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CONTACT:  
Beth Casey (410) 516-0175  
Sophia Rudisill (410) 516-6113

## **MIDDLE GRADES PARTNERSHIP GRANTS \$943,000 TO GIVE CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS A BOOST**

*(Baltimore, MD, 5/8/09)* The Middle Grades Partnership (MGP) has announced grant awards totaling \$943,000 that will equip 643 academically promising Baltimore City public school students with the skills they need to succeed in a rigorous college preparatory high school. The funding announced today will support nine individual programs through the coming summer and the 2009-10 school year. Each program is operated by two partners: a public middle school and an independent school or university.

The MGP, now in its sixth year of operation, opens up choices for students in their education. Sixty-four percent of the program's current 8<sup>th</sup> grade participants qualify for entry into Baltimore's competitive-admissions high schools such as City College and Baltimore Polytechnic Institute. At Collington Square Elementary Middle School, located in one of Baltimore City's most economically challenged neighborhoods, an impressive eighty percent of eighth grade MGP students qualify for competitive high schools in the coming year.

"When we created the pilot program in 2005, we envisioned our MGP students as the future leaders of Baltimore," explains Tom Wilcox, president of the Baltimore Community Foundation which houses the Middle Grades Partnership. "It's exciting to see these bright young people reaching their potential. We're looking forward to seeing them return after college and achieve great things for Baltimore."

The MGP identifies students during their sixth grade year in city schools and provides them with comprehensive, year-round learning opportunities over three summers and their two remaining middle school years. Each partnership between a public and independent school is different, drawing on the strengths, needs and school cultures of the partners. Teachers and administrators from the two schools work together to design curriculum and operate the programs.

Partnerships receiving funding today include,

- Boys Latin School / Garrison Middle School
- Calvert School / Francis Scott Key Elementary Middle School
- Friends School / ConneXions Community Academy / Hampstead Hill Academy
- Garrison Forest School / Collington Square Elementary Middle School / City Springs Elementary Middle School
- Gilman School / Collington Square Elementary Middle School / City Springs Elementary Middle School
- McDonogh School / Mt. Royal Elementary Middle School
- Park School / Winston Middle School
- Roland Park Country School / Garrison Middle School
- Towson University / Baltimore Civitas School

The Middle Grades Partnership, a program of the Baltimore Community Foundation, has made grants to member schools totaling \$4.9 million since its inception in 2005.

### **ABOUT THE BALTIMORE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

The Baltimore Community Foundation distributed \$28 million in 2008 to hundreds of nonprofit organizations in the Baltimore region and beyond. With assets of \$143 million, BCF comprises more than 600 different charitable funds, some of which support special programs like the Middle Grades Partnership.

BCF invites donors to **Invest in Baltimore** through its civic agenda, which combines economic development with poverty reduction by making strategic investments in the areas of human services, youth, education, transportation, neighborhoods, diversity, environment, arts and culture, and promoting Baltimore.

BCF helps individuals, families and organizations carry out their charitable plans, with the common goal of improving the quality of life in the greater Baltimore region, today and for generations to come. To donors, BCF offers a complete toolkit for charitable giving, expert assistance in learning more about the causes they care about, and the opportunity to join others with similar interests to learn and give together. To the community at large, BCF offers a permanent, growing source of grant monies, as well as a common meeting ground and leadership on important issues in our region.

In addition, BCF provides grantmaking oversight for two independent foundations, the William G. Baker Jr. Memorial Fund and the Leonard and Helen R. Stulman Charitable Foundation.

More information about **Invest in Baltimore** as well as support for individual donors' philanthropy and more can be found at [www.bcf.org](http://www.bcf.org).

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