2008.⁸ Incarceration not only comes with direct expenses, it also carries high cost in terms of removing from the community people who could be valuable contributors.

“We’re losing youth, we’re losing adults, one-by-one, two-by-two and three-by-three. In order for that to change we have to make sure that we hold on to the ones we still have. I wish I could build a place where kids can escape and feel safe and comfortable. Where the door is always open.”

—Mikhail Holt

To expand opportunities and invest in solutions in Baltimore, the people who participated in this project recommended social and financial supports for education and employment, including training for green jobs, investing in programs and initiatives for youth (especially related to sports and mentoring), and starting a campaign to build the morale of the community to empower the citizens of Baltimore.

Embrace Restorative Justice: Focus on Healing Harm Caused by Violence

Restorative justice and community conferencing empowers people, particularly victims, to resolve issues themselves and make their own decisions about desired outcomes. The research indicates that restorative justice costs less than a traditional criminal justice process, provides a better sense of healing and justice for victims, and benefits public safety. Maryland has a community conferencing program that has already served approximately 7,000 people.

“Even in the beginning of the trial, they should offer to bring the families of the victims and the defendants together to talk. Don’t let people go to trial hating each other, or thinking that this person hates you. Give the mothers or the families an opportunity to speak – in a neutral space. That needs to happen from the beginning. I would like for [the defendant] to feel free to speak his mind and I would like him to explain to me every detail, how he felt, his motives. It’s only been two years for me, and I can’t even imagine when it will be over, it may never be over.”

—Ginger Beale

To increase restorative justice in Maryland, the people interviewed for this project suggest educating the community about restorative justice and promoting it as a way to address conflict, training more people in restorative justice techniques, and encouraging more agencies to adopt restorative justice because of the multiple benefits it has for victims, accountability for offenses committed, community stability, and financial cost.



INTRODUCTION

In discussions about life in Baltimore City, Maryland, it's hard not to talk about criminal justice issues. In a city of a little more than 600,000 residents (and decreasing), the Baltimore Central Booking and Intake Center processed nearly 100,000 arrests and detained 44,825 people in 2006.⁹ In fiscal year 2008, there were 22,476 people in Maryland's prisons; 61 percent of newly-incarcerated people were from Baltimore City.¹⁰ Another inescapable facet of the city is its longstanding economic struggle and the impact this has had on people living there: the median annual per capital income in Baltimore City is approximately \$21,440, with 20.7 percent of the population living below the federal poverty level.¹¹ Even among home-owning households, over 26 percent were considered "very-low income" in 2000.¹²

So it might be natural to think that, were one to interview – as we did – those most directly impacted both by the City's criminal justice system and by economic hardship, you'd end up with a gloomy collection of stories characterized by hopelessness and despair. However, quite the opposite turned out to be the case. From 2008 to early 2009, researcher Shakti Belway sat down with Baltimore City residents who'd been in prison; parents who lost children to violence and addiction; people working in law enforcement and the courts; people on probation and parole; and other neighborhood and civic leaders. What she found – and what you'll find, when you read these compelling narratives – is a sense of urgency, of commitment, and of hope.

The people interviewed talk frankly of the struggles they've faced, injustices they've endured, and loved ones they

will never see again. While we sought to chronicle people's lives and experiences, we also wanted to show that the people of Baltimore are prepared with solutions to the challenges facing the city. While the narratives are divided into five sections, a number of broad themes emerge and are repeated in many people's stories and in the solutions they've outlined. These include: the need for more treatment services; the recognition that women have unique needs that should not be overlooked; the importance of helping kids get on a safe and healthy path – even if they never experienced such a path before; the value of forgiveness and empathy; the role that faith plays in helping many people overcome obstacles; the need for a more rational system that treats people humanely; and the obligation that we have as a society to move beyond incarceration as the solution to social problems.

The individual stories and experiences in this document are not isolated incidents. The facts and figures in the policy sections that follow the interviews in each chapter show just how widespread the participants' experiences are. However, no matter how much evidence and statistics are placed in front of policymakers, usually nothing creates policy movement like an emotional impetus tied to a personal experience, a name, and a face.

We give our sincere thanks to all of those who generously gave of themselves to share their life experiences and hopes for the future. May your words and the vision you've gained through your experiences help guide us towards a brighter, fairer, more just future for Baltimore City.

The one-size-fits-all approach of the criminal justice system does not take into account the unique challenges that women face. Women are more likely than men to experience abuse, mental and physical health problems, and to use substances to cope with those struggles. Women are also often the heads of household. The underlying issues that may contribute to a woman's involvement in the criminal justice system are rarely addressed and whole families are often impacted. The women interviewed for this project draw from their experiences to show how the criminal justice system has impacted them, their families, and other women they know.

GLENDA BRADFORD,

mother, grandmother, recovering addict, activist

Mothers need to heal and recover alongside their children in order to end the cycle of addiction and incarceration



As far back as I can remember my family has always been caught up in the system. My father went to prison a lot when I was a child. My mother was addicted to pills and alcohol. My father was an alcoholic too and that's one of the reasons he was always in and out of prison. There was

always drugs and alcohol in my life. When I got older I started using and selling drugs.

When you pull a family apart, everyone suffers. Families must stay together. If the parents are addicted, the whole family struggles from addiction. Families need a place to get better when they're struggling from addiction.

Then my children started selling drugs. They didn't make a choice – I made the choice for them. Prison started for my children when they were about 14 or 15 years old. Each one of my boys had their own area in the neighborhood where they were selling drugs. If one of my kids would go to prison, we would sell drugs to get money to get them out. It was always that type of life. I don't remember any other life. So that's how I raised my children. That's all I knew so that was all they knew. When I stopped using drugs, when the Lord sent me someplace to get the help that I needed, I knew I was finished with that life for good. A spiritual recovery house. This made the difference for me. I was so hurt as a young child, hurt was all I knew. People hurt me when I was young so I hurt everybody I touched. Before I was stumbling in the dark.

Now I know where I am. In recovery, I learned a lot about living in the light. I learned how to love people, how to care about people, how to stop fighting. That was a real transformation. I had to learn how to live free of drugs and alcohol and drama.

Now I'm raising my grandchild because his mother is in recovery. Her young children are scattered all over the place and she's trying to recover. It would be better if she could be in treatment and her children could be with her, getting help, going to school so you don't separate the family. So they heal together. When I returned from recovery, my children were mad at me and didn't trust me for the way I lived and for leaving them to go to recovery.

REVEREND SONIA KING,

Asbury United Methodist Church

Families need the power of forgiveness



We have seven prisons within five miles of the church. Those incarcerated are our neighbors. We are called to minister to them. Our goal is to be a haven of hope for our brothers and sisters to begin life again. It's one thing to go in and minister to them but it's another thing to provide them with supports

and keep them surrounded by positive people so they can stay out of prison, live a productive life and give back to their community.

We participate in Kairos Prison Ministry, a four day spiritual retreat. We take the unconditional love of God into the women's prison. I see some of the pain that's involved when the women are separated from their children and families, the pain from betrayal and hurt and not trusting people. I've seen women who had so much pain that they had hardened themselves and did not allow people in their lives. I tell the women, "God has already forgiven you; you need to learn to forgive yourselves."

It's one thing for the man to go to jail because the family can still go on but when mom goes to jail, the whole family falls apart.

I wish society would understand that we all make mistakes, we've all made bad choices in our lives. We need to forgive these women and give them a second chance. The number one crime among the women in prison is because they tried to provide for their families. Second it's because they took the rap for a boyfriend or someone else. We all make mistakes and God has forgiven all of us. These women need to be given a second chance. That's what keeps me going back because I want to be a part of the healing and wholeness.

RASHEEDA ALFORD, *Executive Director of Out for Justice, HIV/Substance Coordinator for Beyond the Walls Outreach, mother of two children*

Support and strengthen our families



My son started acting up in school when he was 6 years old. See, his dad is actually serving 30 years in prison. I had to take my son out of private school and put him in public school for financial reasons and this is where it all started. I got him medical and emotional evaluations, but they said nothing

was wrong. I took him everywhere possible to get help and I did everything I was supposed to do. I even put him on the medication the doctors recommended. But he wasn't getting better. At the time I was in nursing school and working in a heart failure unit but my son's school was calling my job every single day, literally every single day. So I'm about to get fired because the school keeps calling my job. I told the teacher that I was going to handle it. That night, I beat my son, and by that I mean I spanked him with a belt. The next morning after my son went to school I was called and given 10 minutes to get to the hospital. Upon my arrival they had stripped my son, taken photographs, and called a social worker. I tried to explain what happened. I took out all of the documentation that I had been having my son evaluated, trying to get him help. But I was arrested in my medical scrubs. I was held in jail for four days. My bail was \$250,000. I was originally charged with child abuse, second degree assault and intent to injure with a deadly weapon but a lot of the charges were dropped. I was sentenced to two years supervised probation. The judge said I was lucky because I could have been given 12 years in prison.

I want to change policies so that if you're qualified, you can get a job. You should be able to live in society with-

out people labeling you because of your past. I want to put a face to the stigma, because people meet me, and say, "Oh, you're so bright... I want you to work for me." Until they run my background and write me off instead of listening to what really happened.

I wish that before all of this happened, when I was trying to get help, that Baltimore City had things implemented like wrap-around programs for children going through things. Fatherless boys, fatherless girls need opportunities to talk about things, let emotions out. We need more men in schools, you have so many fatherless children growing up not knowing what it's like to be a man or what a man is suppose to be.

Part of my sentence was to have no contact with my son. Then, when he learned why I got arrested, he said he wanted to kill himself. So he has guilt. My other child, my daughter, felt resentful of her brother. I had to give my children away to my brother temporarily. In school, my daughter went from an A student to an F student after I got arrested. She was failing everything, she was crying in school. You know, she's the oldest so it was really rough on her.

I lost everything when I got arrested – my home, my car, I had to go back to depend on my mother – I had nothing. Because of my conviction, I had to leave nursing school where I was nearly finished with my degree. Now I've graduated with a degree in psychology and health education. But it took me two years to find a job. You know the statistics were bad for me: young black teenage mother with a criminal record, going to drop out of school, be on welfare, not going to make it to college. Now my daughter can go to school and say "my mommy's working on her graduate degree." But it didn't have to happen like this.

DEAIRA S., *16 years old, junior in high school, artist and fashion designer with her own clothing label and a Youth Ambassador (YA) at the Safe and Sound Campaign. The YA program is designed to provide young people with the necessary tools and encouragement to mobilize their peers and neighbors in support of more opportunities for Baltimore's children, youth and families.*

If we invest in our young women, they can lead Baltimore to a better tomorrow



I think Baltimore is wonderful – it's more than what's shown on TV. I think Baltimore needs a lot of improvement but it's like a little baby, you have to show it love. I really love Baltimore.

Crimes are pointless. They are caused by neglect and pain. I wouldn't call everyone who commits a crime crazy – every-

one has a story. You never know what they've been through that drove them to that point. So you have to just think: "What is going on in that child's life to make them commit this crime?" If you really do a case study, you learn he was neglected, he didn't have a father, his mother was on drugs so he wasn't getting the love he needed. He didn't have a mentor to tell him right from wrong. We have to be willing to understand different circumstances and teach people they don't have to live like that anymore, and give them opportunities.

A lot of my friends and family members passed away to violence. One of my best friends passed away last year – he was only 15 years old. Some dude just shot him five times. He was only 15, he didn't really even have a life. We had the same birthday and when my birthday comes I celebrate for the both of us. I had to deal with three deaths in two months. My cousin died at the end of last school year. He was only 14. He was shot in his arm. He died instantly. Another cousin, he was 24 when he was murdered. He used to be in gangs but he got out of it and went to medical school. He got a job at Sinai hospital. One day some dude just walked up and shot him three times, in his head, neck and shoulder. Violence hurts a lot people.

I don't want to leave Baltimore, but I can't stay here unless I'm an advocate. I love art and I love advocacy. I've only entered one art contest in my life. The topic: "If you were mayor for a day, what would you do?" I said I'd clean up the graveyard – since everyone is dying, I don't want anyone in a dirty graveyard. I just keep a smile on my face and dye my hair a bunch of bright colors. It's really hard when you're small in a big world.



ALFREDA ROBINSON, *National Women's Prison Project*

Women do the time for others' crimes



I'm fortunate because I knew where my son was while I was incarcerated. Many incarcerated mothers have kids in different homes, foster care, lost, and they just hope to find them when they get out. You have to find joy out of the pain. I'm counting down years, not days or months but years. My son was 21 years old when he was sentenced to 45 years

in federal prison for drug conspiracy charges.

As a teenager, about 16 years old, my son David began selling marijuana, graduated to cocaine and dabbled in heroine. I didn't know how serious it was until his trial. As a little boy he

was a hyper-active, bright child, but the schools didn't know how to work with him. We went through every program, therapy, put him on medication; I was a single mom trying to raise David, while going to school and working. I had to leave him with family while I worked, which is when he got exposed to the lure and power of money and drugs. I tried to talk him out of it but he said, "Ma, I make more money in one day than you make in two weeks." So I put him out of my house; he couldn't live with me and engage in that lifestyle.

Because of my son's involvement, I ended up getting hit with a two-count indictment related to his dealing. Before trial I was offered an 8 ½ year plea to testify against my son. My son was offered a 23-year plea to incriminate me, and he was looking at life in prison. We refused. I was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison; my son was given 45 years for drug conspiracy.

In prison I woke up each morning saying if my son can handle 45 years, I won't cry about my 10 years. That allowed me to do my time and persevere to make sure I would become an advocate to let people know about the unfeeling government that could incarcerate massive numbers of people, who the majority look like me, cannot afford a good attorney, have not been well educated, have made poor choices, have never been a kingpin anywhere, not flying drugs into this country but end up behind bars for excessive numbers of years. All I can do is take what I've experienced and turn it around and not let it kill me and allow it to be a stepping stone so that other people can learn about how easy it is, just one person dropping your name is enough to get you locked up. If I can touch just one person, encourage them to make their own choices and improve their situation, it's worth it for me. God didn't create prisons. Men did.

CONNIE SMITH, *Families Against Injustice*

Families of the incarcerated are forgotten victims and part of the solution



People forget about how incarceration impacts families.

I call families of incarcerated people the forgotten victim because they are off the radar but the family is always there no matter what, through thick and thin. Family bears the brunt of the financial respon-

sibilities to pick up the pieces, whether it's caring for the children left behind, housing, phone calls. The families are always there. A lot of times we forget about them.

There are no quick fixes. Women need to be supported. Often they are the head of their household, all alone. It takes

a whole community. We all got to take responsibility and say 'Enough!' What are we going to do to give back and help? We can see that woman on the street crying and suffering but would it take a minute or two to say what's wrong? Do you just need to cry or a tissue? We all need to give back.

The Maryland Division of Corrections should establish an Office of Ombudsman to see what's going on inside facilities with respect to the families, like other states have. An ombudsman could provide oversight, check on facilities, see how the medical care is, listen to what inmates are saying. The Ombudsman could see what's happening on the ground and, most importantly, get input from families and be there for families to answer concerns like: 'Why my son is not receiving his medications, yes he has sickle cell but he needs help.' I sit and write letters for families for parole review. Families always need help navigating the system.

Now we're going nowhere fast. We're losing a whole generation. Let's create a system that helps families stay connected. Let's bring community courts and community conferencing and mediation back. Let's stop warehousing people and causing even bigger budget crises. Now everything starts on the back end. Let's learn how to start on front end. Let's get to families before they wind up in prison. It's not easy, it takes money and time. Families cry out so often but no one hears them.

ANDREA HARRISON, *Prisoners Aid Association*

Women who are incarcerated have different needs than men. These needs vary from helping women cope with being away from their family to dealing with family members caring for children left at home. Women also need a host of medical and psychological support systems that truly support rehabilitation while in prison.

Before I became a previously incarcerated person, the term "ex-offender" didn't bother me. Ex-offender now hurts

me. It is an offensive, unnecessary label! I prefer the term previously incarcerated person. This label may seem like a small thing, but it speaks directly to how previously incarcerated people see themselves, as others see them as an "ex-offender." How much sense does this label make once a person serves their time and pays their debts for the crime committed? Why are we constantly reminded of the past? At what point does my past become just that - my past - so that I can create a better future?

We can all learn something from those who have had different life experiences than our own. A lot of our clients get discouraged easily like when they cannot meet basic needs, don't know how they're going to eat or sleep, feel not worth much and no one cares so they just give up. Others go back to selling drugs to put money in their pocket. If you can't get decent health coverage, it means you can't get your medication or see a therapist or get in-patient treatment. A significant number of our clients aren't highly educated, with limited life experiences and are in need of help to regain and, in some cases, establish a new belief system about life in order to build the self-confidence needed to gain employment and be successful in society.

Women who are incarcerated have different needs than men. These needs vary from helping women cope with being away from their family to dealing with family members caring for children left at home. Women also need a host of medical and psychological support systems that truly support rehabilitation while in prison.

Until folks realize that it makes more sense to rehabilitate people while they're incarcerated instead of warehousing them, the problem will grow larger. It's not serving people well. People are warehoused in prisons. We need to address mental health issues, and help people become employable. Otherwise, there will be more people committing crimes and doing drugs. It's time for Baltimore to galvanize and come up with a plan. Then we need to carry that plan to the state and national level. Each of us individually doesn't have enough power to bring the change that needs to occur, but together we would be a united voice.

In 2008 there were 1,059 women incarcerated in Maryland prisons.¹³ About 53 percent of these women were from Baltimore City.¹⁴ Nearly 80 percent of women were imprisoned for a nonviolent offense, including 43 percent for drug offenses and 16 percent for larceny. These are not violent crimes, but perhaps the result of a lack of services and support.

A large proportion of women are in prison for drug offenses alone. Some of the reasons for women's involvement with drugs and alcohol are unique to women. Women are more likely than men to use drugs to deal with traumatic experiences, mental health disorders, and stress than to use them experimentally or recreationally.¹⁵

- Women entering prison are slightly more likely to report using drugs than men. In the month before their current offense around 54 percent of women used drugs, compared with 50 percent for the men.
- More than 43 percent of women in prison said they had been physically or sexually abused prior to their incarceration, as compared to 12 percent of men reported physical or sexual abuse prior to incarceration.
- Women are more likely to be living with a mental health disorder, particularly depression, mood disorders, or anxiety disorders, than men.¹⁶

Incarceration can have detrimental effects on families

When women are imprisoned, they are not the only ones punished. According to a Maryland Commission for Women (MCW) Status Report, in 1998, 80 percent of women in Maryland prisons were mothers, with the average age of their children being eight years old.¹⁷ On average, mothers in prison have 2.4 children. The MCW report estimated that the number of children affected by having a mother in prison will reach 5,830 by 2025. Additionally, at any given time, about 20 women at the prison arrived there pregnant.¹⁸

Families are likely to be disrupted when mothers are imprisoned because 69 percent of the time, women are primary caregivers prior to imprisonment. As shown in the MCW report, more than half of the children of women in prison live with grandparents during the mother's imprisonment, while only 25 percent live with their father.¹⁹ When mothers are imprisoned, their contact with their children is severely limited: 29 percent of mothers were not visited by their children during their stay, even though 90 percent will regain custody.²⁰

Children face a number of challenges when trying to visit their mothers in prison, but there two reasons that figure prominently: transportation and prison policies related to pregnancy.²¹ No public transportation services run to the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCI-W), where most women are imprisoned,²² thus preventing children and family members without their own transportation from getting to the prison. With few exceptions, prison policy separates pregnant women from their children after birth. Such separation

prevents the formation of an important bond between mother and child.²³ Without this important bond, children may grow up without an emotional connection to their birth mothers that would encourage visitation.

Lack of contact with their mothers can have damaging effects on children. Children commonly experience sadness, anger, confusion, grief or depression due to the separation from their parents.²⁴ Children whose mothers are or were imprisoned are more likely to have low self-esteem, impaired achievement motivation, and poor peer relations, with up to 30 percent developing mental health problems.²⁵ Studies link parental incarceration with poor school performance, aggression, emotional problems, and post-traumatic stress.

The effects of imprisonment on children and families are far reaching and can have lasting negative consequences on families and communities. There is a relationship between the imprisonment of mothers and their children developing anti-social behaviors including delinquency, drug addiction, and gang involvement.²⁶ Research done by National Council on Crime and Delinquency found that children of parents in prison are five to six times more likely to become incarcerated than their peers.²⁷

Maryland and Baltimore City have some services tailored to the needs of women

“The Prisoner's Aid Association has a program that takes between nine months to a year to help women re-enter society and to get their children back after incarceration. But during the first six months we just work on emotional well-being. The whole process of healing takes time.”

— Clara Cuffie, Prisoners Aid Association

Baltimore City offers health clinics for mothers and their children, including a healthy teen clinic, while also providing a 24-hour mental health crisis center and a free mental health drug program sponsored by drug manufacturers.²⁸ The Office of Community Services offers three affordable child care centers.²⁹ There are three career centers throughout the city that offer a variety of workshops to help people get their GED, improve their resume, prepare for interviews, and secure job placement.³⁰ Although these services are already available in Baltimore, they are underfunded and underutilized.

Maryland's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration lists 15 programs that are Certified Women's Programs,³¹ with eight of those programs allowing children to accompany their mothers during drug treatment. Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, Inc. serves uninsured and underinsured City residents through more than 50 providers.³² Despite the availability of these programs, there are still significant barriers to accessing them, and many women who end up in the criminal justice system lack the resources to find these programs and benefit from them. And often when women do find programs, many of these services can only offer them a waiting list.³³

Reforming Parole and Probation

Parole and probation have the potential to keep people in their communities rather than prison. However, as the people interviewed for this project will attest, parole and probation often serve as a revolving door that traps people in the criminal justice system. Onerous conditions of supervision, fees and fines, and drug testing contribute to a system that seems more focused on catching a person when they are not complying with conditions of parole or probation than helping them successfully stay out of prison and in the community, contributing to society.

MICHAEL DEMINDS

Keeping his head above water despite the demands of a counterproductive system



I'm 44. My incarceration started as a juvenile at age 13 and ended at 44.

My parole agent's job description should be to assist me with becoming a person who does not harm the community. I'm talking to my parole officer from work and he says I need to leave work and go see him. I punch in at 8am and leave at 4pm. Conditions of my parole are to remain employed

and have employment at all times on parole. To leave a job is termination or grounds for suspension. My parole condition says I must work 40 hours a week. If I'm only clocking 37.5 hours I'm in violation. Every time I go see my parole officer I wait four hours! If I don't show up you can violate me and my job can terminate me at any given time for leaving work. It's about communication. They're barking orders but not helping.

The system is not really about solving the problem, it's basically about how to punish the problem. You can always punish a person but you also have to have a solution about changing the person. If there's no change then what you started with, it's what you'll end with.

JEAN LEWIS, *Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon's Office of Criminal Justice*

Working with communities to end a perpetual cycle

The recognition that people need to spend dollars and energy looking at re-entry issues is a huge step forward. That's the ultimate prevention in some cases – looking at the situation that someone gets released into and seeing that it is ridiculous. Why do we think they would approach life differently if we don't help them connect to rehabilitation or help the family or help with medical care? There are so many



logical things that have been ignored because it's easy to say, "Oh it's a convict, the last person we want to serve." First, these are people and second, on a pragmatic level, it's good for all of us because this is a huge issue for the city and we need to do a better job of getting services to these people. Most people, if given the opportunity, are going to choose a safer, more stable life.

JANET SMITH*

The parole and probation system must become more flexible to deal appropriately with individual situations

I worked around the legal system for over 25 years, including the court system, law firms, and the FBI, so I thought I had a lot of information about the law - and I never pictured myself as a potential inmate. When I was diagnosed with lupus, I re-located to Baltimore from Washington, DC while undergoing treatment. A neighbor of mine, a troubled young woman, was having problems with her boyfriend and he put her out in the street during terrible weather. I told her she could stay with me temporarily. That afternoon, when I returned from an errand, my front door was wide open and several of my personal items were missing.

Later that night this young woman returned intoxicated. She entered my apartment and when I told her to leave; she became belligerent, cursing with rage. I picked up the phone to call the police when she approached me with a knife. As I backed away she kept coming toward me and I reached behind me, desperate, and found my hot skillet cooking on the stove. I threw just a bit of hot oil toward her, thinking that would stop her, but she lunged right at me with the knife. That's when I threw the oil directly at her; it was hot enough to seriously injure her. I called the police immediately and my neighbor took her to the hospital. The police arrived at my house and offered to press charges against her but I declined. About three hours later the police returned to my house,

handcuffed me and charged me with first degree assault. That's how it all started.

Before that I had been working for the FBI on several projects that required a certain level of security. All of that went out the window. I retained an attorney but the trial was delayed repeatedly for a year and half. By the time my trial date came I was broke so I could no longer afford my attorney so I got a public defender. The judge gave me a sentence of probation before judgment for 5 years. The first two years were fine, without any incidents. Then one day I was given a technical violation of probation, with no bail, so I was held at the women's detention center for months while waiting for my trial. Then the judge sentenced me to ten years in prison, and suspended seven years – he was having a bad day. I kept thinking: "This has got to be a dream." I was incarcerated for over a year before I went in front of the Parole Commission, when they released me immediately.

STANLEY WARREN

Invest in our future successes, not just punishing past failures



My main concern is the way you send people to prison. If you lock a man up for 10 years in a cell and send him home with no skills, no training, no job, what do you except out of him? I think everybody who has been locked up should get a chance to go to work release before they get out. Let us come home with

a job and some money already saved up.

We need drug treatment for addicts. Drug court is a joke to me. They give you 20 years suspended sentence and 5 years probation and no help. If you couldn't stay out of trouble for 5 months, how are you going to stay out for 5 years? They send you to prison with an addiction and never give you help. You can get any drug you want in prison. Then you just sent me right back out there on the streets the same way I came in.

KEVIN JOHNSON*

Technical violations—destroying futures, wasting taxpayer dollars

After six years, I come out of prison with \$86. For six years I sat in prison and they didn't let me work. So they put me right back on the street with \$86 but I had nowhere to go and no job. I tried and tried to get a job. My first parole violation was

because I didn't have a job. How could you violate me for not having a job when I'm doing everything I can?

I got arrested for violating parole for a failure to report a "change of address" to the parole office. I had to sit in jail for 30 days waiting to see the parole commissioner. I lost two jobs while sitting in jail for a change of address charge. I had proof that my address didn't change but I still sat in jail. Then they kept me there for 60 more days. I sat in jail for 90 days for nothing. Technically you can violate us for anything. That's the reason you have so many of us getting returned to prison. If you violate me for changing my address when I have proof that my address is the same; that's wrong. If I broke the law, that's different, send me to jail. Nobody owes us nothing. I'm not making excuses. I understand the parole officer's duty and job is to protect society. But if you don't give us the opportunity to change, society will stay the way it is.

MICHAEL BROWN, *Prisoners Aid Association*

There is a lot of competition for jobs now and people coming out of prison are going to face even more challenges in obtaining employment. Jobs that used to be available for people with a basic education background are now going to people with Master's degrees. The economic recession will impact parole and probation. Each probationer has to pay money to be on probation. If you don't have a job, you can't pay the money, then you get violated and have to go back to prison. While incarcerated, your child support is accumulating. So as soon as you get a job, your paycheck gets taken away. It becomes a revolving door where you're damned if you do or damned if you don't.

In the 1970s they took away programs that helped individuals while incarcerated. So in the past when people were released from prison, they were able to find a living-wage job. Now prisons just warehouse people, there's nothing to do but look at walls and get in fights. We need more structured programs to help individuals, and then develop exit plans six to twelve months prior to release.

For example, here at Prisoner's Aid we see 4,000 new individuals a year and 10,000 duplicated individuals a year. We house 350 individuals and families on a nightly basis. We have a GED program and HIV testing and information, life skills and financial literacy programs and a food pantry. Open Society Institute and the Empowerment Zone provided us and two other organizations with a grant to assist 105 individuals over a three-year period of time with case management, education and job skills. That's 315 ex-offenders out of 20,000 that get released to the state every year. Baltimore needs more programs that provide wrap-around services on a wider basis.

**Names have been changed at the request of the participant.*

Parole and probation often serve as a revolving door, trapping people in the criminal justice system

In 2007 there were about 70,000 people on parole and probation in Maryland.³⁴ About 27 percent of these people were from Baltimore City.³⁵ The Maryland Division of Parole and Probation's mission is to "enhance public safety by holding supervisees accountable to victims and the community and by helping supervisees through the process of becoming law-abiding and productive."³⁶ By this definition, parole and probation should serve as opportunities to support people in the community as they try to turn their lives around. But this generally has not proven to be the case and, instead, often results in a revolving door into and out of the criminal justice system.

Many people who enter parole return to prison for noncriminal offenses

Parole and probation guidelines are often onerous and inconsistent with rational expectations of behavior, setting up individuals for failure. Expecting a person living with drug addiction to abstain from using drugs without providing treatment can be futile. Another condition of parole and probation—maintaining employment—may be difficult for someone who is unskilled or under educated, especially when they have a criminal record, and especially in a struggling economy. As the system is currently organized, one in five people released on parole in Maryland will return to prison; and over half of these are for technical violations such as missing appointments with parole officers, not paying fines or failing drug tests.³⁷

“If you don’t get a parole officer that is ‘kooky’ then you’ll be okay. There is fear that you’ll lose your job if you have to report to the parole officer. If the parole officer aggravates the employer too much, you might get fired. Parole officers will insist that they have to do things a certain way, otherwise they will lose their job. But then we lose our jobs. What are we supposed to do? Listen to our employer or listen to the parole board? It’s a no-win situation.”

— George Anthony

Supervising more people in the community rather than in prisons and jails could save Maryland money

In Maryland the cost of incarcerating one person for one year is approximately \$33,310. Comparatively, the average cost of supervising one person for one year in the community is \$1,422. Appropriately increasing the use of parole and probation to supervise people in the community can safely reduce prison and jail populations and their associated costs, leaving more funding available for prevention and other programs to serve Baltimore residents.

Parole and probation systems should be based on a support and services model

Instead of a parole and probation system set up with the “tail ‘em, nail ‘em, jail ‘em” mentality, Maryland needs to change to a system of support and services to help people succeed in the community. This has already started with the Proactive Community Services (PCS) program, which includes a risk assessment to tailor conditions of supervision according to each individual’s needs. The PCS program, despite showing evidence that it works to reduce recidivism rates for people involved, is not being used as much as it could be.

“The system needs to get the best out of us, instead of looking for the worst. It’s frustrating trying to keep a job while following the probation rules, checking in every week and paying probation fees when you’re just getting by. I don’t like to be called an ex-offender. I don’t like to be called a criminal. Please look at me as somebody that made a mistake.”

— James Turner*

Community supervision supports individuals and communities

Community supervision through probation and parole allow people to return to and stay in their communities to participate in employment, treatment, education, families and other systems of support. Individuals are able to contribute to the local economy through their employment, financial support for their families, providing taxes, and supporting local businesses. Also, research has shown that community-based treatment is more cost-effective and beneficial than treatment delivered in prison, meaning people with substance abuse disorders can conquer their addictions sooner if on parole.

Stoked, in part, by the drug-related death of University of Maryland basketball star, Len Bias, the U.S. Congress passed mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses in the late 1980s. Maryland and many other states followed suit, ushering in a “get-tough” approach to sentencing for drug use. Arguably, Maryland was the epicenter for a drastic shift from a public health approach to punishment for drug use. The perspectives included in this section reflect that response. In the last five years, however, Maryland has increasingly focused on treatment as an alternative to incarceration. Although Maryland still struggles with a shortage of services for treatment, the state has already started to shift its response to drug use.

MARLO HARGROVE,

Freedom Advocates Celebrating Ex-Offenders

Treatment can help undo multi-generational addiction



I was born into the world by two addicts. The kids would tease me since my parents were drunk all the time. Anytime we had school activities I would actually go and find some adult in the street and ask, “Would you come to school with me and act like my mom or my dad?” I was deeply ashamed.

I dropped out in the 9th grade. No mother, no father, by then both were deceased. Who was there to look up to? The drug dealers and drug addicts. Where I grew up, if you were a not an alcoholic, drug user or criminal, you were a nerd. We didn’t see staying sober as an accomplishment.

At 30, the first time I got locked up, all my other friends had been locked up. Coming up, it’s so crazy, but we thought you weren’t a man unless you went to prison. My first charge was for marijuana. All my charges pertained to drugs and alcohol, my addiction. I’ve got no violent crime on my records.

When I finally got caught, I told the probation officer, “I’m not a criminal, I’m an addict and I need some help! I don’t believe me going to prison is going to solve my problem. If I go to prison, when I come out I will have even more reason to get high and never get help for my addictions.”

With tears literally running down my face I begged, “Please, can you help me get into some kind of treatment program?”

The probation officer said there’s no guarantee that they’d allow me into treatment. Thankfully, the judge agreed: one year stipulated recovery treatment or two years in prison. I took the year and completed it successfully. I was sick and tired of being sick and tired, of doing the same thing over and over and over again for drugs. It’s been 7 years. I haven’t

been incarcerated. Haven’t had a drink or a drug. I didn’t realize that life could be this great without drugs. I was blessed to go back and get my diploma in 2007. I’m a prime example that this can be done. I tell people to find whatever works for you and hold on tight. I made it through by the grace of God. Now I’m trying to show other people how to walk this walk.

Somewhere down the line it has to stop and it should stop with the people that been through it so the young generation won’t have to go through it. My heart bleeds when I see my young brothers and sisters in the streets because they looked lost. They’re trying to search and find their way, but I see me in them. It’s the reminder of where I used to be. They need us.

MEISHA H., 16 year old high school senior, plans to attend Spelman College and one day become a lawyer so that she can help people

Daughter watches her dad beat the odds and get clean, helping her to envision a different future for herself



My father had an addiction. As a child I felt bad because I had no one to hold on to. I kind of sat back watching, thinking my older sister could raise me, while I was practically raising myself. But, I see now that my father has made a big difference in his life. He could have lost his life. He could

have overdosed, anything. By God being by his side, he maintained. I was in elementary school when he was addicted. I was trying to hold on and go to school everyday. But when I was younger I used to fight, get into a lot of trouble. I’m just grateful my father got through his addiction and got treatment. Without seeing him make a positive change in his life, I would not be where I am today.

A lot of us kids are hurting. We have actually seen death. One time there was this boy around our way. He used to be a drug dealer but he was a close friend. He just left my house, walked up the street and got shot. I heard the gun shots. I saw him laying on the ground bleeding. And then he was gone, dead. We were all at the funeral a week later and somebody came shooting. One boy was shot in his neck, dead on the scene. Another boy got shot in his leg, paralyzed. That was a devastating moment for me. There were young kids at the funeral. It hurt, I just could not forget about it because it was just too sad, too sad to even talk about. For a lot of people out here, the future is either death or prison but I know that's not what they want.

After all that I've been through I'm still here doing the best I can. I have great expectations as to what I can do. We youth can help each other get through hard times by communicating with each other and having teen groups. We could make a difference in each others' lives by just telling a little about our lives.

OFFICER ROBERT HORNE,

Baltimore City Police Department

Law enforcement officer pledges to address root causes of crime



Baltimore was known as the heroin capital in the 1990s. We had the highest emergency room overdose rates in the nation. I've seen a decline in open-air drug markets. We've just got to keep chipping away. We have to reach the young people. We need more treatment facilities. We've got to bring in experts, and we have to bring in our

ex-offenders....You can't just lock up people every time. You can't just send the police in because it's putting a band-aid on a gunshot wound. It's not going to change the condition.

We're not going to execute our way out of the problem. It's not going to work. We're not going to incarcerate our way out of the problem. It's not going to work. Some people are locked into this mentality of lock 'em up, but we need to fix all systems. This mentality is not getting us where we need to be.

Growing up as a young man I never thought I would become a police officer but I chose law enforcement because I wanted to make a difference. We must build trust among the police department and community, particularly young people, to deal with crime and addiction and improve the quality of life in Baltimore. It's going to take government, city officials, community, courts, schools and law enforcement to make this thing whole. Even the prison system will have to get on board.

People come from different backgrounds in life. Some people have mental issues; some people have been abused as children. We don't know why they act a certain way. But many people have never received treatment for the physical or sexual abuse they had as children. So they begin to act out and develop addictions. It isn't until they are arrested and charged with a crime or having serious disciplinary issues before we start to find out there's a history of abuse and neglect and no one has ever given the child the therapeutic treatment they needed. So by the time the child is 18 years old, he's a menace to society. He's traumatized.

As a law enforcement officer, you have to know where the resources are to be effective. It's not just about arresting. You could lock people up all day but what have you accomplished at the end of the day? You're going to go to the same call over and over again until you fix the problem. If you have a leak in your house, if you don't fix the leak, if you think you can just wrap a towel around the leak you're going to continue to leak. You could put a bucket under the leak but it's going to become full and you'll have to put another bucket. So you've got to fix the problem.

JASON PORTER*

Incarceration on demand versus treatment on demand

I was intravenously using heroin and cocaine for about 10 years before I actually got arrested. I asked the police for help and they wouldn't give it to me. That first cry for help was the most crucial point of my whole transition. When I realized I had a problem, and I knew I couldn't afford to pay for treatment.... I thought I could get treatment if I got arrested for selling drugs. I knew that was the chance I had to take to get help. When I was dealing drugs and the police came, instead of running away, I ran to them. I felt that maybe this would be a little intervention to help me get clean. The first thing that came out of their mouths was, "Well we don't have any concrete proof or evidence that you have a problem." Come on now, I'm telling you what my problem is and I'm trying to get some help. That didn't work – they gave me probation but no treatment. It took me another time around, same process, where I deliberately got myself caught in order to get treatment. Again, there wasn't enough evidence that I had a problem. So they put me back out on the street. Not a week later, I'm locked up again. Same thing I was in for the week before.

One judge, he was really sympathetic and understanding. He knew when I went to court that I had two pending charges. I explained to him that I was an addict. This judge said he was going to give me the drug court program and placed me on one year probation with drug treatment. The judge from my earlier case had wanted to give me 25 years, said I was "a three time loser." I was scared. Seriously! I was facing 25 years, and all I wanted was an 18-month drug

treatment program. I had a good public defender...I'll never forget that lady. She helped me get into the program. My worst day sober is better than my best day getting high.

FRANK BAXTER, *addict since 16, formerly incarcerated but now clean and proud*

The difference between jail and treatment



All I needed was to understand my feelings and know they were normal so that I could make different choices. I'm living proof that learning to psycho-analyze yourself inside of recovery works. From where I started in life to where I am now was a great travel that I survived, but so many others

haven't. Through the grace of God, I have a chance to express it and hope it helps someone else.

The criminal justice system does not address mental health and addiction problems. The criminal justice system does not recognize relapse as part of the recovery. The criminal justice system must address problems like addiction, depression and mental disorders before everything else.

Because of problems at home, me and all my siblings got split up and sent to live with our aunts who taught us values about life and education. Later my mom got us back but we went from living a good life to being poor again. But we loved her, she was our mom and we were happy to be with her. So, at 16 years old, I started selling drugs to help support my younger siblings and my mom – that's when I caught a drug addiction. I dropped out of high school to make money. The first time I used drugs was valium. This started my addiction.

Just after my 18th birthday, I got in trouble for shoplifting and got sentenced to 60-90 days. My first impression of jail was it was no big deal compared to my life on the streets. I knew I could go back, no sweat. It was a point of pride for me. Later all my charges were drug related. From 18 years old, I was always in and out of jail. But I've always had a big heart.

Years later I went through drug treatment and met a program counselor named Tina. She taught me how to prepare

for different situations, some good, some bad. When I learned that I could identify my feelings and give them a label, I learned how to cope with life. I learned how to understand my feelings and know it was normal to feel.

Addicts must be taught tools in self-analysis. All those years in and out of jail I never learned these things.

LINDA HARRIS*

Pulling up the roots of addiction

All my life all I'd known was drugs and alcohol. Period. My mother was addicted to pills, both parents were alcoholics. So I never had a drug free life. I started getting high at 9-years old. When you start getting high is when you stop growing. So I'm almost 50 but I got a 9-year-old controlling my life. I was stuck in addiction. The stuff that's affecting my family has affected thousands of families. You've got to deal with the whole person to resolve the problem – the way we think, the way we see things, the way we feel – mental, emotional, physical, spiritual.

There's a foundation we all share. Even though we may be different and see things different, there are basic things we all need. We need emotional strength, physical health, food, clothes and shelter.

If you're going to resolve the problem, you have to go deeper than the using or selling of the drugs. Ask why are they living like this? A lot of times probation, drug court, and recovery houses are just trying to fight the problem of the addict but don't understand why the problem is there. You've got to dig deep and help people figure out why they're living the way they are. Go to the root. Like with plants, if you cut the weed off at the top of the dirt, instead of at the root, it'll come back. We've got to get the root of the problem out to solve it. You've got to go back deep, and pull the stuff out. To change the way I was living, I had to face myself.

CHARLES MARTIN

Punishment cannot provide a plan for a productive, drug free life

Even though I was a smart, perceptive child, I wouldn't listen to my teachers. So one day, I was put out of school in 7th grade and told not to come back. Then I started selling pot. I elevated from selling pot to heroin. The first time I was in jail I was 19 years old. My cellmate tried to hang himself going through heroin withdrawal. I thought to myself: I never want to be like that. Five years later, I was in a cell, on the opposite side in the same jail, going through withdrawal and wanting to die from the pain.

Every time I'd go to jail, I'd go home with great intentions to be a good dad, do the right thing. I had great intentions but no plan. I didn't know how to do the right thing. I needed help in order to take the steps I needed to change my life. We assume because of a person's age, they're mature but many adults are children who need help. We assume grown bodies are grown up. But if you live through any bondage, your growth stops. When you grow up in jail, you're only as old as when you were a child, last time you lived free. We need to meet people where they are.

There's no reason to sell drugs. Any community that's struggling knows that. But 25 years ago they were supposed to put up programs in Baltimore for drug treatment and support. They didn't put enough in place. Rehabilitation does not exist in the criminal justice system. You can't even participate

in self-help or GED programs unless you've got more than a 5-year sentence. You can't rehabilitate until you habilitate ("re" means to do again), and you can't redo what you have never done. The few programs they have in the prisons are not designed to equip people for anything, except failure.

At least half of the people they lock up don't need to go to jail. Instead, from the very first day they put handcuffs on you, give people direction.

You can't send struggling people back on the street without direction and expect something different, especially if they've never been where they're trying to go.

They got to provide services to people when they catch the very first charge. Don't wait until they've been in and out of the system over and over again. Give people direction on how to get there and they'll make it.

ED CARTER,* *Pharmacist in Maryland's prisons and jails.*

One of these guys, paraplegic, only in his 20s had pressure ulcers and would be paralyzed for the rest of his life. We couldn't get him to wake up. He was just so depressed, he put a note on his chair, saying, "don't wake me for my medication." No visitors from anybody. No idea where their families were. This idea of being surrounded by people but utterly alone – that's prison.

Increasing the availability of treatment for addiction preserves public safety while saving taxpayer's money

Maryland's decades long "War on Drugs" has resulted in more people in prison for drug offenses at an ever-increasing cost to the state. Between 1998 and 2007, the number of people in Maryland prisons for drug offenses increased 20 percent.³⁸ However, research shows that increased imprisonment does not necessarily make communities in Maryland or Baltimore safer.³⁹ Instead, evidence suggests that community-based treatment not only improves life outcomes for individuals, but also preserves public safety.⁴⁰

Providing substance abuse treatment can improve public safety

National studies indicate that participation in substance abuse treatment can reduce the chances that a person commits an offense in the future. The National Treatment Improvement Evaluation Study showed that drug treatment significantly reduced respondents' self-reported criminal activity: a 78.3 percent reduction in drug selling, an 81.6 percent decline in shoplifting, a 64.3 percent reduction in arrests for any crime, and a 48.3 percent reduction in supporting themselves through illegal activities.⁴¹ Statistics from Baltimore City confirm those national findings. People in Baltimore City discharged from substance abuse treatment had 62 percent fewer arrests while receiving treatment, when compared to pre-treatment.⁴² Additionally, arrests for offenses such as theft, burglary and robbery were 55 percent lower for those who completed treatment than those who did not.⁴³

Substance abuse treatment can improve life outcomes for individuals with addictions

People who participate in treatment are more likely to experience positive life outcomes in terms of the reduction of drug use, participation in employment, and staying out of prison. A study by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services revealed that individuals who participated in federally funded substance abuse treatment programs were not only able to reduce their drug use by about 50 percent, but were also able to make other substantial changes in their lives that reduced the need for public services, yielding savings related to fewer hospital visits and less involvement in the criminal justice system.⁴⁴ Similarly, in Baltimore and in Maryland, people who participated in treatment experienced positive benefits. Employment rates for people who participated in substance abuse treatment in Baltimore increased 55 percent in FY2007.⁴⁵

Treatment both costs less than incarceration and is more cost-effective

Maryland spends millions of dollars annually on its corrections system, especially related to people charged with drug offenses. The average cost of incarcerating one person for one year in Maryland is \$33,310.⁴⁶ With over 4,600 people imprisoned for drug offenses alone, this can add up to over \$152 million per year. In contrast, treatment costs far

less than incarceration. Outpatient treatment costs around \$2,600 per person and residential treatment is around \$21,000 per year.⁴⁷

Treatment is more cost-effective than incarceration. A 2006 study by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that community-based substance abuse treatment is more effective than treatment in prison or jail at reducing recidivism rates.⁴⁸ For every dollar spent on treatment in the community, Maryland could receive \$18.52 in benefits in terms of public safety. In comparison, treatment in prisons yields only \$5.88 in benefits and prison alone, \$.37 in benefits.⁴⁹

Maryland has made progress in adopting a public health approach to drug addiction

In recent years, Maryland has taken steps to shift the response to drug use from imprisonment to that of a public health modality that involves treatment. There is still room for progress, however. For every dollar spent to imprison people convicted of nonviolent drug offenses, Maryland spends an estimated 26 cents to provide drug treatment to patients referred by the criminal justice system.⁵⁰

Baltimore City judges recognize the effectiveness of treatment over incarceration, but due to a severe lack of available treatment beds in Maryland, they are not able to refer individuals to treatment as often as they'd like and instead sentence people to incarceration.⁵¹ Of the 47,122 people who entered treatment in Maryland in 2007, 45 percent were referred from the criminal justice system.⁵²

Treatment in Baltimore, when it is obtained, appears to be effective in reducing drug use. Among people who received drug addiction treatment in Baltimore, drug use fell by 32 percent.⁵³ Although approximately 60 percent of people receiving drug addiction treatment had received assistance in the past, few patients returned to treatment more than twice.⁵⁴ The numbers of people admitted to treatment fell 10 percent from FY 2006 to 14,034 in FY 2007, which is perhaps evidence that treatment is reducing demand in Baltimore City.⁵⁵

Baltimore residents favor a public health approach to drug use over incarceration

Public opinion polls of Baltimore residents find that citizens want treatment over incarceration. A 2006 poll commissioned by the Open Society Institute-Baltimore found that likely voters favor mandatory treatment for drug users over prison by more than 4 to 1. Sixty-seven percent view drug treatment as being more effective than incarceration.⁵⁶ Now Baltimore needs treatment on demand, just like it has incarceration on demand.

“On some levels we have a very good substance abuse program but we don't have enough capacity to give treatment on demand. Ironically, the resources that are there are too directed toward locking people up and not enough at figuring out a way to keep them out.”

— Jean Lewis,

Mayor Sheila Dixon's Office of Criminal Justice

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE: Investing in Solutions

Money spent on incarceration is money that is not spent on other social institutions that have been shown to have greater public safety benefits than prison. Education and employment training, in particular, improve individual life outcomes, strengthen communities, and preserve public safety in the long term. Incarceration not only drains public coffers, it also drains neighborhoods of people who could be contributing to families, churches, neighborhoods, and other community structures.

BILL STRUEVER, *Struever Bros. Eccles & Rouse, Inc., a real estate development company headquartered in Baltimore, is dedicated to transforming neighborhoods through inclusive planning processes*

Applying business principles to creating safe and healthy communities

When everyone talks about scarce resources I talk about investing. It's really about investing in the future and in good schools instead of paying out in emergency room-type expensive health care, incarceration and public safety. If we get smart, we could turn this notion of scarce resources on its head. By investing in the future you're creating more resources so more people are paying taxes and fewer people are draining resources. The challenge and the opportunity are to work on policies and programs that create shared prosperity.

Let's create an inclusive planning process to energize a broad spectrum of the community focused on solutions. In the end we'll have healthier neighborhoods, more people will want to live and invest in the city, the tax base will increase and it'll be a happier place for all.

ANNA MCPHATTER,
Morgan State University, Professor of Social Work

Education is the most effective alternative to incarceration

Education is the key because an educated mind thinks about the world in different ways. I have a nephew who has been incarcerated for 10 years over his addiction (he received 20 years for stealing \$60 dollars). I talk with him every week. He talks all the time about the truly intelligent men who are incarcerated and how we should be helping children learn and believe that they can learn and see possibilities that are different from what they see every day. These young kids in school have so much energy and excitement and want to



learn and by the time they get to late middle school that's gone. We have to figure out what happens. Just look at the drop-out rate in Baltimore, which is between 40 percent and as high as 70 percent in some places. After-school programs are often the first to get cut when the budget is low. We know and

understand what works: when a child has nurturing caretakers, shelters and homes that they're safe and comfortable in, supportive schools, when they get sick and go to doctor to get taken care of, they thrive and grow into healthy citizens.

We grow in our lives because people think we are special. A lot of these young people don't have that. Where is the opportunity for us to re-direct this path? It's education but also it's about relationships with one caring adult. These programs that they have for kids are often filled with people who are either afraid of them or just don't care about them. We don't really understand the importance of relationships. Just think – people join gangs for relationships. Everyone has the same needs and desires. We must recognize this.

ELLARWEE GADSDEN,
Morgan State University, Professor of Social Work



Create an alternative space for our children, so that there is a place other than prison where they can heal

We should create opportunities for teens and young adults who are in difficult situations to get away from the world. Not as punishment, but as a place where they can go and

relax without being assaulted by TV, drugs, violence. Imagine growing up and spending every day of your life in poverty surrounded by violence and despair. How do you get away

from the things that are likely to take you down? Where do you go? In some communities if you don't have money, there is nowhere to get away to except prison. The amount of pain these kids are in will just blow your mind. We should create nurturing, healing space for our young people, just so they can breathe.

CARNELL COOPER, M.D., *Associate Professor of Surgery, University of Maryland School of Medicine; Attending, R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center; Chief, Trauma Services, Prince George's Hospital Center; and Founder of the Violence Intervention Program*

Incarceration is the easy way out; let's put research to work to develop solutions to violence in our communities



It takes less thinking to incarcerate individuals than to determine the root causes of why they are committing crimes. It is complex and time-consuming to research the risk factors for violence and the root causes of violence and then develop evidence-based programs targeting these root

causes. It's easier to categorize these individuals as "unreachable" and put them in jail. Occasionally we see people who really need to be in jail, but studies have proven over and over again that simply incarcerating people is not the solution.

Our intervention starts in the hospital setting since health care professionals are frequently the first, and sometimes the only, care givers to come in contact with violent offenders who present as victims of intentional violent injury. Surviving a near-death experience, victims of violence often feel they have been given a second chance at life. At that time, street-hardened individuals are receptive to an intervention to prevent future violent injury. The Violence Intervention Program (VIP) is built around this opportunity to impact the lives of victims and perpetrators by approaching them immediately in the hospital setting. The life-threatening event shows the victim the dangers of his or her lifestyle and opens an opportunity to intervene.

The VIP model bridges the community, criminal justice and medical systems. Our research demonstrates that many of the factors or problems that put individuals at risk of involvement in violent crime are amenable to change including: unemployment, current drug use, past or present drug dealing, annual income less than \$10,000, less than a high school education and significant criminal activity. The focus of the VIP is to impact these risk factors in an effort to turn around the lives of individuals. In our preliminary study

more than 80 percent of our victims of violence were on parole and or probation, therefore making the parole or probation agent an important part of the intervention. The VIP has a parole or probation agent assigned to the program who is housed in the Shock Trauma Center (STC). When a patient who is on parole or probation qualifies for the program, their case is transferred to our agent. The agent continues to provide supervision to offenders as outlined by the Division of Parole and Probation while working with the STC team.

There are other non-traditional settings in our society that have opportunities to work with these individuals. For example, all businesses downtown could dedicate one Saturday morning a month to talk to Department of Juvenile Services students and teach them about career opportunities. We need to ask ourselves, what do I have to offer and how I can contribute?

In Baltimore, the mayor, health commissioner, and the police commissioner, are amenable to new approaches in dealing with violence. Unfortunately, funding is limited and all of these programs take some money. Still, look what we've done in terms of heart disease, lung disease, and car crashes solely because we've changed the public's attitude through effective campaigns to exercise, stop smoking and wear a seatbelt to save a life. We need to take the same attitudes toward those issues instead of incarcerating people over and over and over again and expecting different results.

LUTHER GREEN, *entrepreneur*

Early interventions can prevent crime and a lifetime of imprisonment



I was 8 years old when I was introduced to the criminal lifestyle. After my mom was paralyzed in a car accident, our whole family broke up. I moved in with my aunt and she was into drugs, prostitution, drinking and gambling. My aunt had 12 kids of her own and we all lived in the projects, sleeping on the floor, wherever you could. I started running with my

older cousin, her son, and he was into breaking the law. He broke into cars, took out speakers. He was dragging me into a lifestyle of criminal activity. When I got to 12, I started doing things by myself, I didn't need him anymore.

It started with breaking into cars and stealing people's bikes. But then it escalated. When I was 14, I started robbing grocery stores. I was about 16 and I started getting locked up and put in juvenile camps. I would go for like six months. I was always in and out of the camp. Go in, get out for a few

months and go back. When I turned 17, I got caught for armed robbery and went to jail. I spent about a year, year and a half in there. But I never got any help about how to change my life. I was completely on my own.

Then came crack cocaine, and I decided to start selling drugs. And I made a lot of money. I lost count of how many times I could have been killed. In 1989 I got 60 years for an armed robbery charge. I went to prison at the age of 19. I just got out of prison 3 months ago. I am 41 now. I gave them 19 years and eight months. People say that they stole my youth, but I still feel like I'm 21.

I always tried to break free of the prison walls in my mind, to imagine a life I never knew. I never thought of the present, of me being locked up; it would have destroyed me. In prison there are so many people who feel like they just failed at life, who give up. In prison, they treat you like you're not really alive.

When I got out, within two weeks I had a job. I taught myself mostly everything I know. I am still on my own, always have been. I work two jobs and I am trying to start my own business selling hand-designed clothing. I can paint, I do design. I live responsibly. I am all I have at this point in time. I'm on parole, 12 years. Then I can move about. I just got another job as a chef and another job at an Italian restaurant. Things could have been different if someone had been there for me to help me or guide me.

PATRICIA JESSAMY, *State's Attorney*

We cannot arrest our way out of violence in our communities; instead we should address the community's collective trauma

Growing up in the Mississippi Delta, I wanted to be a civil rights attorney to serve my community. When I got my first job as a prosecutor, I loved it. We really are the public's defender.

We are slowly but surely having that light bulb go off in our heads within the criminal justice system about how to address all of those unmet needs. We are at the back end of a system that is not doing enough to address the needs of the people but we must do something, even though it's at the back end.

As the state's attorney, whose primary job is to oversee the prosecution of individuals who commit crime, how do you preside over a system in which people are doing life on the installment plan? I can't prevent crime but I can begin a process of talking about what it is we need to be doing as

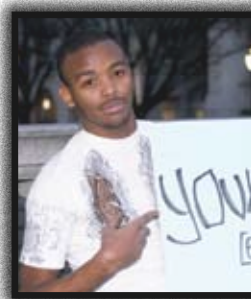
a society. We have to make sure our response, as a system, is what it should be. We need to build an infrastructure of providing services to those people who need it the most. We cannot arrest our way out of this.

I have a three-pronged approach to crime. Prevention, early intervention and traditional law enforcement. We should be doing more to address the needs of families and children. I believe in treatment for addicts. Prisons should be devoted to people who are the most violent offenders in our community.

The community's trauma has never been addressed. When you have sirens and gunfire in your neighborhood every single day, when you become de-sensitized to the value of human life then you become conditioned that violence is a way of life, when it should not be. I believe our community is suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). There is no treatment modality for the community. There is a treatment modality for the individual for PTSD but I don't know if science has developed one for community-wide suffering, in terms of what works for a group of people rather than an individual. Once the methodology is perfected, we should apply it to streets of Baltimore City.

ROBERT D., *16 year old, junior in high school, athlete, ROTC member, and Youth Ambassador (YA) of the Safe and Sound Campaign. The YA program is designed to provide young people with the necessary tools and encouragement to mobilize their peers and neighbors in support of more opportunities for Baltimore's children, youth and families.*

Investing in our children pays large dividends



One reason why I think kids start doing and dealing drugs is because they see the older people doing it and they see it as fast money, the fast life. You can go out there and see a 16 year old driving a Mercedes on 22 inch wheels and you know he doesn't work and he doesn't go to school. He is out there selling drugs, living the life. You think, "I want to

be like him." If we just had more after school programs to keep kids out of gangs and selling drugs we could direct kids in a more positive way. We need more programs like Algebra Project and the Youth Ambassadors. Where kids can express themselves in many ways instead of acting out. This would make the school system better.

A good way to counteract crimes is with sports and after school programs. I'll tell you, if I didn't play sports, I would be in a lot of trouble. Now, because of sports and my opportunities, I have become a political activist and leader. Fortunately,

I have never been in the system. There have been many occasions where I could have been involved. If you give the kid something they want to do, I guarantee they will have everybody in class, not in the hallways. But you have to give them something they like. Just take the time to actually sit down with us to find out what we like. Or keep the schools open late so kids could play sports or study and learn for free.

MIKHAIL HOLT,

18-year-old high school senior, Youth Ambassador

Together, young and old, can support each other in healing



I consider Baltimore my birthplace. When you really live here and see things for yourself, you see the good parts of Baltimore. You see parks being built and recreation centers being used by kids and adults. Baltimore is portrayed as something it's really not. It hurts because I live here, they're talking about my city, where I live, and the community I belong to.

The news is a blessing and a curse. When you see someone on the news explaining, "Three boys got shot yesterday," I sit there and wonder why. That's the curse part. The blessing part is when you see good stuff on the news. Like when you see us on the news, the Youth Ambassadors, and we're making a change, that's a good thing. That's the blessing part.

When you come here to the Youth Ambassadors it's almost as though you walk through the door, and everyone loves you. Not like love in the movies. It's a love that says, "You are welcome here, no one will hurt you here." That's what I consider a giant part of Baltimore.

I learned that standing outside your own front door isn't safe and it hurts me. Kevin was like my brother but six months ago he was shot in the head, it killed him. He was just 13 years old. I couldn't do anything. It's painful and it makes me mad at the world. I think hard about what I can do to possibly prevent some of this. I'm still here and will make sure that the whole community knows that Kevin lost his life for no reason at all.

We have a group of mothers, Joy for Healing, and they all lost their sons to violence. One of the mothers had two sons taken away from her. Another mother comes to us because we are now her children. We told her, "You are not alone, you have us." We wrapped her in our love and went on to the next mom. At first, she didn't like to be around kids because she lost both of her sons to violence committed by youth. At first

she wouldn't smile for no one. Now she smiles. You see this nice little light shines through her face when she sees us. It makes me feel good and takes bags off my shoulder because I know I helped her. We Youth Ambassadors all had a part in helping these mothers put their lives back together piece by piece. When we do that it makes us youth stronger and it makes the mothers stronger.

We're losing youth, we're losing adults, one-by-one, two-by-two and three-by-three. In order for that to change we have to make sure that we hold on to the ones we still have. I wish I could build a place where kids can escape and feel safe and comfortable. Where the door is always open.

GEORGE ANTHONY,

maintenance professional, Morgan State University

Develop programs that help people turn their lives around work—and the sooner people can access them, the better.



I didn't really start getting into terrible things until I got interested in heroin. At 16 I went to prison for shoplifting. Baltimore City put me in an adult prison for shoplifting. Prison makes you get aggressive because only the strong survives in there. You look for familiar

faces and many of them have been in there awhile. They give you a knife, or a shank to protect yourself. If someone comes to violate you, you stick them with the knife. If you prove yourself, no one will bother you thereafter. Not trained to use it in more positive way, you take the aggression back to your neighborhood. Aggression at home makes you want to be with the wrong people. You don't want to be with the wimps and the bookworms. You want to be with the tough-guys because of where you've been and what you've been through. It's sad that you have to rely on barbaric activities to make a statement.

I was always afraid of change because it takes work. If you change the way you think, you can change the way you feel. If you change the way you think and change the way you feel, you can change some other things about you. I go to work every day. I work at Morgan State University in the maintenance department. I have my uniform on. People can see a change. Meeting people through these programs helps. It's been fantastic. If all this had happened at 16, there would've been more positive people in my life than negative people. I just want to say to everyone, "Yes We Can!"

Everyone deserves the right to work with dignity

United Workers is a human rights organization led by the poor to end poverty. We started out of an abandoned firehouse turned homeless shelter and started having meetings there. The men there were all day laborers. Day labor is a common way that ex-offenders work; it's kind of an employer of last resort. A lot of the men wait on the street corner and others get work through temporary agencies. These agencies know that the people who walk through their door are pretty desperate and need money. Most of the agencies offer daily pay which means you get a pay check at the end of the day, which is a blessing and curse because you might need the money because you don't have anything to eat, but it's a really hard way to live especially if you're trying to save money to get into a place to live. Folks with criminal records sometimes fear speaking up because they have a record and need the job even though it's paying next to nothing and they have nowhere else to go.

In the state of Maryland there are dozens of laws that allow companies to just ignore people that apply for their jobs because they have criminal records. When people can get work, it is often at poverty wages in the low wage service sector and temp industry.

We're creating a movement in Baltimore of low-wage workers to lead and present a different vision of how the city

needs to be. Baltimore has a tax base that is shrinking and shrinking and shrinking and you have neighborhoods that are in incredible decline where half of the neighborhood is boarded up. We have neighborhoods that can't afford a grocery store, that can't afford retail, that can't afford to keep the lights on because people aren't making enough money. In our membership we have young, old, men, women, Latino immigrant workers, African American workers, white workers, and they're all at the table because they understand that all of our human rights are being violated. They're all working in horrible conditions. Our goal is the larger human rights movement and to develop leaders with capacity, competency, commitment, and spirit of cooperation to build a movement to really address these issues on a systematic level.

We're not asking for anything extra, workers aren't asking for two cars or a yacht and a mansion, they're asking to feed their families in a reasonable, dignified way.

There's fair development that respects people's human rights and there's unfair development that looks the other way. In the city of Baltimore there's a lot of development that does not take into account what kinds of jobs are being created, who these jobs are being created for and the fact that the city of Baltimore has just an incredible amount of people that are being underemployed, underused and undereducated.

Reinvesting in communities is a prevention strategy that benefits public safety in the long-term

The most effective ways to improve public safety are to provide front-end, opportunities and programs, like education and employment. Incarceration is one of the least effective ways to improve public safety, and may even make it worse. Moreover, reducing prison populations has been shown to have positive public safety benefits in Maryland. During a time when Maryland's prison population fell 5 percent, there was a 24 percent drop in the state's crime rate.⁵⁷ Despite the lack of evidence supporting the use of incarceration, Maryland continues to allocate more and more money to their Department of Public Safety & Correctional Services (DPSCS) with a \$1.20 billion budget in 2008.⁵⁸

Maryland spends more on police and prison than education

The current financial crisis is forcing some hard choices across the country, and many states are making budgetary cuts by reducing spending on essentials such as education and social services. Each dollar Maryland spends on incarceration is another dollar not spent on education, housing and economic development, despite evidence that investments in these services have important public safety benefits:

- The Alliance for Excellent Education reported in 2006 that a 5 percent increase in male high school graduation rates would produce an annual savings of almost \$5 billion in crime-related expenses. Coupled with annual earnings of those who graduated, the U.S. would receive \$7.7 billion in benefits.⁵⁹
- The Heritage Foundation found public safety benefits in increasing the civilian labor force. According to the report, a one percent increase in civilian labor force participation could be expected to decrease violent crime by 8.8 incidents per 100,000 people.⁶⁰
- States that spent more on housing experienced lower incarceration rates than states that spent less. Of the ten states that spent a larger proportion of their total expenditures on housing, all ten had incarceration rates lower than the national average. Of the ten states that spent a smaller proportion of their total expenditures on housing, five had incarceration rates above the national average and two had incarceration rates just below the national average.⁶¹

Incarcerating so many people lowers Maryland's tax base

Unlike investing in social institutions like education and job training which yield long-term benefits to society, funding police and prisons is likely to cost Maryland more money in the long run. Incarceration is not only costly to the state budgets and individuals in prison, but it is also quite costly to society. The estimated loss in tax revenue per person in prison would be around \$2,000 annually. If this value is multiplied by the total number of people imprisoned in 2007 for drug offenses alone, 4,610,⁶² the state of Maryland is losing close to \$9,220,000 in total tax revenue as a result of incarceration.

It is difficult for people who are in prison to contribute to their communities

In addition to the financial losses that occur due to incarceration, there is also a high cost associated with keeping people in prison who could be valuable contributors to their community. The interviews included in this report document some of the contributions that people are able to make to their neighborhoods that can help to enrich and embolden their communities. Sending people to prison not only fails to address underlying causes of crime, but also creates additional problems. Despite the huge financial investment in policing and incarceration, crime continues in Baltimore because we have not yet invested fully in solutions.

“The big mistake is that we try to keep youth away from things. You can only get passionate about going to something rather than going against something. Move people in directions they are passionate about, and they will have the courage and fortitude to put this life behind them.”

— Muslim Imam Darryl Wainwright,
Civilizations Exchange and Cooperation Foundation

Focus on Healing the Harm Caused by Violence

The people interviewed for this project indicate that their healing was hindered due to the adversarial nature of the criminal justice process. Restorative justice and community conferencing allow victims to address the harm they experienced on their terms, while also holding accountable the person or people that caused the harm. A restorative justice framework, which is currently in limited operation in Maryland, provides the opportunity for victims to ask questions, for the person who caused harm to provide answers, and for the community in-general to participate in the process.

GINGER BEALE

Victims' families need a space to confront their loss and an opportunity to heal



On December 18, 1967, my son was placed in my arms for the first time, just minutes after he took his first breath. He was so precious, his face so flawless, his skin so soft and I whispered, 'I love you, son' for the first time. He was the joy of my life from his first breath. My son was murdered almost two years ago, but

it still seems like yesterday. I have never been so hurt in my lifetime. I feel so alone, I miss my son so much. I will not let him die, not his name, his memories. I refuse. I'm working on forgiveness and having reconciliation and peace. During the process of my pain and suffering I have hope.

One day the State's Attorney asked me to come to court because one of my son's killers wanted to confess. This young man confessed to everything. He explained that they did not intend to kill my son, they didn't even know him. He looked me in the eye and cried like a baby. Before I left that courthouse I put my hand on my heart and said to his lawyer, "God bless him, you tell that young man that I'll be praying for him." I didn't get a chance to speak to him on that day because they wouldn't allow it. When I went home it was so heavy on my heart. When I finally got to speak to him I said, "Young man, I forgive you, I'm praying for you and I don't want anything bad to happen to you." Then his mother said to me, "I told my son to do the right thing and tell the truth and take his punishment. I wanted to say something to you before

but the lawyers told me not to." I thanked her and then she hugged me and it just broke my heart down. Now I'd like to talk with him, to help him if I can. He touched my heart.

I didn't know how I would get the hatred out of my heart, the bitterness. I prayed: "God you have to heal my heart."

Before that I had a lot of anger, wondering why they killed my child, for no reason at all. The State's Attorney told me my son was a hero and that he pushed people out of the way to protect them and that's when he got shot in the back. I remind myself that my son was a hero; he saved a lot of lives, and a lot of hurt.

I know the mothers of the men who killed my son are in pain and it's not their fault. I also know that my son is gone, at the hands of her son. When I was going through my trial I was mad at all of the families sitting on the defendant's side, because someone killed my child and they're all sitting over there, surrounding this murderer like they're defending him and they don't talk to me. So you think they're against you, too. In your mind they all become the enemy, the whole family. Now I don't mind reconciling with these parents.

Even in the beginning of the trial, they should offer to bring the families of the victims and the defendants together to talk. Don't let people go to trial hating each other, or thinking that this person hates you. Give the mothers or the families an opportunity to speak – in a neutral space. That needs to happen from the beginning. I would like for him to feel free to speak his mind and I would like him to explain to me every detail, how he felt, his motives. It's only been two years for me, and I can't even imagine when it will be over, it may never be over. God said you have to forgive your enemies. It's easy to forgive your friends but can you forgive your enemy?

BONNITA SPIKES

Fueled by the memory of her murdered husband, working for a more enlightened justice system



In 1994, my husband Michael was working and his habit was to stop at a convenience store to get a cool drink on his way home. Two young men robbed this particular bodega. Michael was at the counter to pay his bill. They got startled. They shot my husband and he died instantly.

I'm so ashamed of the US penal system. I have a son and daughter-in-law in law enforcement so I'm not going to say it's completely broken. But it's a disgrace, it's broken. I work for change because there but for the grace of God, go any of us. We need to get it fixed as soon as possible.

The police came to get me and I grabbed my 15-year-old son to come with me. We were driving to the hospital and I was confused. They took me down to the hospital basement and put me in front of a curtain. When I saw my husband on the stretcher, I fainted. I woke up with my 15-year-old crying and asking what are we going to do. The only comfort is they said he died instantly and didn't suffer any pain. They didn't catch the boys and still haven't. At the time, I had good support and a close church family. They put their hands on me and said we're going to get through this together. My sons are great fathers now. You know, you count your blessings and you keep going. I'm not the only one. I have a support system; some of the people have none. I feel grateful.

Now I always testify at the Maryland State Capitol against the death penalty. Every year the hearing falls within a couple of days of the anniversary of my husband's death. I know that's my husband's way of telling me I'm doing good work. My husband told me when we were young, he would never condemn someone to the death penalty. I can stand proud and say my husband is adamantly opposed to the death penalty, even though he was murdered. I have a son who is a police officer and he doesn't believe in death penalty. It's not for humans to say who lives or dies.

Policy needs to change. People in charge need to change. We need to put money in the education system so the children don't think wrong is right. Parent needs parenting classes to know how to parent. We need a universal fix. It's not something one group can fix. But policy drives everything. We can't get anywhere without new law or policy. If

you're mentally ill or on drugs you don't know what you're doing. You don't belong in prison. I need to see them clean and sober before deciding what you deserve.

PASTOR LEE*

Each family suffers a loss

My son was a successful college student, had a good career, started a business of his own, but the effects of a broken home still lingered – lingered in his mind, heart and affected his life. My son was accused of a crime and sentenced to two life terms without parole plus 80 years. The whole family became engrossed in the criminal justice system, a system we had never known before. The system forces you to learn fast. We felt helpless most of the time. Even though we're intelligent, educated people, it was degrading and made us feel inferior. There was no one there to help us step through it.

We were found guilty as a family long before my son was found guilty by the court. It was like going to hell and back. We were just lost, as to what to do and how to do it. We didn't know which questions to ask, what steps to take.

We didn't ask anyone to hold our hand, we didn't ask anyone to give us money. We just needed someone to walk us through the process, someone to explain what was going to happen to our family, to our son.

Once a loved one is in prison, then you start a whole different form of abuse. You go on visits, and you too are made to feel like you broke the law. The criminal justice system seems to be angry with the families when the families didn't commit the crime. At the same time, it's easy to blame the system for our loved one's incarceration when it started with the failures in our home. Still I wish the criminal justice system gave families a little consideration.

The victims need to have justice. My son is incarcerated for life so justice was somewhat served for them but they can't get their family member back. If there's an alleged wrong, then there should be a punishment for the wrong. My son is serving time for an alleged wrong. That is society's form of justice. The victim wanted the death penalty but the judge took into consideration that my son was worthy of being allowed to live. He's a worthwhile person; he is blessed and has blessed many. Society can never know the change in a person's heart. Society has no way to measure it. They just continue to go with what they see on T.V. Society won't benefit until society can get into the prison and they can get to know the men and women who are incarcerated and what they've now accomplished. The person they are today.

If they're really about rehabilitation, then it has to be holistic. Otherwise, someone is going to win partially and someone's going to lose. Most of the time everyone loses. The family of the victim loses because the person that allegedly did the crime, they're isolated or forbidden to make any contact with the victim's family so the family never knows that person is sorry and has tremendous remorse. Until there is a holistic approach we're going to continue to have that animosity, continue to have that hurt, continue to have that unfounded continuous anger. Let's try another way, let's not be so angry and let's not try to play God. Let's try a holistic approach that starts at the beginning and see if that will work.

LAUREN ABRAMSON, *Community Conferencing*

Transforming conflict into cooperation

Safe communities are communities where people feel connected to each other. All our work is based on giving people a way to talk to each other. Baltimore is showing the world that, in a place often considered the 2nd most violent city in the United States, if 7,000 people can come up with agreements and resolve conflict safely, there's a message here: we as human beings are still able to resolve conflict and do things for ourselves in a safe

way if we give people a chance to do it.



People often leave court feeling angrier than when they went in. Somebody's got to win, somebody's got to lose. Community Conferencing is about giving everyone an opportunity to transform conflict into feelings that

generate cooperation. We use the process as an alternative to court, we use it in schools instead of arrests and suspensions. We use it in neighborhoods to resolve ongoing and intractable conflicts. We use it in re-entry from prison. People who've been in prison have often burnt bridges so we focus on rebuilding support networks. We use serious crimes conferencing for murder cases. Often 10, 20, 30 years after an incident,

victims never had a chance to ask questions of the person who killed their loved one. When I'm in prisons doing the serious crimes conferencing, corrections officers are in the room. Every single time, after these meetings a corrections officer comes to me and says "Just seeing this helps me do my job because I forget that there's a human side to the people who are locked up in here."

We're including people who've been harmed in deciding for themselves what they want to happen to make it right. We're holding those who've caused harm accountable for what they've done. It's all for about 1/10 the price. In 98 percent of CC sessions, people come up with their own agreements and it's only done once. When people decide things for themselves, you get better results with less force.

For example, a kid stole a car on his way to school because somebody had turned it on, warmed it up and went back in the house. That kid had no clue how he affected people. He was probably thinking, 'I shouldn't do it but it's cold outside and I want to get to school.' Then he picked up two of his friends. The guy whose car was stolen wanted monetary restitution at the beginning. At the end of it, the kids were apologetic and they got in a lot of trouble with their families. They apologized and the car owner said 'I don't need the money,' at which point the kid who stole the car said I want to give you \$100 because I stole your car. The other friend said, I didn't steal it but my friend let me drive it so I want to pay you \$50. And the 3rd friend said, I didn't drive but I sat in the back seat, and I want to give you \$25.

We're trying to get our institutions and citizens to ask different questions. Instead of asking who did it and how can we punish them, ask who has been affected and how can we repair the harm. It shifts from being about blame and punishment to being about healing and learning. Stop just being interested in who did what and how can we punish them, and instead ask who has been affected and how the harm can be repaired. You ask different questions, you get very different outcomes. We should be obligated to provide those that caused harm with the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Punishing tells people what not to do but tells them nothing about what to do. It's a different experience when those who've caused harm must sit face to face with those who've been affected and listen to how their life changed as a result of those actions. I need a chance to learn how what I do affects other people because if I know that, chances are I'm not going to do it again.

Restorative justice has been shown to better meet the needs of communities than criminal justice processes

When a conflict arises between people and a law has been violated, we turn to the criminal justice system. In criminal court proceedings, a “victim” and a “perpetrator” present their cases. The judge or jury decides innocence or guilt and a sentence is determined to provide punishment and retribution. However, the adversarial structure of the criminal justice system does not necessarily provide justice for the victims or allow the person who has created the harm to be held accountable.

Exacerbating the damage caused by an offense in the community is the proximity of the people involved. In Baltimore City, the family of the murder victim frequently lives in the same community as the perpetrator’s family. Both families suffer from the tragedy of violence. The criminal justice system itself, which separates defendants from victims, seems to breed additional hard feelings and conflict for some people. Few people walk out of court feeling vindicated and even fewer experience closure or healing.

While the criminal justice system defines crime in terms of the law, restorative justice views a crime as both the result and the cause of damaged relationships. The violation of relationships creates obligations, particularly on the part of the person who committed the crime, but also for communities. In order to address crime and “make things right,” the victim, the offender, and the community must be involved in the process.⁶³

Restorative justice and community conferencing empowers people, particularly victims, to resolve the issue themselves and make their own decisions about desired outcomes. The process is inclusive and provides an opportunity for everyone impacted to participate, including, and especially, victims.

Restorative justice preserves public safety

Some evidence suggests that restorative justice reduces the chances that an individual will commit another offense, thus preserving public safety overall.⁶⁴ The research includes:

- In a large multi-site study of victim-offender mediation programs with youth, researchers found that youth who participated in victim-offender mediation were less likely to recidivate than youth with similar offense histories who did not participate (18 percent versus 27 percent, respectively).⁶⁵
- A study using official juvenile court data found that boys who participated in a restorative justice program had a lower probability of committing another offense than boys that did not, 29.7 percent versus 34.2 percent, respectively. Girls in restorative justice programs had even lower levels of recidi-

vism, 19.5 percent for those in a program compared to 29.2 percent.⁶⁶

- In the same study of juvenile court data, program participants with zero or one prior offense also had lower recidivism rate than juveniles in the comparison group.⁶⁷

Restorative justice programs have been found to be most effective in cases involving youth, females, and those who have committed few offenses in the past. However, with no evidence to suggest any negative effects of restorative justice for other groups, the principles should be considered in many other cases.

Restorative justice can help make people whole again

Unlike the criminal justice process, which can sometimes cause victims to be left with questions and to have little sense of closure, the restorative justice process allows victims and the person who committed the offense to communicate about the harm that was caused. In fact, victims who met with the person who committed the offense in the presence of a trained mediator were more likely to be satisfied (79 percent) with the justice system than similar victims who went through the normal court process (57 percent).⁶⁸

Research has shown that victims that participate in restorative justice are less fearful and experience a greater sense of well-being. After meeting the person who committed the offense, victims were significantly less fearful of experiencing crime again.⁶⁹ Another study found that restorative conferences reduce the psychologically traumatic effects of crime. Participants in the study experienced anxiety, irritability, and persistent intrusive thoughts about crime. The group that participated in restorative justice programs had significantly less symptoms compared to those who participated in the conventional criminal justice process.⁷⁰

Restorative justice is comparatively inexpensive

Restorative justice efforts are less costly than incarceration or even community supervision, but may yield a higher level of accountability and a greater sense of community healing. Community conferencing, for example, is one-tenth the cost of current criminal justice practices. A full-time facilitator salary is around \$60,000 and they each handle approximately 200 referrals a year. A typical community conference costs between \$800 and \$1,200.⁷¹ Comparatively, in Maryland, incarceration costs approximately \$33,310 per person per year⁷² and supervision, like parole or probation, costs approximately \$1,422 per person per year.⁷³

RECOMMENDATIONS

The people who participated in this project drew from their experiences and expertise as citizens of Baltimore to provide specific alternatives to relying on incarceration as a means of solving social problems.

Recommendations for addressing the needs of women and families:

Strengthen families

- Develop wrap-around services that are individually designed to meet the needs of children or families in crisis, instead of punitive responses.
- Consider the needs of children in determining the sentence of parents, particularly women, with children under 18 years old.
- Help incarcerated parents, particularly mothers, maintain bonds with their infants and children.
- Strengthen mother-child bonds by expanding family visiting hours to Maryland Correctional Institution – Women (MCIW) and ‘parenting from inside’ options.
- Provide free or low-cost weekly transportation to children for visits to MCIW
- Establish a family-centered Ombudsperson within the Maryland Division of Corrections to serve as a liaison between families and their incarcerated loved ones.
- Each time a woman is arrested, police should determine whether she has unattended minor children and identify an adult who can help.

Trauma and mental health

- Expand individual, family and child-centered counseling.
- Provide specific trauma-based interventions for youth and families.
- Develop an initiative dedicated to youth with an incarcerated parent or parents.

Enforcement strategies

- Provide interventions and supports for women charged with prostitution, vagrancy and sex work, instead of criminal sanctions.
- Re-assess Maryland’s approach to enforcing drug laws against women with low-level offenses, who often lack information to offer in a plea bargain.
- Take into consideration mitigating factors such as abuse and domestic violence when sentencing women who have committed acts of violence against an abuser.

Recommendations for closing the revolving door:

Division of parole and probation

- Clarify the mission of the parole officer, which is to help people succeed in the community and not re-offend.
- Reduce the caseload of agents so that they have time to provide individualized case management to clients.
- Reduce the number of technical violations.
- Develop alternative sanctions for technical violations.
- When drug tests return positive, refer clients to treatment or counseling rather than incarceration.
- Expand community-based parole and probation systems.
- Create grievance procedure for clients to anonymously report unfair conduct of parole agents.
- Reduce and/or eliminate parole and probation-related fees, depending on financial need of clients.

Create new incentives for parole and probation officers

- Define success as a reduction in recidivism rates for their clients
- Provide bonuses/perks based on the number of jobs clients obtain and maintain
- Remove fear among parole agents of losing their job for the failure to violate a client, as this leads to irrational revocations of parole
- Create a peer-review system in which successfully re-integrated formerly incarcerated individuals assess the support needs of people being released from incarceration.
- Start re-entry services and programs pre-release and provide ongoing supports to assist people as they work to establish themselves.

Recommendations for achieving a public health approach to drug addiction:

Treatment on demand

- Anyone who wants addiction treatment gets quality treatment, without financial barriers.
- Increase the capacity of residential treatment options
- Improve the coordination of government agencies and service providers to ensure that people get treatment when they need it
- Offer comprehensive array of treatment modalities

Family treatment options

- Expand treatment options that allow parents and children to live together during the recovery process

Community-based treatment options

- Increase community-based treatment options that are available to people upon request
- Make community-based treatment available without referral from law enforcement or courts.
- Provide treatment and opportunities for gaining life and job skills immediately after someone first comes into contact with law enforcement, rather than after several incidents

Help people reach the root of the problems driving the addiction

- Provide options for intensive mental health services that include teaching self-analysis skills to help people understand their feelings

Youth outreach

- Employ people who have transformed their lives to share the dangers of drug use and speak with youth about choices and possibilities
- Create forums for youth to engage in peer counseling and support groups
- Develop positive, constructive programs that lead youth toward opportunities

Recommendations for expanding opportunities and investing in solutions:**Start a campaign for change**

- Increase public understanding of the impact of the criminal justice system on the community
- Involve “unlikely” allies such as artists, educators, law enforcement
- Build morale of communities that are directly affected by the criminal justice system and harness power and vision toward solutions

Build community

- Develop a community-wide treatment for healing from trauma
- Create an inclusive planning process for how to strengthen and revitalize Baltimore’s neighborhoods
- Mobilize community to form a support network for people returning to society after incarceration by neighborhood, get to know your neighbors

Education and re-entry

- Expand opportunities for continued learning, GED programs, job training and workforce skills development
- Expand re-entry services inside the prisons through comprehensive pre-release planning
- Expand programs, services and supportive housing options for people returning to society after incarceration

Good jobs

- Remove professional licensure barriers for people with a criminal record
- Push for Green Jobs and Green Collar training programs and make them available to everyone, including people with criminal records
- Expand public-private partnerships for employers and companies willing to support Baltimore’s residents

Youth

- Expand opportunities for youth to include creative and artistic programs, sports, tutoring, mentoring, after-school programs, peer mediation and counseling
- Coordinate with schools to provide youth who are at-risk of becoming involved with the criminal or juvenile justice systems with interventions, supports and anger management programs
- Develop programs designed by youth for youth
- Create youth retreats

Recommendations for increasing the use of restorative justice in Maryland:

- Systematically expand education about and use of restorative justice and community conferencing
- Promote restorative justice as an effective option not just for criminal justice cases, but also for families and communities in conflict
- Build local capacity throughout state by training more people in techniques and building viable community-based programs that support their use
- Encourage more institutions to utilize restorative justice and/or community conferencing, by emphasizing the “quadruple bottom line” that they will achieve:
 - > Includes victims in the justice process
 - > Holds offenders accountable
 - > Increases community stability
 - > Is cost effective

About this Project

Before this report had a name, we called it the Community Documentation Project: while there have been other reports on the criminal justice system's problems, none had given voice to the people most affected by the system. Their input and participation is vital to creating safe and healthy communities throughout Baltimore. This unique process brought together various stakeholders including youth, families, formerly incarcerated people, law enforcement, and business and religious leaders. Beginning with a series of discussions with several advocacy groups in Baltimore about their work, policy and service priorities, the project developed an interview protocol that reflected the priorities and concerns of local criminal justice stakeholders. Individual accounts of experiences with the criminal justice system, violence, crime, drug addiction and the "War on Drugs" were gathered through one-on-one interviews. The interviews were conducted between July 2008 and February 2009. We solicited feedback on our findings and recommendations through a series of community-based focus groups. This project has been an intense collaboration among many organizations and individuals throughout Baltimore who generously donated their insight, time and resources, without whom the report would not have been possible.

Material for this report was gathered using the methodology of oral history, in which living people describe their experiences in their own words. They are first-hand accounts filled with strength, wisdom, resilience and redemption. Each person chose to courageously share part of their life because of their desire for a better future. There is an important lesson within each of these life stories. The enduring strength of Baltimore's communities, the strong will to change and the human experiences behind the statistics provide both the vision and energy that must be harnessed as the city forges ahead to address the current failures of the criminal justice system. The collective voices within these pages provide reason for hope for a concrete plan of action guiding the way forward toward a fair and effective criminal justice system and safe and healthy communities.

Contributing Organizations

Alternative Directions

Alternative Directions, Inc is a nonprofit organization that helps people who are in prison or who are leaving prison through civil legal pro-se services, comprehensive case management, and public education about the barriers people face when re-entering society. It was established in 1979 and is based in Baltimore.

Asbury United Methodist Church

Asbury United Methodist Church is a 142-year-old historically African American congregation that seeks to be a Haven of Hope to those desiring to begin life again. Asbury United exists to connect to God and others, ignite the Holy Spirit and spark others to be on fire for Jesus Christ.

Baltimore City Police Department

The mission of the Baltimore Police Department, in partnership with the Baltimore community, is to protect and preserve life and protect property, to understand and serve the needs of the city's neighborhoods, and to improve the quality of life by building capacities to maintain order, recognize and resolve problems, and apprehend criminals in a manner consistent with the law and reflective of shared community values.

Baltimore's Safe and Sound Campaign

The Safe and Sound Campaign is a citywide effort to ensure children grow up safe and healthy in Baltimore City. The Campaign began in 1996 when Baltimore was selected as one of five cities to participate in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's 10-year Urban Health Initiative. Save and Sound has been responsible for developing several data-driven strategies which are still in place today, including Success by Six Partnership ©, Afterschool Strategy, Reading by Nine, Violence Reduction and Community Safety and Community Engagement.

The Community Conferencing Center

The Community Conferencing Center (CCC) is a community-based justice and conflict transformation organization, providing people and organizations with ways to collectively resolve their own conflicts and crimes. The CCC provides conflict transformation and dialogue circles without barrier to cost. Training and technical assistance services are also available for organizations and jurisdictions interested in building their own community conferencing program.

Drug Policy Alliance

The Drug Policy Alliance Network (DPA Network) is the nation's leading organization promoting policy alternatives to the drug war that are grounded in science, compassion, health and human rights. Our supporters are individuals who believe the war on drugs is doing more harm than good. DPA works to ensure that our nation's drug policies no longer arrest, incarcerate, disenfranchise and otherwise harm millions of non-violent people. DPA's work inevitably requires us to address the disproportionate impact of the drug war on people of color.

Families Against Injustice

Families Against Injustice is dedicated to strengthening families and keeping them involved with their loved one, allowing successful re-entry into the community. They bring families and incarcerated individuals together through education, awareness and involvement.

Freedom Advocates Celebrating Ex-Offenders

F.A.C.E (Freedom Advocates Celebrating Ex-Offenders) is a group of people who have come together to support one another and reach out to others who have experienced conditions of substance abuse and/or incarceration. F.A.C.E. is a spiritually guided non-profit Christian organization that believes in the God-given dignity and status of every human being, and seeks to be a resource and support for ex-offenders.

Jericho, ECSM

Jericho is a one-year job readiness and retention program where people returning to society after incarceration are supported in the search for employment and a better life.

Justice Maryland

Justice Maryland is a statewide criminal justice advocacy organization. Working to eliminate the parts of Maryland's criminal justice system that perpetuate the cycle of racial injustice and poverty through a five-pronged approach that includes research, communications, public education, organizing and advocacy.

Justice Policy Institute

The mission of the Justice Policy Institute is to promote effective solutions to social problems and to be dedicated to ending society's reliance on incarceration. Since 1997, the Justice Policy Institute has used research, policy analysis, and strategic communications to enhance the public dialog on incarceration. Lawmakers, media, advocates, systems reformers, and the general public rely on JPI's timely analyses. Over the last decade, JPI has published more than four dozen policy reports exploring the negative impact that incarceration has on government budgets, communities, and individuals.

Legal Aid of Baltimore

The Legal Aid Bureau has been providing free civil legal services in Maryland for low-income people, children and the elderly since 1911. The Legal Aid Bureau, Inc. is a private, non-profit, multi-funded law firm providing free legal services to low-income people statewide. Legal Aid serves Baltimore City and Maryland's 23 counties from 13 office locations. Legal Aid is an independent, 501(c)3 charitable organization that receives funding from federal, state and local governments, the United Way and other private sources.

Marion House

A transitional and supportive housing program, Marian House is located in the Better Waverly neighborhood of Baltimore City. Founded in 1982 as a joint project of the Sisters of Mercy and the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Marian House was initially established in response to the circumstances of women at the Baltimore City Women's Detention Center; now they help women and their families who are in need of housing and support services.

Maryland Citizens Against State Executions

Maryland Citizens Against State Executions is a coalition of groups and individuals united to end the death penalty in Maryland through education, grassroots action, and public demonstration.

The Maryland Justice Policy Institute

The Maryland Justice Policy Institute (MJPI) has a three-fold mission: 1) To study public policies and practices and proposed alternatives with respect to all aspects of crime and violence, crime prevention, criminal law, corrections, victim restoration, dispute resolution and other related subjects, especially as implemented in Maryland; 2) To educate and inform the public with respect to these policies, practices and alternatives; and 3) To support research, evaluation and demonstration projects, especially for crime and violence prevention, victim restoration and dispute resolution that could serve as alternatives to the criminal law and correction systems.

The Maryland Restorative Justice Initiative

The Maryland Restorative Justice Initiative's mission is to advocate and promote humane and sensible criminal justice and sentencing policies for those incarcerated long term in Maryland prisons. They believe that through actions of restoration, redemption and reconciliation, we can create long-term systemic change.

Mayor Sheila Dixon's Office of Criminal Justice

Mayor Sheila Dixon established the Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice (MOCJ) to provide the citizens of Baltimore City a safer, healthier and stronger community. The office's goal is to improve public safety for Baltimore City residents and increase opportunities for those who have been in contact with the criminal justice system.

Mothers-in-Charge Baltimore/Joy for Healing

Mothers-in-Charge Baltimore are women – mothers, wives, sisters, grandmothers, aunts, godmothers – who have suffered the unbearable loss of a loved one(s) to violence and are committed to saving lives and stopping the violence in Baltimore City. Mothers in Charge Baltimore provides violence prevention support, advocacy and education to ensure the safety and well-being of Baltimore's children, youth and families.

National Women's Prison Project

The National Women's Prison Project's (NWPP) mission is to embrace women returning home with a continuum of holistic services to meet their needs and ensure their continued freedom. NWPP is a female reentry agency that also advocates for women who have ever encountered the criminal justice system, and for their children and families.

Open Society Institute - Baltimore

Founded by philanthropist George Soros, OSI-Baltimore is a private operating foundation that supports a grantmaking, educational, and capacity-building program to expand justice and opportunity for Baltimore residents. With support from a range of investors, its current work focuses on helping Baltimore's youth succeed, reducing the social and economic costs of incarceration, tackling drug addiction, and building a corps of community fellows to bring innovative ideas to Baltimore's underserved communities.

Out for Justice

Out For Justice organizes former prisoners, families of prisoners, and supporters of criminal justice reform to change unjust and counter-productive policies affecting incarcerated individuals and their families.

Power Inside

Power Inside is a grassroots community-based organization in Baltimore that serves and advocates for women impacted by incarceration, street life and abuse.

Prisoners Aid Association of Maryland

Prisoners Aid Association of Maryland, Inc. is an affiliate of the United Way of Central Maryland. It was founded in 1869 for the sole purpose of assisting inmates, ex-offenders, and the homeless. Their goal is to provide a holistic approach by providing food, shelter, employment, training, and other social services.

Project SERVE, Living Classrooms

Project SERVE, now in its ninth year, is a Living Classrooms Foundation initiative working with communities in East Baltimore. The project's mission is to positively impact distressed communities with direct services and to stimulate the involvement of residents in addressing community needs. Their goals are to provide workforce development and community service opportunities for the community's disadvantaged adults and to improve the quality of life for residents by revitalizing parks, buildings and neighborhoods.

Safe Streets/East

Safe Streets mission is to stop and reduce homicides and shooting in the area of their operations.

State's Attorney Patricia Jessamy

Patricia Coats Jessamy is the Maryland State's Attorney and has held the office since February 1995. She is a graduate of the University of Mississippi School of Law. She serves on a variety of councils and task forces related to public safety in the state of Maryland.

Struever Bros. Eccles & Rouse, Inc.

Struever Bros. Eccles & Rouse, Inc. (SBER) is dedicated to transforming Baltimore and America's cities, neighborhood by neighborhood. SBER's dedication to its neighborhoods means that none of our development efforts are stand alone projects. Rather, SBR is committed to the long haul, investing in our neighborhoods and working with community partners to build sustainable urban communities. In its years of experience, SBER has come to understand that a broadly inclusive community planning process that draws together all key stakeholders in a constructive dialogue is essential to success.

United Workers Association

The United Workers is a human rights organization led by low-wage workers and focused on leadership development through education, reflection and action. United Workers was founded by homeless day laborers in an abandoned firehouse-turned-shelter and has grown to a multi-racial and bilingual membership base of over 1,000 low-wage workers.

Violence Prevention Program

The mission of the Violence Prevention Program (VPP) is to prevent violent personal injury among Baltimore City's most at-risk populations through research into the root causes of violence and to develop evidence-based programs targeting the root causes of violence. The VPP draws upon the resources and talent of the School of Medicine Departments of Surgery and Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, and attends to the patient population and services offered by the STC. VPP seeks to serve as a national model in bridging the community, criminal justice and medical systems and in the development and dissemination of proven, effective interventions. The VPP includes three direct service projects including the Violence Intervention Project, Promoting Healthy Alternatives for Teens (PHAT) Project, My Future My Career, an after-school program, as well as donor specific research projects.

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