

THE DAILY RECORD

2016

20 IN THEIR TWENTIES





LEADING BY EXAMPLE

PREPARING THE LEADERS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

Towson University is proud to congratulate

Andrew Baker '10

Min Kim '13

Phylicia Porter '10

Heather Rustici '12

Francesca Weeks '12

For being recognized among the

20 in Their Twenties

by *The Daily Record*



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Everybody remembers what it was like to start their careers – to look for work in their chosen fields, to interview with their future employers and to begin a new job. Baltimore is fourth in the nation for attracting millennials with its job opportunities and cultural offerings. Other Maryland municipalities have a similar pull for twentysomethings looking for interesting occupations and a livable city. The result is that many

people at the start of their careers are finding themselves here, at one of the most exciting times of their lives. That is true of The Daily Record's 20 in their Twenties honorees featured in this publication. They are an energized and energizing group of self-starters who are already making an impact. They are learning from seasoned mentors, striking out on their own with start-ups or continuing their education at a Maryland university or college. They also give back. A thoughtful group, they engage in conversations about the future of their communi-

ties and how to best lead them. They are forward thinking. They appreciate what they have been given and already want to find a way to share that with the next generation. It is exciting to highlight their achievements. When we began this award in 2011, we knew there were excellent young leaders in our business community. Each year since then, we have recognized another class of go-getters, adding to the list and learning more about the opportunities that young professionals are finding and making in and around Maryland. It's

truly heartening, and we admit that we have been amazed ourselves at the accomplishments of our winners. The future is bright. These winners represent that. I invite you to read about them, to share with their stories with your colleagues and to be inspired.

Suzanne Fischer-Huettner
Suzanne Fischer-Huettner
Publisher
The Daily Record

THE JUDGING PROCESS |

The Daily Record received more than 115 nominations for the sixth annual 20 In Their Twenties award. A panel of judges assembled from past honorees made the selections based on **professional accomplishments, community involvement and impact of achievement.**



Karalynn Aanenson
Community Law in Action



Shaina Anderson
Geppetto Catering Company



Bridget Forney Deise
Roland Park Place



Melissa Garcia
Baltimore City Public Schools



Brittany Gay
NASA Goddard Space Flight Center



Gabby Knighton
Mayor's Office of Human Services



Robert Moore
Baltimore City Public Schools



Moira Moynihan
Alexandar & Cleaver PA



David A. Muncy
Plaxen & Adler PA



Divya Potdar, Esq.
Wise Law LLC



Margaret Roth
Yet Analytics Inc.



Jennifer Schmidt
Medifast Inc.



Jay Turakhia
PNC Bank

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Katie Dix	11	Phylicia Rae Louise Porter	12
Jessica Fast	14	Emily C. Rogers	10
Emily Gordon	8	Heather Rustici	8
Nikki J. Hasselbarth	10	Robbie Sheehan	13
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Innovators. Motivators. Activators. Five of the people on the Daily Record’s 20 in Their Twenties list are Towson University alumni. Of course they are—for 150 years, TU has been graduating individuals with smarts, strength, and serious talent.

Andrew Baker ’10 hadn’t even graduated from our College of Business and Economics’ business administration program before he was literally planting the seeds of his family’s Old Westminster Winery. Min Kim ’13 went from our College of Health Professions to founding Project HOPE at the Family League of Baltimore and helping heal unimaginable hurts. Phylicia Porter ’10 earned double degrees in biology and molecular biology, biochemistry and bioinformatics from our Fisher College of Science and Mathematics—and now she’s heading up Optimal Public Health Solutions. Heather Rustici ’12 tells people that what she learned in our College of Liberal Arts psychology program led directly to her business success at Jeffrey Brown Contracting. And Francesca Weaks ’12 earned our master’s in allied health while she was pointing out—

and knocking down—barriers to better public health in diverse populations.

But at TU, we don’t just have a few stars. We have thousands.

With more than 22,000 enrolled students and more than 151,000 alumni—93,000 of whom call Maryland home—TU provides 109 programs where students can shine. From the second they step on campus to the day they retire (or not!), Towson Tigers make a difference in their communities, their state, and the world.

We’re proud of **Andrew, Min, Phylicia, Heather** and **Francesca** for being on the *Daily Record’s 20 in their Twenties* list.

But we’re not surprised.

Congratulations, Tigers—and congratulations to all of the phenomenal young people who will lead us into a bolder, brighter future.

About Towson University

Founded in 1866, Towson University is the largest public university in the Baltimore region, and is among the nation’s best regional public universities, offering more than 100 degree programs. Towson’s interdisciplinary partnerships with public and private organizations provide opportunities for research, internships and jobs, and its 329-acre suburban setting offers easy access to a wealth of academic and community resources. U.S. News & World Report has ranked Towson as one of the nation’s most efficiently run universities. With 19 NCAA Division I sports, Towson is a member of the Colonial Athletic Association as well as the Colonial Academic Alliance.



TOWSON
UNIVERSITY

We have the highest enrollment of undergraduate business majors in the University System of Maryland. We are the state’s leader in allied health profession alumni. And a quarter of all the teachers in Maryland hold a degree from Towson University’s College of Education—which means your children learn from the best.

20 IN THEIR TWENTIES

Complete List of Winners 2011-16

Karalyn Aanenson	2015	Lauren M. Dodrill	2012	Benjamin H. Meredith	2013	Amber Rose	2015
Kate Airey	2014	Chas Eby	2013	Aaron Merki	2011	Margaret Helen Roth	2015
*Marie M Anderson	2016	Thomas Eckes	2011	*J.D. Merrill	2016	*Heather Rustici	2016
Haya Appel-Fishman	2014	Sarah K. Elfreth	2014	*Jamie Meyers	2016	Christina Ryan	2013
Stephanie J. Austin	2014	Nicholas Esposito	2014	*Adam Jeraldo Milam	2016	Jonathan Sachs	2015
April Baer	2012	Catherine Estevez	2013	Nick Miller	2014	Kathleen Bands Schindler	2013
*Andrew Baker	2016	*Jessica Fast	2016	Caitlin Mills	2014	Jennifer Schmidt	2015
Ejaz Baluch Jr.	2013	Abby Ferretti	2013	Devon Mish	2012	Brandon M. Scott	2012
Wade Barnes	2011	Tiffany S. Franc.	2012	Caroline Miner	2011	Desmond Serrette	2012
Brandon Batiste	2012	Melissa Garcia	2015	Christina Moniodis	2014	Rachel M. Severance	2014
Tina Beliveau	2015	Justen Garrity	2011	Bobby Moore	2015	Kathleen Shaffer	2011
Matthew Bjonerud	2012	Anna Gavin	2011	Moir R. Moynihan	2015	*Robbie Sheehan	2016
Shaina Bindeman	2015	Brittany S. Gay	2015	Emeline Mugisha	2012	Sarah Sheppard	2012
*Kultar S. Bindra	2016	Elizabeth Geare	2015	Yasmene Mumby	2012	Haris H. Siddiqui	2014
Avery M. Blank	2014	Keenen W. Geter	2015	David A. Muncy	2015	LaRee Siddiqui	2013
Caron A. Brace	2014	Scott Gibson	2011	Cara Murray	2012	Julie Surell Siegel	2013
Christopher Braga	2012	Eduardo Gonzalez	2011	*Shawna Q. Murray-Browne	2016	Greg Sileo	2013
*Kirsten Brinlee	2016	*Emily Gordon	2016	*Celia Neustadt	2016	Chantel Skipper	2012
Christina M. Brooking	2013	Joshua M. Greenfeld	2014	Brandi Nieland	2014	Ellen Smith	2011
Darren Brownlee	2014	Fagan Harris	2015	Jenna K. O'Connor	2013	Jared Solomon	2013
Sara Bruszewski	2012	*Nikki J. Hasselbarth	2016	Darah Okeke	2012	Nick Stewart	2014
Laura Bumiller	2013	*Christopher Hawkins	2016	John Olszewski Jr.	2012	*Matthew Stubenberg	2016
Sarah Bunch	2014	Kristian Henderson-Hayes	2015	Shalita O'Neale	2011	*Madeline Suggs	2016
Kristerfer Burnett	2015	Kathryn Hickey	2013	Marianne E. Ortiz	2013	Danyelle Thomas	2011
*Liana Burns	2016	W. Brett Hollander	2012	*Christine Osazuwa	2016	Jay Turakhia	2015
Katie Carlson	2015	Noelle Hopper	2013	Elizabeth R. Paal	2013	Genevieve Vetter	2012
Tom Caron	2014	*Roger G. Isom Jr.	2016	Katie Palencsar	2012	Greg Vetter	2012
Charles Cawte	2015	Ricardo R. Johnson	2012	Jill K. Pardini	2013	Suzanne Vetter	2012
Jason Cheung	2015	Joshua Kahn	2015	*Zachary Peters	2016	Marcus Wang	2011
*Phillip Chong	2016	Kristen Kelso	2014	Amy Petkovsek	2011	*Francesca Genevieve Weaks	2016
Patrice Meredith Clarke	2014	*Min Kim	2016	George Petrocheilos	2014	Jennifer Arice White	2014
Zeke Cohen	2012	Gabby Knighton	2015	Thomasina Poirot	2013	Daniel Whitehurst	2014
Morgan Cole	2014	*Adam Konstas	2016	Steven Pomplon	2012	Kristen Whitworth	2011
Andrew Coy	2012	Erin Lamar	2014	*Phylicia Rae Louise Porter	2016	Alicia Wilson	2011
Liz Crammond	2013	Alan C. Lazerow	2013	Divya Potdar	2015	Lisa Woodward	2011
Nathaniel W. Cundy	2015	Margaret Leberhz	2012	Michelle Amick Prikhodko	2013	Matt Wyble	2012
Gregory Dahbura	2012	*Hannah Marr	2016	Heather Pruger	2011	*Ericka L. Gray Wylie	2016
Danielle Gaquin Davis	2013	Julia Marrocco	2015	Amanda Pugh	2015	Caryn York	2013
Bridget Forney Deise	2015	Akil Matthews	2014	Zachary Reichenbach	2014	Matthew Youssef	2011
*Katie Dix	2016	Mallory K. McDonald	2013	Ashley Riddle	2013		
Jennifer Dodson	2014	Mack McGee	2013	*Emily C. Rogers	2016		
Ryan J. Dymek	2013	Kate McGrain	2015	Teresa Rogers	2011		

*2016 Honoree

Goodwill

Industries of the Chesapeake

For over 97 years, Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake Inc. has helped others help themselves. Operating as a non-profit entity in two primary industries, retail and workforce development, Goodwill collects reusable items for resale in its retail stores, trains people for work and living skills and instills dignity, and purpose in countless peoples' lives.

In 1919 Rev. John S. German and a group of prominent civic leaders incorporated the Baltimore Goodwill Industries and opened the first factory in the Fellowship Hall of Broadway Methodist Episcopal Church. Two indigent employees were hired to stencil and fold burlap bags to be sent out to collect reclaimable household goods that could be sold. Proceeds would pay the workers and make the operation self-sustainable.

Burlap bags and the jobs they created would come to symbolize the origins of the new organization whose slogan was "Not a charity, but a chance."

While Goodwill's focus for many years was helping people with disabilities find gainful employment, that



mission has expanded. Goodwill has brought its years of experience to initiatives that train and place people with barriers to employment, including dislocated workers, individuals with no work training and those receiving public assistance, all while maintaining

its commitment to serve those with disabilities.

Today, Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake Inc., employs more than 800 individuals, operates 29 retail stores, nine workforce development sites, and provides a variety of contract commercial services at several locations. Most importantly, Goodwill provides services to more than 35,000 people in need of assistance because of physical, mental or other social barriers, and places approximately 3,300 workers into jobs. We consistently look for new programs and collaborations in the community to provide better services for our clients. Additionally, we are committed to opening new retail stores and donation centers to grow our mission and support our community.

CHANGING LIVES THROUGH THE POWER OF WORK

Goodwill helped 3,307 individuals find jobs and start on the path to self sufficiency in 2015.

Learn how you can partner with Goodwill at GivetoGoodwill.org

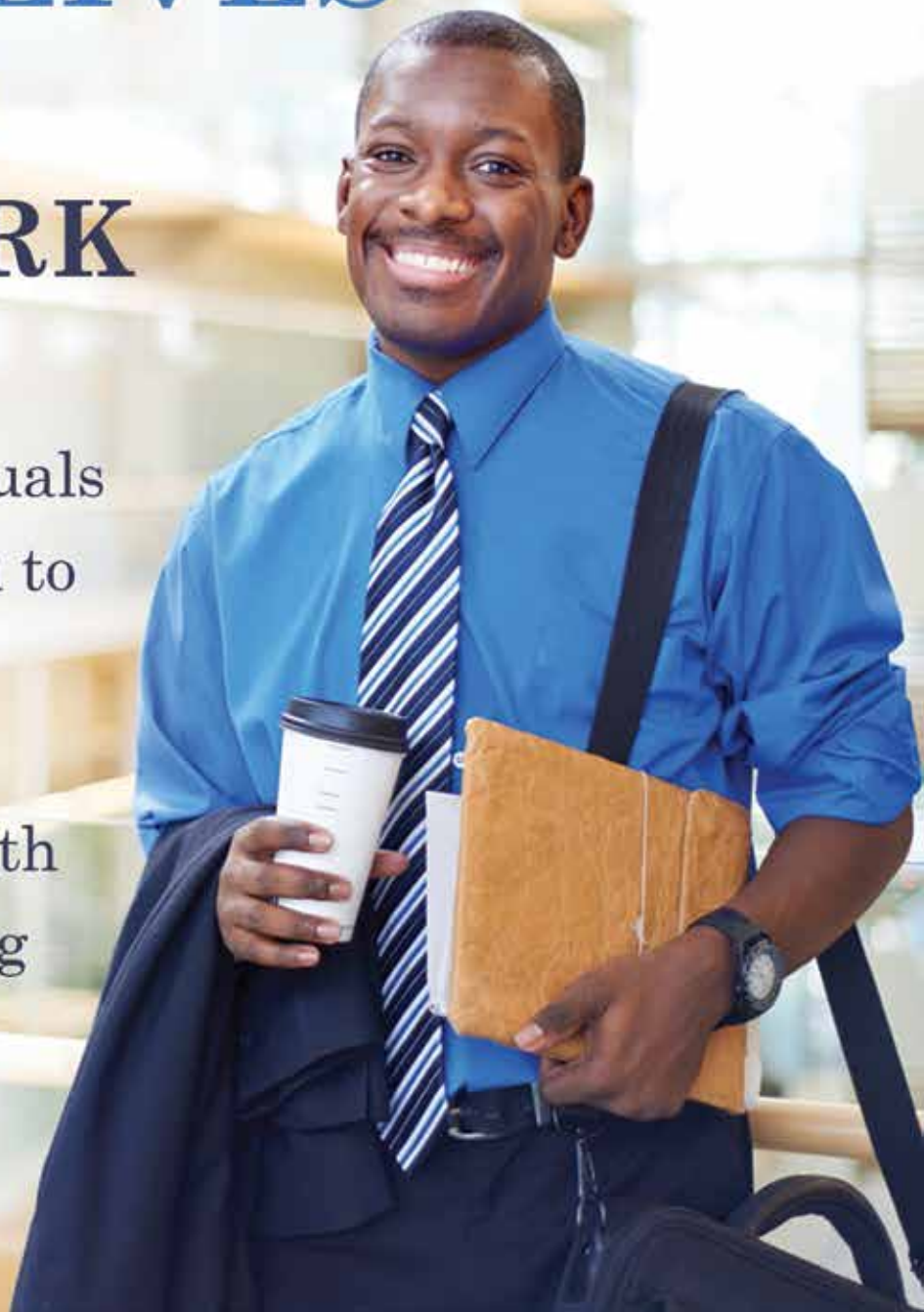




Photo taken at Oriole Park at Camden Yards, Baltimore



Marie M. Anderson

Assistant Director
Loyola University Maryland
York Road Initiative

Marie M. Anderson, 26, describes herself as a leader at the back of the crowd. “The end goal is to build community, and hopefully I just make it a little bit easier to do so,” she said.

Anderson is assistant director of the Loyola University Maryland York Road Initiative, a community development strategy focused on the York Road corridor adjacent to Loyola’s campus. Driving down York Road, the communities offer different pictures – to the west, middle- to high-income families and a mostly Caucasian population, and to the east, middle- to low-income families and seniors, most of whom are African American.

To unite these communities, Anderson creates connections between the campus and York Road neighbors. For instance, in October the Fresh Crate Healthy Corner Store program brought fresh food to four businesses in Govans locations where there wasn’t access to supermarkets. The program used Loyola’s dining service as the ordering hub for produce.

Anderson also helped lead the BMore Birds Mural Initiative and manages the Govanstowne Farmers Market. Anderson helped organize the York Road United Peace March for the anniversary of Freddie Gray’s death. In addition, she serves on the Maryland Farmers Market Association Advisory Committee, Baltimore City Food Policy Advisory Council and the York Road Partnership.

“I hope that this will draw attention to the folks who need their voices heard, the voices of the community that will be lifted up and the needs of folks in our city who aren’t always heard,” Anderson said.



Andrew Baker

Founder
Old Westminster Winery

Just two months after graduating from college, Andrew Baker helped plant 10,000 estate vines at his family’s property in Westminster. It was the start of a new winery that has become both a business and a passion for the 28-year-old.

Old Westminster Winery now employs 12 workers, partners with six local farmers and produces 30,000 bottles of wine each year. This year, the business will open a tasting room. Baker himself personally manages more than 60 retail and restaurant accounts, including Baltimore’s trendy Woodberry Kitchen and Wit & Wisdom at Harbor East’s Four Seasons Hotel.

In 2014 and 2015, Old Westminster Winery earned the Governor’s Cup for best white wine and white wine blend, respectively.

Baker also strives to use the family business to provide basic needs to citizens around the world. With that goal in mind, Old Westminster Winery pledges \$1 from each bottle sold to provide access to clean water and education to those who need it. Last year, they provided funds for a school in Uganda to purchase two 5,000-liter rainwater harvesters to collect water for its 300 students. Baker plans to visit Uganda this August and to continue the quest to turn wine into water.

“We think water is such a basic necessity and it’s remarkable how many people don’t have access to it,” he said. “And it’s a problem we can do our part to curb.”



Ericka L. Gray Wylie

Emergency Managerz
Northwest Hospital

Ericka L. Gray Wylie’s first job was as a greeter in her family’s funeral home in West Baltimore. She was seven, but the lesson of being understanding of others during a difficult time was not too advanced for her age. In fact, she believes it has informed her current work.

As Northwest Hospital’s emergency manager, Wylie prepares for and assists in mitigating any natural or manmade disasters that could affect the facility. On a day-to-day basis, that means ensuring that preparedness efforts, materials and funding are in place to maintain the safety of 1,500 employees, 250 patient beds and hundreds of visitors.

Wylie, who holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Iona College in New York, serves as the secretary of Infragard Members Alliance Maryland, which is part of a nationwide partnership between the FBI and private sector groups to share information to prevent hostile acts against U.S. infrastructure.

She also is a volunteer with the Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps and serves on the Young Professionals Leadership Council for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Through The Center Club’s Young Members Committee, Wylie helped to organize Moving Baltimore Forward, a forum for business professionals to help unite Baltimore after the unrest following the death of Freddie Gray in 2015.

“I believe that as a developing professional that your work does not remain at work,” Wylie said. “We have to be supporters and good stewards of justice by bringing topics and concerns to the forefront and offering a safe environment to have a constructive conversation.”



Christopher Hawkins

Director, Identity Services Group
BITHGROUP Technologies Inc.

Christopher Hawkins has had the entrepreneurial spirit since childhood. In his first boyhood business venture, which he called Chris Inc., his services included lawn care, errands, baby sitting and pet walking. By the time he was a 16-year-old high school junior, he was working for a small delicatessen/grocery store in Towson as part of his school’s work-study program.

“The program was critical because we learned techniques in the classroom and gained real-world experience on the job,” said Hawkins, now director of the Identity Services Group with BITHGROUP Technologies Inc. in Baltimore.

Hawkins earned an associate’s degree in general studies at Community College of Baltimore in 2007 and was one of the first people in his family to get a college degree. In 2013, he completed an executive education program at Dartmouth University’s Tuck School of Business in Hanover, N.H., which he calls his most significant professional accomplishment.

“I learned how to evaluate an organization’s health and diagnose its strengths and improvement areas,” said Hawkins, who helps with his company’s high school student summer program and college internships. “I was also able to identify my strengths and areas I need to improve. It had a big impact on my career, and my achievements have positively influenced my company and community.”

Hawkins is also a volunteer basketball coach and youth mentor at his church, Spirit of Faith Christian Center.



Maximilian Franz/The Daily Record



Min Kim
Program Coordinator
Family League of Baltimore

Through the Family League of Baltimore, Min Kim has been instrumental in launching a program that helps Baltimore mothers and families cope with grief following the death of an infant or unborn baby. The program, the HOPE Project (Healing Ourselves through Peer Empowerment), is a peer-based home visiting program based at Roberta's House, a nonprofit center that offers free grief and bereavement services to low-income families in Baltimore City. Kim, a Baltimore native and graduate student in health science at Towson University, established the program's policies and procedures and helps train the home visitors, who are mothers who have also experienced a loss.

"Every year in Baltimore City, there are approximately 200 fetal and infant deaths, and mothers and families are left unsupported to grieve alone," Kim said. "HOPE Project is a healing experience for the home visitors and mothers."

So far, the program has provided in-home support for about 20 mothers and there are plans to reach more. "This has shown us how a community has the capacity to heal itself," Kim said. "We hope this program serves as a model for other communities in Maryland and across the country."

Kim is a volunteer with Safe House of Hope and a past volunteer with the American Heart Association and Planned Parenthood.



Kultar S. Bindra
Financial Advisor
UBS Financial Services Inc.

As an undergraduate at Salisbury University, Kultar S. Bindra first wanted to be a teacher, to make a difference in the lives of young people who would go on to change the world.

"But during the height of the financial crisis, I realized that I should hold myself to that same standard," he said.

At the time, he was working 50-plus hour weeks at an AT&T store to fund his college education. His family had immigrated from India when he was a child and he had learned to save as he watched his family's struggle to establish financial security. That experience gave him the insight and determination to help financial clients find a way to pay for their children's education or other goals.

"You want to make sure all your hopes and dreams you have for your kids and your retirement, (that) you're going to be able to make it come true," Bindra, 27, said

Bindra spent his early career making hundreds of cold calls every day. From there, he forged long-term relationships and saw firsthand how he could make an impact. His first clients, a middle class family, thanked him for taking the time to reach out to them, even though they weren't million dollar investors. He said they now feel like family to him.

Bindra holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Salisbury University. He is a mentor through the university's alumni association and previously served on the Diversity Council of Morgan Stanley.



Congratulations to
20 In Their Twenties
Honoree

ROBBY SHEEHAN

*Salisbury University Deputy Chief of Staff and
Director of Government and Community Relations*



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www.salisbury.edu



Photo taken at Enoch Pratt Free Library



Kirsten Brinlee
Assistant Director
Baltimore Collegetown Network

Kirsten Brinlee didn't go to college in Baltimore – she holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Oklahoma and master's degree in public administration from the University of North Texas. But as the assistant director for Baltimore Collegetown Network, her job is to connect college students with the city where they are studying.

It's a job Brinlee loves, and alma maters aside, is a great fit because it fits her talent of making others feel valued.

The 29-year-old manages and leads the Collegetown Leadershape program, which started in 2010 and has more than 300 graduates who have contributed more than 300,000 hours of community service. Other cities have Leadershape programs, but Baltimore's is unique because it engages students over a nine-month period and supports them as they develop projects that make the community stronger. Graduates have gone on to work on issues like food deserts in urban areas or vacant homes and homelessness.

This summer, the network will host the first Collegetown Underground, a four-day civic engagement experience organized by Brinlee. The first cohort of students will focus on West Baltimore's history, culture and systemic challenges.

"This program will help students dive deep into Baltimore in a meaningful way," Brinlee said. "I've worked on programs similar in the past, but never with this level of intentionality and purpose."

Brinlee is also the board development chair for the Young Nonprofit Professionals Network (YNPN) Baltimore, and last year she led an initial membership drive that resulted in 100 new members.



Heather Rustici
Client Relations Manager
Jeffrey Brown Contracting LLC

Heather Rustici is proof that life can be unpredictable. After earning a bachelor's degree in psychology at Penn State University and a master's degree in counseling psychology at Towson University, she found her passion as client relations manager for Jeffrey Brown Contracting LLC, a construction company in Towson.

Rustici, who previously was office assistant and project coordinator for the company, stepped into the newly created job last October. "My new position in business development and marketing offered a diversified role in which my manager felt I could excel," she said. "I creatively use my psychology background, and in the last three years have developed new systems and procedures for quality control, companywide business development, and efficient information management."

She volunteers with the Junior League of Baltimore, encouraging members to network and build relationships and helping to organize training in salary negotiation, financial growth, and mental and physical wellness, as well as Volunteering Untapped, helping many area nonprofits. She is also active in the America Institute of Architects Baltimore Chapter, the Maryland Chapter of the Society for Marketing Professional Services, and the Chesapeake Area Society of Healthcare Engineering.

"I try to encourage, educate, enlighten, and empower others," she said. "I have dedicated my personal and professional lives to this mission. By exhibiting a positive attitude toward life, I hope I inspire others."



Christine Osazuwa
Web and Social Media Coordinator
University of Maryland Baltimore County

Christine Osazuwa thrives on being a Type A personality and that's good for her hometown.

In addition to being the web and social media coordinator at University of Maryland, Baltimore County, the 2011 graduate (bachelor's degree in music entrepreneurship and journalism) mentors undergraduates. She also teaches coding as a volunteer to female high school and college students

at Betamore. "I hope that my presence in the Baltimore tech world encourages other young women to get involved," she said.

Osazuwa, who earned an MBA from Loyola University of Maryland in 2014, has started a marketing and front-end web development business (ChristineOsazuwa.com) to help businesses in Baltimore. "I work with small- to medium-sized companies so they can understand their customers better through web analytics, marketing strategy, and web optimization," she said. "I give people the information and tools they need to grow."

She also nurtured her love of art by volunteering at the Walters Art Museum and Baltimore Museum of the Arts. "No matter how many business classes I take, art will always be my first love," she said.

In writing for EliteDaily.com and the blog on her website, Osazuwa has tried to inspire openness among young people. "I've been doing my best to make it easier to talk about things we're not supposed to talk about, like love, sex, and money, as well as provide guidance for those starting to get interested in tech."



Emily Gordon
Chief Empowerment Officer
Elevate. Inspire. Empower.

Emily Gordon believes the very core of a business should recognize the importance of the employees and what each can contribute and not base performance and goals solely on business metrics. She founded Elevate. Inspire. Empower. LLC in January with the goal to promote leadership responsibility by elevating mindsets, inspiring awareness and empowering meaningful contributions.

She also serves as executive director for the Hot Spots Extended Care Programs Inc. which combines extended learning outside the classroom for students along with building community partnerships. "I absolutely love seeing our students grow and evolve," she said.

When asked how she balances the two jobs, Gordon said it is more a lifestyle choice. "I am very passionate about the work I do," she said. "I want to make sure I have left a footprint on this Earth. I am a very spiritual person and I believe that God put each and every one of us here for a reason. I am on a path to make sure that in every way, every day I show up and contribute something to the world."

The Goucher College graduate also co-chairs Kids Helping Hopkins, an educational program of Johns Hopkins Children's Center designed to help students learn about ways to give back to the community. "To be able to work with such innovative young minds, it is rejuvenating," she said. "It's inspiring. It's intimidating. I love it."

She is also serves on the United Way of Central Maryland's Partnership Board of Baltimore County and helps with initiatives such as stuffing holiday stockings for foster care students and supporting individuals without housing through the Baltimore Homeless Project. "I feel (volunteering) is important," she said. "I know there is a need and it goes back to my faith in making sure that I am giving in any way that I am able."



Maximilian Franz/The Daily Record



Liana Burns
Administrative Resident
LifeBridge Health

Liana Burns, 27, just completed a master’s degree in health administration at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and has been shadowing the CEO of LifeBridge Health system as an administrative resident for the past year.

“Baltimore’s industry truly is health care. From the innovation that occurs at Johns Hopkins to the novel concepts related to payment and reimbursement (that) no one else in the country is doing, Baltimore leads the way,” Burns said.

Burns previously worked for the Asthma and Allergy Foundation. In 2013, she created a nationwide patient speakers network for the foundation, identifying advocates in 25 states who came together in Washington, D.C. to voice their concerns about asthma and allergy specific legislation.

“Their voices as patients had much more effect than anything I could ever say,” Burns said. “This experience showed me the power of grassroots mobilization.”

Burns serves as the logistics chair on the Board of Directors of Women in Healthcare, which began in December 2015 in Washington D.C. and Baltimore. She is also a member of the Junior League of Baltimore and served last year as a committee co-chair. Burns volunteers monthly with Volunteering Untapped, serves on their Marketing Committee and is a member of the George Washington University Baltimore Alumni Committee.



J.D. Merrill
Teacher
Baltimore City College

Baltimore City College history teacher and 2009 graduate J.D. Merrill didn’t want to hear any more excuses from students about poorly-sourced assignments.

He knew the school’s library was overdue for updates – a fact that couldn’t be overlooked because City’s students hail from all across Baltimore and some have limited access to other libraries. Fifty percent of the school’s students will be the first in their family to go to college and 62 percent live in poverty.

After the school system supplied \$300,000 for library repairs and updates, Merrill—who teaches a research-based course—said he created the school’s first fundraising program to finance more upgrades for the space.

In the end, he helped raise \$2.18 million to refurbish and update the library at what is the nation’s third-oldest public high school and Baltimore’s only public high school to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma program.

“I’ve always tried to fill in holes wherever I’ve been, and it seemed like a really natural fit—this is something I’m really passionate about,” said Merrill, 25, who is also the school’s director of admissions.

After graduating from City, Merrill received a bachelor’s in educational policy studies from Davidson College and master’s in educational studies from Johns Hopkins University, before landing his dream job at his alma mater.

The refurbished library is to be completed this summer with three peer-tutoring centers, a computer lab and updated and expanded sources.

“It’s one of those situations where you’ve got a boat and you need somebody to start rowing,” Merrill said. “There’s nothing remarkable about what I did, other than I picked up a paddle. What’s remarkable is that we’re getting a new library.”



Shawna Q. Murray-Browne
Owner/Integrative Psychotherapist
Kindred Wellness LLC

Her brother’s murder inside a Baltimore jail cell motivated Shawna Murray-Browne to start her own psychotherapy practice helping women and children experiencing trauma in the city.

Murray-Browne said that her greatest accomplishment has been to launch and grow Kindred Wellness, her integrative practice focused on honoring culture and expanding mindfulness. She provides holistic psychotherapy, and holds classes, trainings, retreats and coaching for Baltimore youth and women. Last year, her first year of business, she served more than 150 women in the Baltimore-Washington, D.C. region.

The 28-year-old said that her experience with homelessness as a child and dealing with her mother’s addiction issues helped her make her career choice early.

“I made the decision in middle school that other children shouldn’t have to do this,” she said.

She got her master’s in social work from University of Maryland, Baltimore in 2011, after earning a bachelor’s degree in family science and criminology from University of Maryland, College Park. She started her career in the child welfare sector, and said she was determined to “combat taboos surrounding mental and emotional wellbeing in communities of color.” In 2012, she established the Usisi Circle Initiative to mentor and educate young girls of color.

Murray-Browne learned about meditation and qigong while in college, and said she’s been intrigued by the practice ever since. She’s in the process of working with a group of sixth and seventh graders managing grief, while she continues to grieve the loss of her older brother.

Her goal is to provide the emotional support and wisdom to the teenagers that she and her brother lacked growing up, she said.

“It’s become a powerful time to see the kids work through their emotions,” she said. “I see a lot of energy and spirit of my brother in them, and it motivates me to support them and find ways to harness their energy and to limit their engagement with the criminal justice system,” she said.

TWEET IT

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THE DAILY RECORD

CONGRATULATIONS

19 of this year's 20 in Their Twenties winners graduated from Baltimore colleges.

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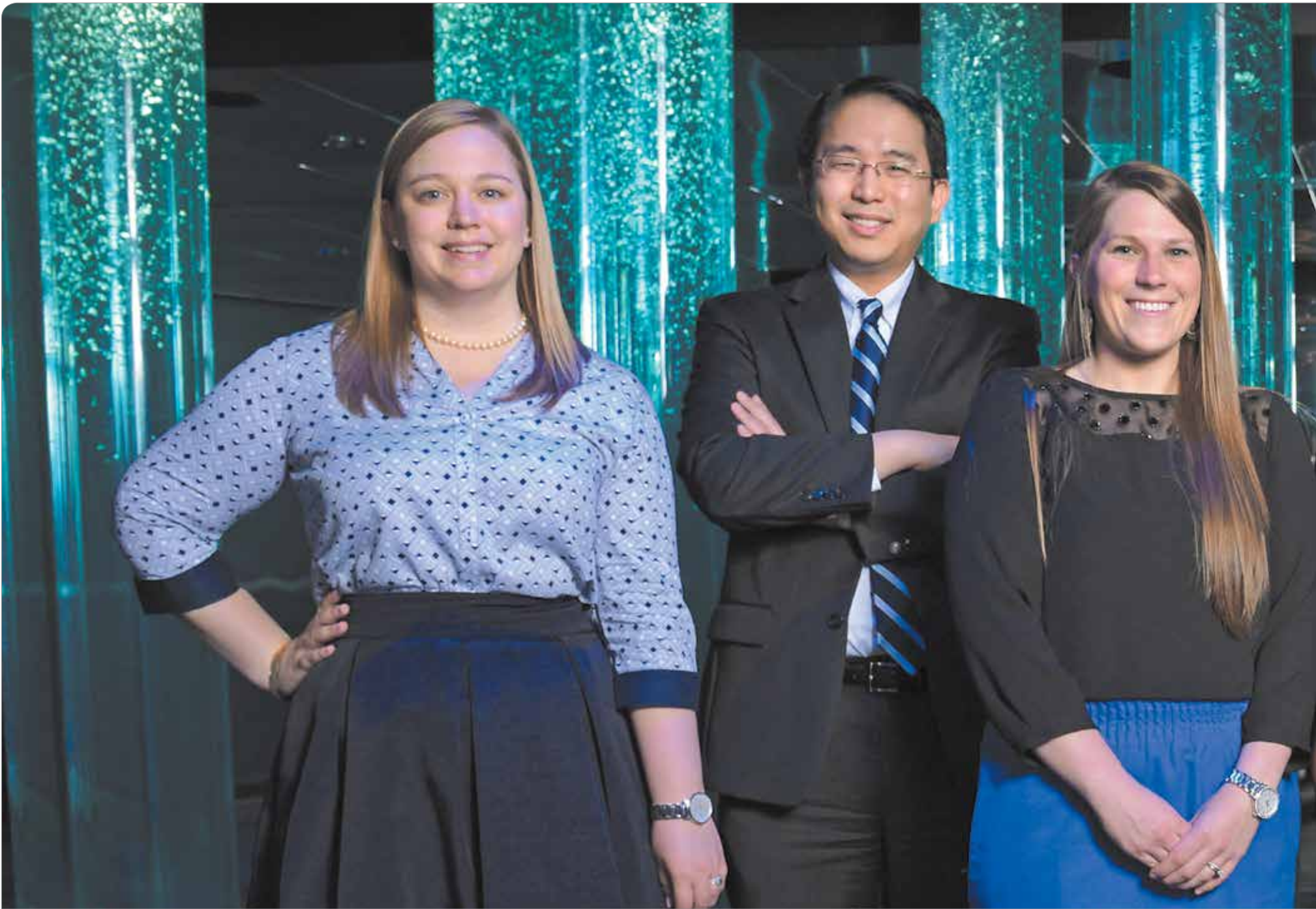


Photo taken at The National Aquarium, Baltimore



Emily C. Rogers
Assistant Director
Law Career Development Office
University of Baltimore School of Law

Emily C. Rogers measures her success by the success of her students. As assistant director of the University of Baltimore’s Law Career Development Office, Rogers is used to coaching students and building them up as they struggle with courses, externships and job searches.

Recently she reassured a student who performed poorly in an interview and prepared her for her next interview. She was hired for the second job. “The work can be challenging at times, but it’s very rewarding when a student nails an interview or chooses a fulfilling career path,” she said.

Rogers, who earned a law degree from the university in 2012, urges law students and young lawyers to take on pro bono work. “I love watching students and lawyers who have not done (pro bono) getting involved, and seeing them experience its rewards,” she said.

Rogers does pro bono work for Senior Legal Services. In her first case, she helped a 90-year-old man recover his money after a funeral home went out of business without putting his money in an escrow account. “Helping the vulnerable elderly population has been exceptionally rewarding.”

Rogers is proud her work allows her to make a difference. “I am lucky that I get to give back to my community every day through my students and pro bono work,” she said.



Phillip Chong
Associate
Duane Morris LLP

Phillip Chong grew up watching his parents, both Korean immigrants, work hard to give their family a better life. “For me, that’s a driving point every day,” he said. “To make sure that none of their efforts go to waste.”

And they haven’t. In 2009, the George Mason University School of Law graduate received a Fulbright scholarship to teach English at a rural, all-boys middle school in South Korea. “I was proud to represent the United States, in and out of the classroom, and to increase cultural respect and understanding between the U.S. and Korea,” he said.

Now an associate for Duane Morris LLP, Chong enjoys helping his clients involved in complex business, construction, professional liability/malpractice and employment litigation. “I love solving difficult problems and helping people find solutions to their important issues,” he said.

Chong serves as a member of the Baltimore City Judicial Nominating Commission, which reviews and interviews all applicants for judicial vacancies in Baltimore City. “Any organization that I serve, it is something that I really believe in,” he said.

He also provides guidance through the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity’s Success in Law School mentoring program. “Even though I am still young in my career, there is a way that I can give back and I try to make sure I do whenever it is possible,” he said. “I encourage and offer honest and candid advice so that my mentees can maximize their potential and excel in college or in the practice of law.”

Chong also donates his time through pro bono work aiding those in need, including survivors of sex trafficking and domestic violence. “I think it is a moral duty, quite honestly, to give back,” he said.



Jamie Meyers
Program Specialist
United Way of Central Maryland

When the first graduate of Baltimore City’s Docket for Homeless Persons – a man who had been unable to secure housing due to a minor warrant—found a home through the new service, Jamie Meyers said she was proud of her work.

Meyers, 24, was a part of the team that created both the Baltimore City’s Docket for Homeless Persons and the Veterans Treatment Docket. As a program specialist for the United Way of Central Maryland, she coordinates service for citizens on both dockets, working and often strategizing with 15 agencies that help homeless families or those on the brink of homelessness in Central Maryland.

The Greektown resident holds a master’s degree from the University of Maryland School of Social Work, specializing in community action and social policy, and a bachelor’s degree in social work from Newport University.

She said that her greatest accomplishment is bringing together groups that don’t typically play on the same team: the Baltimore City’s State’s Attorney’s Office, the Office of the Public Defender, and many nonprofits and government agencies.

“Without the cooperation of each party, the dockets wouldn’t be in existence,” Meyers said.

Meyers said that her work as an intern at United Way helped expand her skill set and challenged her to step outside her comfort zone—at the same time it taught her a lot about program management and professionalism.

“I enjoy the opportunity every day to work with interdisciplinary teams consisting of a network of social workers, educators, lawyers, judges and families who all work together to improve the lives of those living in Maryland,” she said. “Whether I’m at the courthouse or in the office, no day is ever the same.”



Nikki J. Hasselbarth
Tax and Wealth Planning Associate
Venable LLP

Nikki J. Hasselbarth went to public school in Baltimore County from pre-K through the 10th grade until moving to a private school through a scholarship from the Baltimore Educational Scholarship Trust (BEST). “I think it significantly changed the trajectory of my life,” she said of the scholarship. “I think it made me interested in education and the power of education.”

The Duke University School of Law graduate has returned to BEST as a recently approved member of their Board of Trustees. Just days after her appointment, Hasselbarth said she is excited to give back to the program.

Participating and volunteering for education-focused groups is important for Hasselbarth. She taught for a year at a Houston, Texas school as a part of the Teach for America program and currently gives her time as a mentor for Higher Achievement Baltimore. “I am dedicated to organizations that work with underserved youth and work to provide them with greater educational opportunities,” she said.

Hasselbarth also participates in the program committee for Stocks in the Future. “I think a lot of underserved students don’t have financial education growing up,” she said. “I think working with a program (Stocks in the Future) that actively is teaching intercity kids and public school kids financial literacy is important.”

Since 2014, Hasselbarth has worked as a Venable LLP tax and wealth planning associate. She helps high net worth individuals manage wealth through estate planning techniques and assists nonprofit organizations of various sizes to obtain tax exempt status and stay in compliance with federal and state laws.

She is driven professionally to be “the best that I can be in anything that I do. I think especially in the (career) that I am in, there really aren’t any people of color. I think that drives me to maintain a certain level of professionalism and to break down barriers.”



Maximilian Franz/The Daily Record



Adam Konstas
Attorney
Pessin Katz Law P.A.

Attorney Adam Konstas’s love of education goes beyond fighting successfully for school systems in state and federal courts or working as an adjunct law professor at McDaniel College in Westminster. Konstas, an education, labor and employment lawyer with Pessin Katz in Towson, has also been a volunteer instructor with the Baltimore County Bar Association’s Civics and Law Academy, teaching high school students about legal issues that affect their lives. In addition, he is an assistant lacrosse coach with the Pikesville Recreation Council.

As a member of the 2014 Business Volunteers Maryland GIVE class, Konstas helped raise money for the 29th Street Community Center in Charles Village. “Most of my work, professionally and in the community, is aimed at helping children,” Konstas said. “My goal is to make the community a great place for children to learn, have fun, and grow.”

His work in the classroom opened his eyes to the problems schools face today. “I learn something new every day in working with school systems,” he said. “But as an adjunct professor, I get to step back from the legal issues and get a broader view of the challenges confronting teachers. Still, I enjoy teaching and share that joy with my students.”

Konstas is a graduate of Franklin & Marshall College and holds a law degree from University of Baltimore School of Law.



Katie Dix
Volunteer Program Manager
Blue Water Baltimore

Whether working at Blue Water Baltimore or giving her time to several local organizations, Katie Dix believes there is power in working alongside someone. “When you plant 100 trees, clean a stream or build a greenhouse, not only do you feel an ownership of the project, but a connection to people that also put in the sweat,” she said. “You don’t just walk away from it. All of the things I do are community oriented and I am thankful to lead teams of volunteers.”

As volunteer program manager for the nonprofit, she recruits, trains and manages volunteers and programs to enable the organization to work toward its mission for clean water in Baltimore’s streams and harbor.

Many days, Dix comes home exhausted, covered in dirt and sweat but she doesn’t mind. “It’s always been easy for me to work for things that I know are right, work that needs to be done, and I honestly believe that this work is urgent and pressing and we need to be making some big moves in a very serious way,” she said. “I feel like as soon as I am around volunteers I just get instant energy. Everybody is working toward the same mission. People come at it (for different reasons but) ... everybody is working toward this goal of creating a more humane metropolis for ourselves and our neighbors.”

The University of Maryland Baltimore County grad has given more than 1,500 hours since 2011 as a Baltimore City Master Gardener, with duties focused on mobilizing the membership base by getting them to contribute hours and examining projects to help benefit the area.

Dix is also a coach for Girls on the Run Greater Chesapeake, an after-school youth development program for girls between third and eighth grade. “The girls are amazing,” she said. “There is something really special about being in a group full of women, period. But when you have these younger women that want to connect with you because you are not their mother or you’re not their teacher, you feel like they can talk to you about those greater issues.”

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Photo taken at The Baltimore Museum of Industry Maximilian Franz/The Daily Record



Phylicia Rae Louie Porter
President & CEO
Optimal Public Health Solutions

Phylicia Porter remembers the hard work it took to become the first in her family to graduate from college. She worked multiple jobs and was active in campus activities as she earned two bachelor’s degrees, one in general biology and the other in molecular biology, biochemistry, and bioinformatics, from Towson University in 2011.

“My experiences have led me to mentor other African American STEM-focused students in Baltimore, helping them navigate their coursework, internships, and an efficient work-life balance,” said Porter, who founded Optimal Public Health Solutions in 2014 as a way to champion STEM, public health and her native city.

Porter, who earned a master of public health degree in 2013 from Morgan State University, mentors young public health professionals, advocates against tobacco use in communities, and participates in voter education and turnout drives. One of her biggest passions is the Maryland Academy of Technology and Health Sciences (MATHS), where she is the board vice-chair of the charter school for grades six to 12. Porter also has helped develop a STEM curriculum for short courses designed for school breaks.

This summer, she also will be coordinating a STEM-enabled drone camp with Global Air Media and Kids Safe Zone. A pilot program was successfully accomplished in West Baltimore this spring and now Porter and partners hope to expand. It is an example of exactly the type of success and advocacy she hopes to achieve.

“All too often communities are left behind,” Porter said. “Therefore, as a product of these communities, it was my duty to enrich the lives of others as my mentors have instilled in me.”



Roger G. Isom, Jr.
Founder
Fitness Buddies of McDaniel College

Roger G. Isom Jr. brought his passion for physical fitness and helping his community together four years ago at McDaniel College in Westminster, launching a community fitness program that will continue even though he recently graduated.

Isom’s Fitness Buddies teams Carroll County residents with children from the Boys and Girls Club of Westminster for weekly exercise activities. Most weeks, there are 25 to 30 children working with him and other community mentors, Isom said.

“I created Fitness Buddies as a way to give back to my community,” said Isom, who earned a bachelor’s degree in liberal arts with an exercise science focus. “I am trying to make a difference in children’s lives by teaching them how to be mindful of their health through physical activity.”

The program has a new president and may expand to other neighboring colleges in the future, said Isom, who will still be involved while pursuing a master’s degree in public health this fall at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He also wants to work on more youth health projects in the future.

While at McDaniel, Isom was a Global Fellow and studied in Colombia. “Studying abroad helped me apply a global mentality to my undergraduate studies and leadership in cultural student organizations,” he said. “It was a transformative experience that has helped my work in the Fitness Buddies community.”



Madeline Suggs
Director of Public Affairs
Baltimore Jewish Council

Madeline Suggs keeps her ear tuned to current events, and in the past year, what she has heard began to trouble her.

“As the dialogue in the national media become more and more polarizing, and anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric continued to rise, I knew something had to be done,” Suggs said.

As the Baltimore Jewish Council’s director of public affairs, she knew she could make an impact. She started a new dialogue series for Muslim, Jewish and Christian young professionals to discuss current events and to get to know one another. Working along with the Institute for Islamic, Christian and Jewish Studies, she also helped to organize volunteer efforts and discussions to bring people together to work and talk about their communities.

Finally, after the death of Freddie Gray, she conducted anti-racism training within the Jewish community to help residents become better allies with their African American neighbors.

“My goal in all to these efforts, and the other programs I lead each year, is to combat hate in Baltimore,” Suggs said. “We all have too much in common to get lost in the issues that drive us apart.”

This year Suggs was accepted as a member of the Governor’s Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs, an achievement of which she is particularly proud.

“One of the reasons this group is so special to me is its ability to bring together groups of varying faiths and shared histories to work together toward making Maryland a stronger state and more welcoming home for those of Middle Eastern descent,” she said.

Suggs also volunteers with EMILY’s List, Jewish Volunteer Connection and Charm City Tribe. She is a graduate of University of Maryland, College Park, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in government and politics.

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Photo taken at The Maryland State House, Annapolis

Maximilian Franz/The Daily Record



Robbie Sheehan
Director of Government
and Community Relations
Salisbury University

Robbie Sheehan was 14 years old when he was hired as a bus boy at Kent Island’s Silver Swan restaurant. He credits this first foray into the world of work with teaching him how to speak professionally, think on his feet, deal with a “myriad of personalities” and earn the respect of his supervisors.

The lessons proved their importance when he took his first job out of college as Salisbury University’s interim director of government relations. “Within the first few weeks of my hiring, I was asked to lobby the Maryland General Assembly for a \$107 million academic commons capital budget project, for which the University had been fighting for several years,” Sheehan said. “I was absolutely terrified that I wasn’t going to be successful and would be looking for a new job within a few weeks.

Four years later, Sheehan said he is “truly humbled” to see that project is nearly completed and to continue working for his undergraduate alma mater, now as the director of government and community relations.

Outside of work, Sheehan serves on the advisory board of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Greater Chesapeake and is also a Big Brother. In addition, he has been named to the United Way of the Lower Eastern Shore’s Mentoring Task Force and serves on the Advisory Board of the Epoch Dream Center after-school program.

“I have been a lifelong resident of Maryland and the Eastern Shore and it is my desire to continue giving back to a community that has invested so much in me,” he said.

Along with his bachelor’s degree from Salisbury, Sheehan holds a master’s degree in public administration from University of Pennsylvania.



Hannah Marr
Press Secretary
Office of Gov. Larry Hogan

As press secretary to Gov. Larry Hogan, Hannah Marr is proud to be raising awareness about programs like the Maryland Food Bank, Special Olympics Maryland, and the Cool Kids Campaign.

“We make a big impact, whether it’s through donating coats and gloves to low-income families in Baltimore City, or raising awareness and funds for cancer research,” she said. “Our work has positively impacted thousands of people across the state.”

Marr communicates with Maryland residents through the governor’s social media accounts. “I talk about policy initiatives, but also connect on a personal level and give them a glimpse into his personality and life,” she said. “I have a high level of responsibility and have built a strong working relationship with the governor.”

Marr has come a long way since her first job – supermarket cashier at a Mars store in Carney when she was 16 – and is just starting her political career. “In 20 years, I hope to be an established political communications professional helping to elect liberty-minded, small-government candidates to office at all levels,” she said. “I will continue to work as hard as I can to gain the experience and connections needed to influence our country’s political landscape for the better.”

Marr is a graduate of Washington College.



Zachary A. Peters
Special Projects
Office of the Commissioner
Maryland Insurance Administration

Zachary A. Peters is working to ensure that his hometown, Mount Airy, will continue to grow. Appointed to the town’s Economic Development Commission in 2014, while still a student at Loyola University Maryland, Peters helped revise a zoning ordinance that has allowed a micro-distillery to open downtown.

“This is the kind of economic development our community needs to thrive,” said Peters, a 2015 graduate who earned a bachelor’s degree in political science. “MISCellaneous Distillery is planning to open this summer and will add a new and exciting industry in our impressive roster of businesses.”

Peters is a fourth generation Mount Airy resident and volunteers on the town’s historical society hall of fame selection committee. “We are passionate about rewarding those who have made great efforts to improve our way of life.”

Peters also helps state residents as special projects assistant in the Maryland Insurance Administration, which regulates the insurance industry. He recruits insurance carriers to Maryland to expand the market for consumers.

Eventually Peters hopes for a career in economic development. “I am working to provide a solid foundation for the long-term economic health of my community, and in 20 years, I hope to be in a leadership role that improves the quality of life across the state.”

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Photo taken on Federal Hill, Baltimore



Jessica Fast
Account Manager
Abel Communications

As a communications and public relations specialist for Abel Communications, Jessica Fast helps local and national companies be part of a broader conversation. “I believe the greatest accomplishments come from overcoming obstacles, so I look for new and different ways to solve challenges,” she said.

Each day is different for Fast – a fact she thrives on. One day, she may be writing, another helping a client coordinate a live event, the next overseeing a video shoot. “I feel really lucky to be a part of an incredibly talented group of people here at Abel,” she said. “They have really exciting ideas. ... and I really love being able to share fresh ideas.”

Her proudest professional accomplishment thus far was helping one of her clients, Presbyterian Senior Living, with a campaign to raise awareness for National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month. Fast spread the word about one of their facilities in Easton, Pa., which features a dementia wing filled with items dating back to the 1940s and 1950s. The story about this unique effort to help patients remember details of their lives published in more than 100 media outlets and led to calls from researchers, recognition from celebrities and interest from families with loved ones facing the disease.

“When we get to hear what our work does beyond (the initial placement), that is the most meaningful for me,” she said.

Fast is a graduate of Flagler College and holds a master’s degree from Johns Hopkins University’s Carey School of Business.



Matthew Stubenberg
IT Director
Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service

Matthew Stubenberg’s work shows what’s possible when law and technology are blended. Stubenberg created MDexpungement.com, which has been used to help residents expunge more than 10,000 criminal cases.

The website has turned a process that usually took 30 minutes per case to one that now takes less than one minute. It operates by using a given case number, pulling the information about that case from the Maryland Judiciary Case Search website, determining if the case can be expunged based on several factors, and then automatically filling out the forms.

“The website has helped thousands of people, and more importantly, has pushed people to think about other legal areas that could benefit from technology,” Stubenberg said.

Stubenberg’s day job is to provide legal services to low-income clients through the nonprofit, Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service. He has organized numerous expungement clinics for clients and others, and trained more than 100 attorneys on expungement law. Before starting law school, he taught computer lessons at a homeless shelter.

This path of law and technology has been a good one for his career, Stubenberg said, and he wants to continue on it by creating additional software to help low-income clients.

“Where a good attorney can only help a certain amount of people per day, a good piece of software can help thousands of people a day,” he said.

Stubenberg is a graduate of the University of Maryland School of Law and holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from University of Maryland Baltimore County. Additionally, he sits on the Maryland State Bar Association’s technology subcommittee.



Celia Neustadt
Executive Director
The Inner Harbor Project

Baltimore native Celia Neustadt was an urban sociology major at Pomona College near Los Angeles when a thesis project on participatory action research gave her the determination to return to her home city and work as a bridge to break down segregation.

“I grew up in the city and had the unique privilege to grow up in both Baltimores,” said Neustadt, the 26-year old executive director of The Inner Harbor Project. “I embraced the city as a young white girl exposed to these divisions, and this is my attempt to have people walk a mile in other people’s shoes and break down those stereotypes.”

The result is the Inner Harbor Project, a nonprofit the Pomona College and Baltimore City College graduate started at age 22 as a youth-led initiative. The Inner Harbor Project employs 40 youngsters year-round who meet every day after school. The students are sent as ambassadors to the Harbor (wearing blue T-shirts) to promote the group’s message of respect. They hold trainings with Baltimore City Police Department officers and work with police to intervene in some juvenile cases. The group also issues a Harbor Card — offering discounts at area merchants — to incentivize positive behavior among youths who hang out at the harbor.

“I think it took me time to find where my role was — I’m in between communities,” she said. “My role is not to be at the front of the crowd, but to be between two groups and help them navigate that space, and that’s a really comfortable place for me to be in.”

Neustadt said that her parents joke that her first words were “that’s not fair.” Social justice and Baltimore are her driving passions, and she hopes to expand her project to other cities in the future.

“I want Baltimore to be a model for social change,” she said. “I want to see Baltimore at the forefront.”



Adam Jeraldo Milam
Faculty Associate
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

When Baltimore native Adam Milam discovered that he could use science to keep youngsters away from violence, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, he got hooked on research.

The Baltimore City College graduate with a bachelor’s degree, master’s degree and Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health has fueled new legislation through findings from his doctoral dissertation—including in a 2012 Rolling Stone story about “The Wire” actress Felicia Barnes—showing the role liquor stores play in childhood health and safety.

“The research that I have conducted with my colleagues at Hopkins and University of Maryland have helped to increase taxes on little cigars, improve enrollment in health insurance and is currently being used to re-write the zoning code for Baltimore City,” he said.

The 29-year-old said he found his niche in the research lab as an undergraduate at Johns Hopkins University, and enjoys tackling big problems, learning every day.

“I am surrounded by Nobel Prize winners, international scholars and individuals that make ‘Saving lives, millions at a time’ a reality,” Milam said.

He is pursuing a career as a residential anesthesiologist focusing on substance abuse intervention with plans to work himself out of a job.

His first job was as a camp counselor at the Police Athletic League Center on Pennsylvania Avenue where he said he learned the impact of early and simple health interventions. Now, he counsels, mentors and teaches college students how to research.

“My biggest pride is helping prepare the next generation of researchers and practitioners that will have an impact on the community,” Milam said. “Many of the students I mentor mention that they were impacted by my work and decided to pursue their career in public health and medicine because of the work I was doing and the impact it can have on the local community.”



Maximilian Franz/The Daily Record



Francesca Genevieve Weaks
Adjunct Professor
Bowie State and Morgan State Universities

Francesca Genevieve Weaks focuses on eliminating health disparities in all communities. It's work that has captivated her since she was undergraduate at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro and founded the school's American Red Cross club.

Now on an academic track, Weaks teaches public health and health science classes at Bowie State and Morgan State universities as well as Community College of Baltimore County. Previously she taught at Towson University.

What's exciting about this work, Weaks said, is that the way practitioners promote public health has changed in the past decade to include more input from the communities they serve. The resulting dialogue is more fruitful.

"Our language and methods for how we address health issues have had to change over the last decade, and I have been honored to be a part of that shift and movement of how we strategically plan, market and advertise in communities," Weaks said.

Weaks, who grew up in rural North Carolina in a single parent household, said she was warned not to dream too big. As the first person in her family to earn an undergraduate degree as a traditional student, she hopes to inspire her students to achieve more than they dream of as well.

"Professionally I love pouring hope, encouragement and joy into my students," said Weaks, who is within a year of finishing her Ph.D. "Being able to reach back and give them more because of my struggles and what I had to learn is one of my greatest accomplishments."

Weaks is member of the Glen Community Association and sits on the board of the Maryland Academy of Technology and Science. She is also an American Red Cross first aid and CPR instructor.



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