



# The East Baltimore Bulletin

A publication of Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition and its many community partners

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## Special Points of Interest:

- *YO! Grant*
- *Elroy Christopher a local hero*
- *Living Classrooms skills training*
- *Community youth lend a hand*

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## \$1 Million grant awarded to HEBCAC Youth Opportunity for mental health

Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition's (HEBCAC) Youth Opportunity (YO!) Center has received \$1 million in grants to expand mental health services for young adults.

The three-year, \$500,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation will fund *Healthy Minds at Work*. The project will expand mental health services at HEBCAC's Youth Opportunity (YO!) Center for youth aged 16-22 who are not connected to a school or the workforce.

Citing data from a 2006 report conducted by the Center for Adolescent Health, Jane Plapinger, President and CEO of Baltimore Mental Health Systems, said one-third of the YO! Center's 500 members have witnessed a homicide and about half of these young people exhibit mild to severe symptoms of depression. She also said "due to the current limited capacity of the mental health staff at YO!, less than one-quarter of YO! members showing mental health concerns received mental health services."



YO! Staff members Benjamin Byrd, research assistant and peer leader (standing left), Jahon Jones, research assistant and peer leader, Sara Brown, mental health therapist, and Amanda Manning, screening coordinator, will be providing mental health services to members.

HEBCAC's YO! Center is part of the larger Baltimore Youth Opportunity Movement that is sponsored by the Mayor's Office of Employment Development. Local funding partners for the program include The Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation, Leonard and Helen R. Stulman Charitable Foundation, The Abell Foundation, France-Merrick Foundation, The Annie E. Casey Foundation and The Aaron Straus & Lillie Straus Foundation.

## HEBCAC launches new website

Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition has launched a new Website --- [www.hebcac.org](http://www.hebcac.org)

Check out HEBCAC's new website for community news and events. The website provides a fresh look and up to the moment information about all of HEBCAC's programs, activities, and many other items of interest for East Baltimore. Special thanks to the staff at the Center for Community Technology Services at The University of Baltimore for their hard work to build the new website for HEBCAC.

## EBTRC offers free computer training

Do you need help creating a resume or learning Microsoft Word? If so, then the East Baltimore Technology Resource Center (EBTRC) is the place for you.

EBTRC, located at 901 N. Milton Avenue, offers low-cost computers and software; hardware and software training; and computer repair services to people of all ages. “The oldest volunteer at the center is 90 years old, and the youngest is 18,” says EBTRC Director Towanda Boston.

EBTRC also offers A+ certification classes. The training will be geared toward preparing individuals for entry level positions as IT service technicians. There is a fee to take this training.

EBTRC refurbishes more than 1,500 computers a year, providing Maryland public schools, nonprofit organizations, and selected individuals with much needed technology. Some of the refurbished computers are available for sale through ReBoot Computer Store, located at 2341 E. Monument Street. The store is open Monday through Friday from noon to 5pm.

For more information about the A+ certification or to take a class, call (410) 534-4099 or visit HEBCAC’s website at [www.hebcac.org](http://www.hebcac.org).



*Lenora Jones, 91, attends computer training classes at EBTRC.*



*EBTRC volunteer Harry Hook refurbishes a computer.*

## Training program helps out of school youth

Fresh Start, a 40-week job skills training program that serves out-of-school youth ages 16-19, is now located at 901 N. Milton Avenue. The program uses carpentry skills training as a medium to teach reading, writing, math, history, and science. Students work in the Living Classrooms Foundation’s Maritime Institute workshop and the Douglass-Myers Maritime Park boatbuilding workshop building toolboxes, furniture, and boats. The majority of the students in the program are referred by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services.

Students receive classroom instruction and one-on-one tutoring. The curriculum is designed to increase self-reliance, teach problem solving and academic skills, and demonstrate how academic skills and knowledge are used in a practical work environment. Fresh Start students increase their math, reading, and writing levels by an average of 1.5 grade levels while in the program. Nearly eighty percent of graduates remain employed and/or in school for three years after completion of the program.

The Fresh Start program is one example of how Living Classrooms is changing lives by teaching marketable job skills. The U.S. Department of Labor and the National Youth Employment Coalition has recognized Living Classrooms’ Fresh Start program for “best practices working with at-risk youth” and for embodying a “continuous improvement process.”

For more about the program, contact Stephanie Region at (410) 685-0295 ext. 234.

## Youth workers contribute time and talent in community

More than 100 youth from the Mayor's Office of Employment Development spent the summer working with community leaders in East Baltimore. Mitchell Henderson, president of Madison Multi-Purpose Community Center, supervised more than 25 of these young workers. Besides cleaning streets, participants had an opportunity to visit the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum and the Mitchell Court House. One youngster in the program, Nehemiah Hall, a junior at Baltimore Freedom Academy, even wrote a poem about his experience.

*"Mr. Mitch saw us as more than employees, he saw the future. He saw a family. He saw potential. He was there for us, even if he was tired. He did more than what was required. When you hear that name, Madison East End, think of him—Mr. Mitch Henderson."*

Meanwhile, Elroy Christopher, president of Covenant Community Association, played host to about 50 youth workers. Youth workers helped run a summer camp, participated in a gang-related intervention program, conducted peer tutoring, and expanded their vocabulary. Additional youth workers were also assigned to help out at the Summer Peace Camp Program for community youth held at the Harry & Jeannette Community Center at 901 N. Milton Avenue.



Mitchell Henderson talks to youth workers during a youth appreciation celebration.



Four-year-old Nyla Lyles holds a birdhouse she painted during summer camp.

## Community residents receive honors and recognition



**Ida Hopkins**, vice president of special events for Collington Square Neighborhood Association and a board member for Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition, was recently recognized by Mayor Sheila Dixon, for her dedication to the Baltimore City Head Start program. Hopkins first started volunteering with the program in 1988. She was also honored with a Star Volunteer Award from the Baltimore Housing—Office of Community Service.



**Delegate Hattie Harrison**, chair of HEBCAC's Board of Directors has received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Sojourner-Douglass College. Delegate Harrison received her honors during the twenty-eighth commencement exercise held in June. She was one of four people receiving the degree. The degree is conferred upon persons whose lives and achievements exemplify the mission and purpose of the college. Delegate Harrison is currently the longest serving state legislator, having served 35 years.



**Elroy Christopher**, president of Covenant Community Association, has been named a 2008 local hero by Bank of America. The Neighborhood Excellence Initiative Award recognizes local heroes, student leaders, and community-based organizations working to improve communities. The bank focuses on areas such as education, community development, arts and culture and health and human services.

## Creating a safe haven for people with drug addiction

In 2000 a group of former substance abusers with the help of Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition (HEBCAC), launched Dee's Place—a safe haven for people struggling with drug addiction.

Most experts agree that late hours are often the times that former substance abusers are the most vulnerable to relapse. Dee's Place staff and volunteers support individuals in their recovery nearly 24 hours a day, seven days a week through group meetings and one-on-one counseling.

The staff also assists people seeking help with recovery by referring them to appropriate drug treatment programs and connecting with support services for housing, legal, health and mental health services, job training and other needs.

People seeking recovery support services can attend daily Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings at Dee's Place. Meetings are held at 1212 N. Wolfe Street (in the rear of the building).

For more information, call (410) 276-4035.

## Community Association Meetings

### Berea/Eastside Community Association

4th Monday, 7:00 pm  
2600 E. Hoffman St.

### McElderry Park Community

3rd Wednesday, 6:00 pm  
611 Montford Ave.

### CARE

4th Tuesday, 6:00 pm  
219 N. Chester St.

### Madison East End

2nd Tuesday, 7:00 pm  
901 N. Milton Ave., 3rd floor

### Collington Square Neighborhood Association

4th Tuesday, 6:30 pm  
2111 Mura St.

### BCPD Community Relations

Eastern District Police Station  
Last Tuesday, 7:00 pm  
1620 Edison Hwy.

### Douglass Homes Tenant Council Meeting

3rd Wednesday, 2:00pm  
1500 E. Lexington St.

### Oliver Community Meeting

3rd Thursday, 7:00 pm  
1400 E. Federal St.

*The East Baltimore Bulletin* is a quarterly publication of Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition and its community partners. To submit comments or story ideas, please call Anita Stewart-Hammerer at 443-524-2800 or email [ahammerer@hebcac.org](mailto:ahammerer@hebcac.org).



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