

# Hopkins Volunteers Make School Rejuvenation a Success

While the start of the 2010–2011 school year was still a distant thought in most students' minds, volunteers from Johns Hopkins various entities joined together to help prepare schools for the return of students at the end of August.

The Johns Hopkins Office of Community Services, part of Government and Community Affairs, hosted four separate school rejuvenation projects at elementary schools in East Baltimore including Tench Tilghman Elementary/Middle, Wolfe Street Academy, East Baltimore Community School and Dr. Raynor Browne Academy.

Through the efforts of over 40 Hopkins volunteers and many community members, the groups were able to paint 11 classrooms, two cafeterias, and one office, as well as code and set-up a new library for the East Baltimore Community School and organize two supply closets for ease of use in the new school year. Additionally, volunteers cleaned, repaired and prepared countless chairs, desks and bookcases for the new school year.



The outpouring of gratitude from schools was immeasurable. The Office of Community Services received emails, handwritten letters from students and small trinkets in thanks for valuable volunteer efforts at each school.

“The strength of the school community relies on the people who make up the school community,” said Mark Gaither, principal of Wolfe Street Academy. “The rejuvenation projects are a chance to strengthen those relationships and create new ones.”

Many volunteers from Johns Hopkins University were able to take advantage of the new Johns Hopkins Takes Time for Schools initiative. Launched in March by Johns Hopkins University President Ron Daniels and Baltimore City Public Schools CEO Andrés Alonso, the program is a service partnership between the university and city schools. Full-time university employees are allowed to use up to two work days of paid outreach time per year for their participation in events in Baltimore City Schools.

Jodi Duffie, Community Outreach Coordinator for Tench Tilghman Elementary/Middle sees the school rejuvenation program as a launching board for further involvement with Johns Hopkins Takes Times for Schools. “Now that I have shared an experience with the partnership, I am motivated to add more volunteer oppor-

tunities. It is my hope that as the year moves along, more employees will venture out and the partnership will grow in ways that we never imagined!”

For more information on this and other upcoming volunteer opportunities please contact Pamela Bechtel at pbechte1@jhmi.edu or 410-614-0744.

## UHI Announces Henrietta Lacks Award for Community-University Collaboration

The Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute, part of the Bloomberg School of Public Health, recently announced a new annual award to honor outstanding collaboration between community-university partners working together to improve the health and well-being of residents in the city of Baltimore. *The Henrietta Lacks Award for Community-University Collaboration*, named in recognition of Henrietta Lacks, highlights the importance of community-university collaborations, recognizes the accomplishments which can be achieved by such partnerships, and continues to support the efforts of the partnership.

The inaugural award of \$15,000 will be awarded to the community entity that is the central partner in that relationship. Specific eligibility requirements will be released later in 2010. Collaborators will be able to self-nominate or be nominated by others. Nominations will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of leadership from community and city organizations and Johns Hopkins.

Henrietta Lacks was an East Baltimore resident and cervical cancer patient in the early 1950s at Johns Hopkins Hospital, where cells taken from her tumor became the first “immortal” human cells grown in culture and led to breakthroughs in cell research related to cancer, AIDS, the effects of radiation and more. Mrs. Lacks’ family was unaware that her cells, now known worldwide as ‘HeLa’ cells, had been used for research until more than twenty years after her death. *The Henrietta Lacks Award for Community-University Collaboration* honors Mrs. Lacks and her family and is intended to be an enduring reminder of her contribution to medical science and to her community.

More information about the Award will be available on the Urban Health Institute website [www.jhsph.edu/urbanhealth](http://www.jhsph.edu/urbanhealth).



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# Community Ties



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FALL 2010

## EBDI Family Fun Day

On Saturday, August 21st, 2010, East Baltimore Development, Inc. (EBDI) hosted its informative and fun annual Family Fun Day. Over 400 attendees celebrated the end of summer break with refreshments, entertainment, games, arts and craft projects, and health screenings. EBDI also distributed over 150 donated backpacks and school supplies to children in the EBDI footprint and former residents who have relocated.

“This being the 7th year that EBDI has hosted its annual Family Fun Day event, we had an excellent turn-out with local residents and relocated residents returning for the festivities,” said Cristi Gaither of EBDI. “Aramark, one of our major contributors, was a huge success hosting the healthy cooking station, and the donation of fully stocked book bags from Johns Hopkins, allowed us to send a number of our students back to school prepared for an exciting new school year.”

Many Baltimore families live paycheck to paycheck, and the annual Family Fun Day event helps to ease the financial burden that can be created during back-to-school season. According to the National Retail Federation, in 2009 parents spent an average of \$204.67 on clothing, \$93.59 on shoes and \$82.62 on school supplies for just one child.



Other East Baltimore based groups hosting similar back-to-school events sponsored in part by the Johns Hopkins Office of Community Services include

HEBCAC, and the Monument, McElderry and Fayette Revitalization Board.



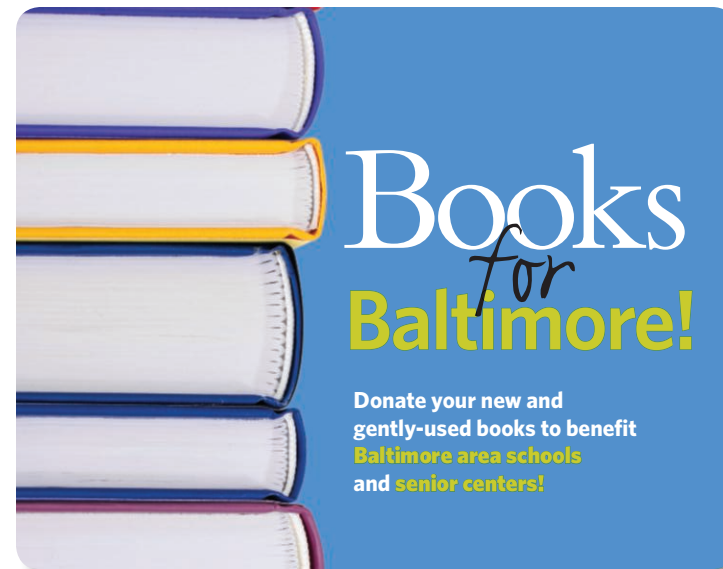
## Johns Hopkins Nurses Fundraise and Participate in Habitat for Humanity's Carter Work Week

When Habitat for Humanity of the Chesapeake reached out to potential volunteers to help fully rehab homes in the community directly east of the Johns Hopkins Medical Campus, a group of Neuroscience Critical Care Unit (NCCU) nurses heard the call and leapt into action.

The group of 15 nurses raised over \$8,200 to participate alongside former President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn in the 2010 Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project. The project worked to complete gut-rehabs of properties in the transitional Monument-McElderry-Fayette community to act as stabilizers, and increased the success of renewal efforts in collaboration with the community.

“This is a significant investment in the revitalization efforts of our community,” commented Ernest K. Smith, President of the McElderry Park Community Association and Co-Chairman of the Revitalization Plan. “And to have President and Mrs. Carter come to visit and work with us helps to put a spotlight on the efforts being undertaken to transform the McElderry Park Community.”

## Books for Baltimore! Stacks Up Success



Throughout the month of September, enthusiasm across the Johns Hopkins campuses and satellite sites stacked up for the *Books for Baltimore!* book drive. The Johns Hopkins Office of Community Services, a part of Government and Community Affairs, collected over 2,300 new and gently-used books to donate to Baltimore-area schools and senior centers.

Susan Woodman, Patient & Staff Library Coordinator at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, was the first person to volunteer a location to host a collection bin. "Reading is a gift to be shared," Woodman stated. Within days, the blue collection bins were overflowing with book donations and support for the program. Books flooded in to drop-off locations at 550 North Broadway, Mt. Washington Davis Building, O'Conner Recreational Center on the Homewood campus, Bond Street Wharf and the Peabody Friedheim Music Library.

Dr. Larry Cheskin personally donated over 30 books to the drive. "Once I've read a book, it will just sit in my house taking up space. When I heard there was a way to put these books to such good use, helping Baltimore, my years of hoarding apparently useless items was rewarded. I feel good about this small contribution to the community," Cheskin said.

According to the Maryland Superintendent's Panel on Excellence in Adult Education, Maryland as a whole "has more than 20 % of working age residents functioning with limited literacy or English proficiency skills that prevent their entry into post secondary education and training. Low literacy levels and lack of

a high school diploma are highly correlated with unemployment, living in poverty, incarceration, and children's lack of academic performance." By introducing old favorites and new titles to Baltimore's population, the *Books for Baltimore!* book drive, and similar initiatives, strive to break the cycle of struggling educational performance transferring from generation to generation by encouraging recreational reading

and advancing literacy.

When Shawtair Thompson, Supportive Services Coordinator for the Moravia Park Drive Senior Center learned that her residents would receive a bounty of books that they desperately wanted, she was elated.

"I think the donation gave a lot of residents who used to read and used to love books the opportunity to love them again, especially when they saw their favorite author or a classic they remember from long ago, like *Canterbury Tales*," said Thompson. "We were not only surprised and appreciative of the number of books that were donated but also the range in types of books donated, from African American literature to self-help books, our library really has a bit of everything thanks to Johns Hopkins' thoughtful donation."

In addition to the Moravia Park Drive Senior Center, donations were also made to Ashland Terrence Senior Center, Oliver Senior Center, John Booth Senior Center, Esperanza Center, Bluford Drew Jemison S.T.E.M. Academy, Paul Laurence Dunbar High School and Tench Tilghman Elementary and Middle School.

Donated books ranged from textbooks to children's books of all levels to current best sellers and classic tales. "The *Books for Baltimore!* drive was a wonderful success because of our many patrons who care to make a difference," Woodman explained.

If stacked on top of one another, the collected books would reach to the top of the Johns Hopkins Dome and beyond, twice.

### *Habitat ... continued from page 1*

Elizabeth Esposito, who led the charge of NCCU nurses, has been involved with Habitat for Humanity since her high school days in Tennessee and has continued to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity of the Chesapeake since moving to Maryland.

Said Esposito, "When I saw the information about the Jimmy Carter project I thought it was such a great honor that Baltimore was picked as one of four places in the country to host this event. What made it even more exciting was that the project helped fund 10 houses in the Monument-McElderry-Fayette community which is so close to the hospital."

Each team of participants was responsible to raise \$5,000 for each group of 10 volunteers. After an initial donation of \$2,500 from Johns Hopkins Human Resources, the nurses sprung into action and hosted two large fundraising events, solicited smaller, individual donations and sold T-shirts touting their cause. The first



fundraising event donated 10% of daily sales from the Green Turtle Sports Bar as part of its Funds of Friends initiative. The extraordinary group of nurses even took orders and delivered food to those who were not capable of actually making it to the Green Turtle in person due to their schedules. The second fundraiser raised \$900 through ticket sales to a happy hour hosted at Mad River in the Federal Hill neighborhood of Baltimore. The money raised at Mad River were then matched by a Hopkins surgeon.

When the workday finally came, the volunteer builders reinforced ceilings and framed walls in House #3, while President Carter and his wife worked in House #6. And as an added benefit, five of the volunteer nurses were invit-

ed to attend a luncheon honoring President Jimmy Carter at the Hilton Baltimore. The luncheon offered a unique opportunity to hear the former president speak about affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization in Baltimore and around the country. President Carter commented on the transformation of Baltimore since his days at the Naval Academy. "Baltimore, San Diego and Pittsburgh were disgraceful places during my days at the Naval Academy," he said. He went on to say, "today I can see significant changes with major investments happening in all of these places. This is great for the citizens of Baltimore."

"Habitat for Humanity of the Chesapeake is thrilled to have been selected as a site for the 2010 Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Work Project," said Mike Mitchell, HFHC's Chief Executive Officer. "The Carter's visit is an affirmation of our commitment to build sustainable communities, develop green homes that minimize utility expenses, and contribute to the revitalization of older communities alongside future homeowners, current residents, and the civic and community leaders devoted to lasting change." To date, the organization has rehabilitated 38 houses in this East Baltimore community.

The NCCU nurses' dedication to the project didn't end at the close of the workday though; they have committed to continue to work on the home throughout the remainder of the build, attend the dedication ceremony when completed, and help to support the family who will move into the home throughout the holiday season and move-in period.



## New Developments for Johns Hopkins East Baltimore Community Nursing Centers

Since 1992, the School of Nursing has established three Community Nursing Centers in East Baltimore to reach out to both families and individuals in need. Recently, these nurse-managed health centers in East Baltimore were renamed and restructured to work collaboratively as the JHU School of Nursing East Baltimore Community Nursing Centers (EBCNC). The three sites include the Wald Nursing Center at Rutland, the Isaiah Wellness Center at Apostolic Towers, and the Health suite at the House of Ruth. Nursing faculty, graduate student nurses and undergraduate nursing students together, offer a variety of community health nursing care to each of these sites with the goal to offer comprehensive community health services to families in Baltimore City. Along with the nursing students, dedicated physicians and nurse practitioners donate time to offer free medical services on select days of the week.

One patient recently stated, after a check-up by Sarah Szanton, CRNP at the Isaiah

Wellness Center, "This is the best my blood pressure has been in years." The EBCNC is offering health education programs aimed at empowering elderly clients to get the most out of every doctor visit. Activities include: "How to Have a Good Doctor Visit", weekly Diabetes Support Group, home visits to help teach people about their medications, a senior exercise class, a weekly mindfulness and meditation group, and health and Medicare advocacy groups.

For more information regarding these centers please Contact Chanel Newsome, Associate Director of Development, 410-614-0878.



## Comiendo Juntos: 10 Years of Food, Fellowship and Fun

The sound of music and laughter floats through the hall of St. Patrick's Church on South Broadway in Upper Fell's Point as volunteers fill plates of homemade food for waiting seniors. The seniors chat animatedly as they eat, proudly sharing photos and catching up. It is another gathering of Comiendo Juntos.

Now in its 10th year, Comiendo Juntos (Eating Together) is a community program for seniors that started with the support of Baltimore City's Commission on Aging to address Baltimore's influx of aging Hispanic immigrants. Twice a month, approximately 20 Hispanic seniors gather at Assisi House at St. Patrick's Church for food, community, and presentations from the community on relevant topics and services. Johns Hopkins has long been involved; members of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Johns Hopkins Medicine International and the Johns Hopkins Health System Office of Community Services work together to secure volunteers, funding, and speakers from Hopkins, many of whom are bilingual students, clinicians and physicians who present on health topics relevant to the senior population, such as diabetes, nutrition, cancer,

high blood pressure, stroke, heart health, and glaucoma.

The importance of providing a social network and community support for seniors is well documented. In 1999, the British Medical Journal published a study that revealed that people over the age of 65 who engaged in regular social meetings (such as eating out with friends or family, playing games or taking part in other group activities) live an average of 2.5 years longer than those who do not engage in regular socialization. They also enjoy better health and a more positive mental attitude.

"Community volunteer service to Comiendo Juntos is an essential supportive element for the successful operation of this project," emphasizes Assisi House Executive Director, Jeanne Velez. "We profoundly appreciate the dedicated volunteer service and program support given by the staff of the Johns Hopkins Office of Community Services, and recognize Johns Hopkins Medicine International for its translation services as well as its ability to recruit professional medical staff of the JHH Broadway campus to give helpful and informative presentations to our seniors."