And Jayne Miller is curious about a lot of things. She has covered crime stories without making assumptions or losing sight of the humanity of every participant. She has sniffed out corruption in public officials, railed against unethical private businesses, and advocated for accountability in public policy.

Through four decades of investigative reporting, Miller has become one of Baltimore's most respected and influential voices for integrity, insight, and change. "My reporting," she says, "is intended to make people think differently, to open their eyes."

Over years and many conversations, Miller has found a kindred spirit in BCF. She was a member of BCF's early Quality of Life Giving Circle and has opened a BCF donor-advised fund. She has directed honoraria for speaking engagements to her fund and is planning to leave BCF a legacy gift.

"The Baltimore Community Foundation is open to new donors, new leaders," she says, "so you get new ideas, new attitudes and outlooks. That's how we're really going to change."

Dr. Sonja Santelises
A Series of Conversations with Philanthropic Partners and Others

This is a distillation of a conversation between Tom Wilcox and Dr. Sonja Santelises, CEO of Baltimore City Schools.

TOM WILCOX: You have had two relationships with BCF, one as Chief Academic Officer and now Chief Executive Officer. What perspective has that given you on the importance of philanthropy in general and BCF in particular?

SONJA SANTELISES: I always think fondly of the authentic collaboration between us and our independent school counterparts in the many thousands of kids served in the Middle Grades Partnership. BCF always did its best to understand and connect into the core of our teaching and learning.

Returning as CEO, I have a much greater appreciation of the true bandwidth of BCF in really helping to foster thriving schools in Baltimore City. We benefit from your direct support through things like Judy Centers and School Leadership, but also from your editorials, and your influence with key decision makers in the business and governmental sectors. You know the issues so well that we don’t have to spend a whole lot of time explaining why an issue is important. Having a place where people “get it” is invaluable in this work, and you bring a unique objectivity because your donor community crosses Baltimore’s ideological spectrum. You also always make sure the messaging is really about empowerment of communities, about neighborhoods advocating for the education of their young. 
I have been working with BCF’s Neighborhood Grants Program for over ten years, and the thing that stands out to me is that it’s permanent – because we have an endowment to support it – but it’s also flexible. We can tweak the grant program to meet new or different neighborhood needs, or to complement other things BCF is doing.

But at its heart, the Neighborhood Grants Program is about giving community associations and informal neighborhood groups a source of small grants to support their ideas of how to make their neighborhood better. Applicants may or may not have a 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, but they have an idea for a project that will get people involved and help build a stronger organization and a stronger community. For some, it’s the first grant they ever receive, and many are then able to go on to apply successfully to other sources, having completed that first project.

Every neighborhood is unique, but a lot of what makes any neighborhood strong is the relationship among neighbors. Helping neighborhoods identify their needs and come up with a way to address those needs by working with their neighbors—that’s what makes the Neighborhood Grants Program so great. Getting people out and talking to one another, and tackling something together is really powerful.

The Neighborhood Grants Program gives us a way to support neighborhoods all across Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are always looking for ways to get the word out to more neighborhood groups about the availability of these grants, especially in Baltimore City where there’s no official list of community organizations we can reach out to. I am an optimist at heart, absolutely.” She talks about the new members of the City Council, the enlightened leaders who are applying public health approaches to the opioid epidemic, the interest of young people to be politically involved, and the perpetual dream of reliable, efficient transportation. She cites the effectiveness of preschool education and recognizes the public servants who “go above and beyond to help kids succeed.”

“Baltimore is better off than a lot of places because of the proximity to Washington and the institutional components already in place,” she says. “Another encouraging thing is that I know young people in this town, and I’ve been really impressed by conversations with BCF about how to grow the talent, creativity, and entrepreneurship of these young people.”

A LEGACY OF PHILANTHROPY

Miller remembers her parents instilling in her and her brother the values of humility and philanthropy. “Philanthropy,” she says, “meant that you were cognizant that you were blessed, that you were to look outwardly to put your humility and philanthropy. “Philanthropy,” she says, “meant that you were cognizant that you were blessed, that you were to look outwardly to put gratitude to work.”

“I’m doing estate planning,” she continues, “and in figuring out what I wanted to do, I thought about conversations I’ve had over time with the Community Foundation. I have an interest in fiduciary oversight once I’m long gone, and I have the opportunity with BCF to put philanthropic dollars to work in a more impactful way. That’s really important. You can always do more in the collective than you can individually.”

THE BCF BEAT Reporting on all things BCF

We invited members of the Baltimore City Council to get to know BCF over breakfast. What ensued was a terrific conversation—which is continuing about our mutual hopes and plans for our city.

We got solid proof that BCF donors’ investments in Judy Centers are paying off: recent test results show that Judy Centers boost readiness for kindergarten 28% beyond City Schools pre-k classes, which themselves outperform other early learning experiences in Baltimore and across the state.

Tom Wilson, president and CEO of BCF since 2000, announced his retirement. A search for our next CEO has begun; you can see updates on the search at www.bcf.org/CEOsearch.

The Transportation Alliance chalked up an important win when the General Assembly passed a bill ending an outdated requirement that 35% of the operating costs of Baltimore’s public transit be recovered through fares paid by riders.
Appreciation for Our Volunteers

Two longtime members of BCF’s Board of Trustees, Harry Johnson and Marc Terrill, retired from the board this past spring, and were honored during the board’s June meeting. Both were named honorary BCF trustees. Steve King, longtime volunteer on our Budget & Finance and Audit committees, was also hailed at the event.

LEADERSHIP ON RACE, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Harry Johnson and Marc Terrill’s legacy at BCF is deeply connected to the Foundation’s development of, and ongoing effort to advance its race, equity and inclusion work. Both have served on the board since 2006, bringing their combined expertise to bear on BCF’s work to improve neighborhoods and schools.

Under the co-leadership of Harry and Marc, BCF’s Race, Equity and Inclusion Task Force developed a framework and a timeline for educating trustees, staff, and partners about principles of racial equity, and incorporating those principles into BCF’s focus areas of schools and neighborhoods, as well as into BCF’s grantmaking and organizational framework.

“Harry and Marc have made many key contributions to BCF’s work over their time on the board, and their work together on race, equity and inclusion has been very instrumentalugn shaping our strategic direction for the future,” says Laura Gamble, BCF board chair. “BCF was made stronger because of the commitment Harry and Marc have to BCF and to making Baltimore better.”

HARRY JOHNSON

Harry Johnson is partner at the law firm of Whiteford, Taylor & Preston. At BCF, he has been a familiar face in many areas of our work. He was a founding member and co-chair of BCF’s Race, Equity and Inclusion Committee, a role he held for six years.

He also served on the Audit, Neighborhoods and Executive committees, the Campaign Executive Committee, and was a member of BCF’s Strategic Planning Task Force.

“Harry has played a key role in BCF’s growth in size and influence. He played an important role in the BCF 2011 Strategic Plan, was a conscientious member of the Audit Committee and helped shape BCF’s commitment to racial equity; he has been a salient voice at BCF pushing us to make our work more inclusive, relevant and impactful in Baltimore,” says BCF President & CEO Tom Wilcox. “He has never shied away from taking on a new challenge as a member of our board and its committees, and you can see his expertise and insight reflected in so many areas of our work. It’s not a stretch to say that BCF is profoundly stronger due to Harry’s efforts – all of which we will truly miss.”

MARC TERRILL

Marc Terrill is president and CEO of The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore. Marc has served on both the Development and Executive committees. He also served on BCF’s most recent Strategic Planning Task Force.

Since 2013, Marc has co-chaired the Race, Equity and Inclusion Committee alongside Harry Johnson.

“Marc brought with him to BCF a wealth of knowledge about the landscape of philanthropy in Baltimore and provided leadership as we began our process of addressing race, equity and inclusion. Along with Harry Johnson, Marc helped establish BCF as a frontrunner among community foundations nationally,” says Wilcox. “Marc brought new donors to BCF, and he helped BCF in innumerable ways. It is simply wonderful that has shared his resources, in every sense of the word, with us. His generosity, advice and experience have all been deeply appreciated.”

STEVE KING

BCF’s Board of Trustees also honored Steve King, who served as a committee member at BCF for 13 years – on the Audit Committee (2003-15) and the Budget and Finance Committee (2015-17). Steve is a Baltimore native and CPA at Ellin & Tucker. Steve’s reflective review, precise thinking and deep wisdom in overseeing BCF’s financial integrity has helped build community-wide trust in BCF’s role as fiduciary for Baltimore.

Your gift to the Civic Leadership Fund provides operating capital for BCF, supporting efforts like our advocacy for equitable funding of our public schools.

Learn more and give at www.bcf.org/clf

BCF hosted a session with Bryce Critt, nationally known expert on complex charitable gifts, to provide Baltimore-area legal and financial advisors an opportunity to learn about “Top Trends Every Advisor Should Know in 2017.”

Our annual Investment Briefing included an overview of BCF’s recent investment strategy and returns, and a presentation on preliminary plans to move a portion of our assets into social impact investments: local projects that align with our mission. Stay tuned for more on this topic!

Middle Grades Partnership summer program kicked off with 400 students – the largest cohort ever for this 15-year old program. The program changes lives; 80% of students say they are four times more likely than their peers to qualify for Baltimore City’s competitive-entrance high schools.

The Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle, 15 years old and 432 members strong, awarded $480,000 to 19 organizations serving low-income women and their families. The grants support projects that help women improve their health, education, self-sufficiency and overall well-being.

Visit www.bcf.org for more upcoming events.
FROM SCHOOLHOUSE TO STATE HOUSE

All Eyes on Kirwan Commission Report in December

Maryland’s Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education—chaired by Dr. Brit Kirwan and known to many as the Kirwan Commission—will deliver its final report to Governor Larry Hogan and the Maryland General Assembly in December. The report is the culmination of a year-long investigation of how public education might best be funded and delivered across the state of Maryland.

The recommendations of the Kirwan Commission will likely drive conversations and legislation about public education for the next several years. Though we don’t yet know what the Kirwan Commission’s recommendations will be, we do know this:

- Current funding for City Schools is inadequate.
- Changes to the state funding formula must include:
  - Increased funding for schools in areas of concentrated poverty,
  - Equitable distribution of state aid,
  - Full-day pre-K for 3- and 4-year-old children from low-income families.
- We have confidence in Baltimore City Schools. The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and the City Schools CEO have well thought-out plans to improve the system. However, in the absence of a significant increase in state funding, City Schools will not be able to fully implement those plans, resulting in students not meeting state standards.
- Systemic racism — policies and practices that drive the achievement gap and impede economic opportunities for students of color — must be addressed head-on as an integral part of any plan to reform public education.

BCF is keeping a close eye on this important moment for public education and we are focusing our advocacy efforts on the preparing for and following up on the Kirwan Commission’s recommendations.

JOIN US

- Subscribe to our e-news to receive regular updates and action alerts:
  www.bcf.org/subscribe
- Watch the advocacy page on our website for additional information:
  www.bcf.org/advocacy

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT UPDATE

Learning to Lead

“Natural” leaders do not spring fully formed into their roles. Even the most naturally gifted leaders must hone their skills and apply them effectively. Now the Baltimore City Public Schools are strengthening their leaders—school principals—by supporting their participation in the very enterprise they lead: learning.

As part of its work to increase school effectiveness and school leadership, the Baltimore Community Foundation is partnering with City Schools and education organizations to bolster school principals’ leadership abilities. Stronger leaders reinforce effective classroom teaching and, in turn, improve student achievement.

To accomplish this, we are investing in five school leadership strategies:

- Leadership pipeline development
- Leadership professional development including coaching, mentoring and peer networking
- Building a culture of appreciation for principals
- Advocating for and influencing changes in policies and practices
- Other supports, including contributions to the Principal Support Fund

BCF funded BKL & Associates to help new and early career principals learn how to be successful within the City School system. We funded MarylandCAN to launch a mentoring program pairing less experienced principals with transformational, top-performing principals. We also funded a Teach To Lead coaching program to develop principals’ core leadership competencies: self-awareness, cultural proficiency, strategic planning/execution, people leadership/management, and instructional leadership. We helped participants in the New Leaders program raise their proficiencies through teacher team coaching. We partnered with The Fund for Educational Excellence to seed the Principal Support Fund, which, among other goals, awards grants for professional development.

BCF’s work in school leadership directly supports the stated priorities of Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises, the CEO of City Schools, and Brookins Santelises, the CEO of City Schools, and Callaway Elementary School, credits his participation in a leadership program with his growing confidence as an educator and administrator. “Through Teach To Lead,” he says, “I work with a coach who is an experienced educator and former principal. I’ve become more proactive and purposeful in the professional development that I provide to my teachers and with the instructional changes that I want to foster. I’ve seen a change in teacher practice and have seen students improve their academic proficiency, especially with gains in math and reading.

“My teachers know I have a coach,” he continues. “They know I am open to feedback, and our conversations are not punitive. They’re an effort to improve our practice so that we can put students on a college and career readiness track. At my school, we are creating a culture of learning.”

Principal Del Toro says that coaching doesn’t just help him do his job better. It helps him provide better professional development for the teachers at his school — that’s a powerful ripple effect for a modest investment.
Summer Camps Enrich Young Lives

A brief exposure to something entirely new and thrilling can have a life-changing impact. That is what the Children's Fresh Air Society has provided to more than a quarter-million low-income and disabled Baltimore-area children. Founded in 1890, the Society was converted to a BCF fund in 1990 and has since awarded more than $1.8 million in “camperships”—scholarships equal to tuition, fees, and transportation.

Two Fresh Air Fund grantees illustrate its purpose:

Echo Hill Outdoor School (EHOS)

Summer Explore Program blends education and recreation during a four-day adventure. Baltimore City Public School students who have already participated in an EHOS program during the school year are selected by their teachers for another outdoor experience in the summer.

“These are just really great kids,” says Andrew McCown, associate director of EHOS. “They may not be at the top academically, but their teachers have seen a light bulb come on, seen them blossom or make a connection. The follow-up experience is where we see exponential growth. They’re used to things, like sitting in the grass with bugs, and they go from there.” Campers explore the ecology of the Chesapeake Bay from historic workboats; hold eels and crabs; go swimming and zip lining; cooperate on the low-rope challenge course; and make dessert with hand-picked berries. They see the night sky without light pollution and expand their views of the world and their own capabilities.

Camp Erin®, a program of Roberta's House, supports bereaved children who have experienced the death of someone close to them. Camp Erin was created with former Oriole Jamie Moyer and his wife Karen, who had befriended Erin Metcalf and her family.

“Erin, who died of cancer at 16, was concerned about how her sisters would fare after her passing,” recalls Annette March-Grier, president of Roberta’s House. “That touched the Moyer’s hearts. So each August, we take children out of the city into a wonderful, adventurous environment, where they can deal with the hardest issues and emotions of their loss.”

Camp Erin combines grief education and traditional summer fun. Campers keep a journal of their thoughts, post pictures of their loved ones on a memory board, and float luminaries for a loving farewell.

“We create a safe place to heal,” March-Grier says. “We also give the kids an opportunity to have fun, with obstacle courses, zip lines, swimming, and canoeing. They tell their stories around the evening campfire and learn healthy coping skills. We stay connected and help their families continue the healing process.”

One camper said he learned to talk to others about his grief without feeling embarrassed. Another said she wants to use her camp experience to let other teens know that “they, too, can share their story and they are not alone or going crazy in their grief.”

Dr. Sonja Santelises continued from page 1

TW: So what do you hope BCF can do moving forward?

SS: More of the same. Help us build out what it means to be a collection of schools, a school system that really is an extension of community rather than kind of a fortress against it.

I appreciate that BCF has thought about change and wants to be poised to respond to needs as they arise. I am saying this to somebody who had worked with me in city schools my first round—you recognize that Baltimore is now a different city. It’s a different system now than it was three years ago. Freddie Gray changed the dynamic forever.

TW: Absolutely.

SS: Not all understand the impact of that change. People get that it was bad, they get that we don’t want it to happen again, they get that there are a lot of things contributing to it. But Baltimore needs a true understanding of the importance of the community’s voice and an appreciation of and willingness to work at the ground level. My former colleague and your education officer Billie Marie Malcolm gets it, and Cheryl Casciani has been an amazing board member. This is what makes BCF distinctive in its work, and I think it is essential that you continue to be the bridge between an elite community and the rest of Baltimore. There is a power dynamic whenever you have an organization that can leverage millions upon millions of dollars, but you all navigate that well. You lobby the power when you need to, but you also understand and appreciate the need for respectful and open interaction with the community. You listen.

TW: I’m thrilled to hear that because our board and staff want to build upon that, to be sure that we are really listening. We don’t do that as well as we should, and we need to improve. We need to systematize it; we need it to be based upon one-on-one authentic relationships and interactive social media where people feel free to say what they want and know that they will be heard, without fear of retribution.

SS: Good listeners usually know that they need to do more of it. I think the fact that you mentioned that just reaffirms what I was just saying.

TW: Thanks to your bold leadership, our donors and partners are listening and acting. BCF’s outreach during this year’s budget crisis led to thousands of responses, and we can document that 440 separate different letters went from our donors to the governor.

SS: That is wonderful, and it matters. The next iteration of the state funding formula coming from the Kirwan Commission will have a critical impact on our ability to serve our young people and give Baltimore an educated workforce. You did it by capturing the funding, and now we need you more. There was a diversity of voices, there were people who I know are part of BCF, who were calling friends from different zip codes specifically to tell them “make sure you call and make sure you say what your zip code is.” BCF has a strategic understanding of Maryland’s power base and how it works.

TW: Some say that public education is broken. Some say it needs to be privatized, some want to let the traditional schools implode. What do you think?

SS: Do we need to challenge our assumptions about schools? Absolutely. But I think it is naive and elitist, frankly, to think that there are enough private, parochial and charter schools to successfully educate all the kids, that somehow, we can do the “blow up the public school system.” Do we need more choices and better choices? Absolutely. Most families I talk to, from a variety of income levels, want diverse schools and diverse populations in those schools. We have long waiting lists in a variety of traditional and charter schools. That kind of popularity can become the rule.

Ultimately, I believe in the power of public schooling. And I believe that choice is really important. And I don’t mean choice like voucher choice, but choice among a diverse set of strong public schools. Most people want to be able to walk outside of their front door and talk to their fifth grader and know that there is a high-quality school there, that they don’t have to get up and go across town, or make a huge financial commitment, to find that school.
To serve my clients in the best way possible, I ask about their interests and passions. What do they value: Their place of worship? Education? The environment? Arts and culture? A remedy for homelessness? Animal welfare?

Once I understand more about my clients' interests and passions, I can help them shape their financial planning in a direction that will be meaningful to them. Most people welcome an opportunity to talk about charitable giving as part of financial planning because giving makes us feel good. In fact, recent studies have linked giving with being healthier and living longer.

But most people want to contribute so they can understand the impact of their gift, and that's where I talk with them about working with a community foundation and establishing a charitable fund. They like the fact that it's a structured, active style of management, but they don't have to police it. Rosemary Calderalo, BCF's director of planned giving, is a great partner, and my clients know that their charitable funds will be well managed.

When financial advisors become involved in their clients' charitable giving, they see that we're not simply managing their assets for investment; we are helping them manage their financial lifestyle. Creating a legacy can be part of that. Family involvement as a centerpiece for giving back can be one of the greatest joys of building wealth. When I describe donor-advised funds, many realize they can engage their family members, especially younger people. It's a great reason to get the family together to talk about their values and choices.

Sometimes clients are surprised with what a family member will propose. One child had a friend whose family was homeless, and their gift could make a helpful change in that family's life. Another family chose to name their fund in honor of the matriarch so her memory would live on.

Wealthy clients also appreciate being able to make a graceful reply to requests for donations. They can say my financial planner advised us to establish this charitable fund as a vehicle for giving, and you are welcome to apply for a grant from it.

Philanthropy is a rewarding addition to overall financial planning, and it can help mitigate both income and estate taxes. But playing a meaningful, supportive role in causes that personally speak to a client goes far beyond tax deductions.

D. Crystal Alford-Cooper is Owner/CEO, Davita Financial Planning LLC and President of the Financial Planning Association of Maryland

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**MY LEGACY**

**Sharon and Bill Reuter**

“When we moved to Ridgley’s Delight 30 years ago, we found a generous community and a city we loved. We have always supported the young people in our neighborhood, and when it was time to plan our estate, we knew we wanted to do something that could help students identify and pursue their interests. We knew BCF through a giving circle we participated in there, and it made sense to us to leave a bequest through BCF that would create a scholarship fund to benefit young people who share our passion for graphic design. It feels good – if a little intangible – to know that what we give now could be helping students succeed decades into the future.”

Ready to think about your legacy?

Contact Rosemary Calderalo by phone: 410-332-4171 or by email: rcalderalo@bcf.org, or visit www.baltimorelegacy.org.