



bester  
community of  
**HOPE**

A SAN MAR INITIATIVE



# THE RIPPLE EFFECT

2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT







IN JANUARY OF 2014, SAN MAR FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES SET OUT TO PARTNER WITH OTHERS IN MAKING A STRATEGIC IMPACT FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES LIVING IN THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE CITY OF HAGERSTOWN, AND IN SEPTEMBER OF 2015 THE BESTER COMMUNITY OF HOPE WAS FORMALLY CREATED. AT THE CENTER OF THIS DECISION WAS THE IDEA THAT IF WE TOOK THE RESOURCES AND SERVICES THAT ARE TYPICALLY AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES WE SERVE IN FOSTER CARE PROGRAMS AND PROVIDED IT UPFRONT TO ALL RESIDENTS, PREVENTION OF A VARIETY OF NEGATIVE STRESSORS CHILDREN EXPERIENCE WOULD ULTIMATELY IMPROVE THE WELL-BEING OF A NEIGHBORHOOD. WE BELIEVE TODAY THAT THIS HOLISTIC APPROACH IS THE BEST AND MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO INVEST OUR ENERGY TO PREVENT ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES, AND WHAT IS CLEAR IS THAT IT IS ALSO A WISE FINANCIAL INVESTMENT IN THE LONG-TERM.

THE CHALLENGE IN COMMUNICATING THE WORK BEING ACCOMPLISHED IN SO MANY DIFFERENT SECTORS OF NEIGHBORHOOD LIFE IS: HOW DO YOU MEASURE SUCCESS? HOW CAN WE CORRELATE THE SMALLER DAILY ACTIVITIES THAT FACILITATE TRUE PREVENTION OF MAJOR COMMUNITY ISSUES IN THE FUTURE? THIS RIPPLE EFFECT IS BOTH OUR GREAT SOLUTION AND CHALLENGE, TO EXPLAIN THAT A SERIES OF SMALL AND LARGE EFFORTS BUILDING POSITIVE MOMENTUM IN A NEIGHBORHOOD FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ULTIMATELY ARE THE FORMULA FOR THE LASTING CHANGE WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE. SOME OF THESE ACTIVITIES MAY FALL INTO THE IMMEASURABLE, BUT IT IS THE REPEATED DOSAGE OF HEALTHY AND POSITIVE RELATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT BRING US TO THE TIPPING POINT WHERE SUDDENLY THE NARRATIVE ABOUT A PLACE CHANGES, AND THE FEELING KIDS AND THEIR PARENTS HAVE ABOUT WHERE THEY LIVE TURNS TO PRIDE, AND ALL THE KEY OUTCOMES FOLLOW.

THIS REPORT ENCAPSULATES THE ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE OCCURRED OVER THE PAST 18 MONTHS IN THE CORE AREAS OF THE INITIATIVE. WITHOUT THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR CORE PARTNERS AT THE WASHINGTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES, THE ALICE VIRGINIA & DAVID W. FLETCHER FOUNDATION AND CASEY FAMILY PROGRAMS, NONE OF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE. THIS EFFORT IS A CONTINUOUS COURAGEOUS JOURNEY FOR ALL OF OUR PARTNERS, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO THIS EVOLUTION. IF WE REMEMBER THAT WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER, THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN'T DO.

# FAMILIES

## COMMUNITY TRIAGE SERVICES

STRENGTHENING THE NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY NET – USING PROMISING WRAPAROUND PRACTICES ADAPTED FROM JACKSONVILLE FLORIDA’S FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES (NEFSS) TO DELIVER FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE SUPPORTS TO FAMILIES IN CRISIS.

### CTS BY THE NUMBERS JANUARY 2017– JUNE 2018

- **Referrals 114 (111 served)** - Primarily from Bester Elementary, the Washington County Department of Social Services or self-referral. #1 reason for referral- Child Welfare (ex: parenting support, parenting education, safety support & education, etc.)
- **New families 94** - Comprised of 223 children and 144 adults
- **Home visits** - Provided 1528 home and community visits to families in need, meeting them where they are most comfortable
- **Transitions** - 43 successful family transitions
- **Linkages and direct services provided** - 12,580 direct services and linkages to all active families such as transportation, substance abuse, mental health, parenting support and crisis support amongst many others
- **Christmas Elves** - Supported approximately 35 families/80 plus children with extensive Christmas gifts for the holiday season



The CTS program integrated the Strengthening Families framework for engaging and supporting families. The Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Tool for Home Visiting Programs was selected to assess and identify strengths and areas of opportunity within the CTS efforts.

*The following goals were adopted for this past year to sustain the strengths of the program and continue to grow in areas with identified deficiencies:*

- **Family Engagement** - We will continue to demonstrate the value of families and their satisfaction with supportive services through implementation of a family satisfaction survey.
- **Diversity** - We will develop practices that intentionally embrace and mobilize support surrounding the needs of fathers as well as other cultural aspects of families served through individual evaluation of need and supportive supplementations.
- **Opportunities** - We will develop on-going opportunities for families and staff to expand their access to trainings, information sharing, service development and advocacy.



## OUTSIDERS TO INSIDERS

BY SANDY ROBERTS

Bester Community of Hope received a referral for a young mother and her daughter. The young girl was new to the area and was having some difficulties in the classroom. At the initial meeting to discuss our involvement with the family, mother was unsure that the relationship would be positive for her family. Previous experience didn't give her great confidence that "outsiders" were really there to help.

The family support worker listened to mother as she described the family's history as well as their current situation. Mom expressed her goals for her family and identified several current family needs which she wanted to address. The family support worker (FSW) explained that BCOH was family-driven in nature and that she would guide the direction of any decisions made or actions taken. Our team supported the family as we partnered to support the school in meeting her child's specific needs in the classroom, navigated available resources and benefits for the family in the neighborhood as well as made connections to a variety of concrete supports.

More than five months after the initial visit between mother and BCOH, disaster struck. A fire would ravage the family's home destroying all their belongings and render them homeless. More concerning, the young girl would sustain injuries for which she required hospitalization. The mother stayed with her child while she received necessary medical attention in Baltimore and, thank God, she recovered completely. BCOH would deliver clothing, hygiene supplies and snacks to the family at the hospital. The FSW stayed in contact with the social worker at a Baltimore hospital to coordinate services and meet the family's needs in this time of crisis. BCOH would further assist grandfather with temporary housing in a local hotel where he was also given clothing, hygiene supplies and food. When mother and daughter returned to Hagerstown, BCOH would provide temporary housing for the entire family at a local hotel. The FSW would provide support for mother as she worked with the Red Cross and would contact state government in Baltimore to help speed up the family's relocation process. BCOH would continue to help the family with clothing, food, transportation

and other needs as they arose - including taking care of the furry members of the family (dogs and cats need love too!). San Mar, BCOH's parent organization, would put out a call to the community for assistance in gathering household goods and furniture for the family. The call was answered generously and BCOH was there to help load up the moving van. When the family arrived at their new residence three weeks later, they had everything they needed to turn their new house into a home - bedroom furniture, living room furniture, kitchen furniture, bedding, kitchenware and more.



**ONCE A  
BCOH  
FAMILY,  
ALWAYS  
A BCOH  
FAMILY**

Though the formal relationship concluded after the family relocated to their new home in Baltimore, BCOH made referrals to local Baltimore agencies to connect the family to those who might continue to provide assistance. The family was also provided information concerning a variety of concrete supports and children's services in the area. The young girl was enrolled in her new school which the family reported was very attentive to her needs. Communication with the family remains open and the relationship developed still exists - Once a BCOH Family, always a BCOH family. The "unconditional care" approach to working with families created a trusting relationship which supported the family so that they could keep their family safe and intact. The family was more resilient, more connected and better able to meet their self-identified needs. The mother and her family repeatedly expressed their gratitude to the "outsiders" who had become "insiders."



# SPECIAL PROJECT TARGET AREAS

REDUCING THE LENGTH OF TIME CHILDREN ARE IN FOSTER CARE, DECREASING REENTRIES BY PROVIDING LOCAL SUPPORTS AND HELPING CHILDREN ACHIEVE PERMANENCY.

## FAMILY CENTER

We partnered with the Washington County Family Center teen mother support group, facilitating discussions on pregnancy, parenting and connecting to resources during 2017.

## PARENT CAFE

We continue to partner with Judy Center, Early Childhood Action Council and The Hub at USMH to provide a monthly convening for parents focused on the Protective Factors at different community sites

## BESTER PLAYGROUP

Starting in January 2017, we partnered with The Hub at USMH to facilitate a bi-weekly playgroup at Bester Elementary for families of children 0-5, giving parents the opportunity to engage with their children and also build relationships with community providers and their eventual neighborhood school

## THAT FAMILY THING

An informal monthly gathering for parents in the South End started in April of 2018 at the Shriver Center where adults can discuss the issues that matter in their lives while their children are entertained with fun activities in the same building.





### **FAMILY DAY**

In April of 2017 we partnered with Crystal Lenz photography to provide activities focused around the protective factors and provide free professional family photos. This year we took it to the next level in March of 2018 with the same great photography from Crystal Lenz with exciting kids activities at the Pediatric Movement Center, a celebration of all the characteristics of strong and resilient families. Exactly one hundred friends from the neighborhood participated in the event with the focus to provide a hands-on learning experience for families around the protective factors framework, which identifies the five key areas that help to make families strong and positioned for success: Social Connections, Parental Resilience, Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development, Concrete Support in Times of Need and Social & Emotional Competence of Children. Family Day was successful in helping parents find resources, supports, and coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress. BCOH staff and partners witnessed as parents eagerly welcomed the opportunity to “lay their burdens down”, and savor the embrace of community partners. This sensory-rich environment was surrounded by tangible goodies (e.g. food baskets, free massages, birthday celebrations). Relationships were vigorously strengthened on this day set aside to honor families. As our partners at Casey Family Programs say, “Every family should have the support of a strong and caring community.”

## **DECREASING OCCURRENCE OF MALTREATMENT**

### **RESTORATIVE PARENTING**

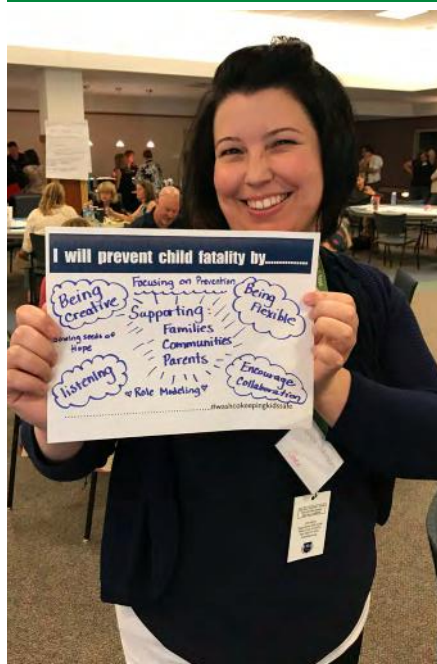
We partnered with the Washington County Department of Social Services to adapt the curriculum originally developed by Dr. David Matthews from Minnesota for those impacted by domestic violence towards trauma informed parenting. We facilitated a 10 week program for WCDSS connected families who gained insight on how their childhood trauma impacts their own parenting style. We were able to complete three cycles of the effort in 2017 and continue to offer this program in 2018.

## DECREASING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT FATALITIES



### CHILD FATALITY PREVENTION TEAM

We are working to expand prevention practices with WCDSS, and we kicked off our first community event on 6/26/17 with 100 attendees. We participate in a subgroup that focuses on the preventative supports and focus areas where families can get the help they need before a tragedy occurs. Our next priority will focus on providing concrete resources to families with newborns impacted by the opioid crisis, helping to ensure safe sleep practices and supports are in place. In addition, we are able to provide a voluntary service to families offering community linkages as they bring their newborn home to the Bester neighborhood. We have signed an MOU with Meritus Health, to support substance exposed newborns and provide supportive interventions via our Community Triage Services division. On 6/22/18 we held our second annual event with keynote speakers Teri Covington (Alliance for Strong Families and Communities) who reviewed federal recommendations and Claudia Remington (Maryland State Council on Child Abuse & Neglect) who highlighted local programs achieving a collective impact.



### SUBSTANCE EXPOSED NEWBORNS

As Washington County is increasingly impacted by the opioid crisis, there has been a significant rise in the rate of substance-exposed newborns (SEN). In order to respond to this need, Bester Community of Hope, along with the Department of Social Services, Meritus Hospital, Washington County Public Schools, Maryland Department of Health and other community partners met for the first time as the Substance-Exposed Newborn Care Team on January 17, 2018. At this nascent meeting, the group identified these goals: Safety of children; Coordinating services - identify resources, barriers to care, and gaps in services; Prevention of future harm to children; Keeping families together; Consistency in information conveyed to SEN caregivers – all agencies at all levels in contact with family aware of same information and reiterating information to family

### HOME SAFETY GRANT

In May of 2017, BCOH was awarded the Funkhouser Grant. Over a period of 6 months, a family support worker and intern utilized the grant money to develop a home safety program conducive to our individualized in-home services. Outputs included safety demonstrations and giveaways at a booth during Babypalooza, the development and implementation of a safety rating scale, a hands-on environmental self-assessment, a landlord/tenant safety concerns communication manual, information fact sheets, a home safety card game for children, a home safety social story and children's book, an information packet regarding safe sleep, and implementation practices to reduce potential hazards. We served a total of 14 families with concrete safety improvements such as 250 outlet covers, 20 safety latches, 5 baby gates, 3 video baby monitors, 2 medicine lock boxes, 200 poison control stickers with contact information, 10 bath thermometers, 10 refrigerator thermometers, a door alarm, a stroller, a wagon, and a crib.



# NEIGHBORHOODS

## BUILDING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

BESTER COMMUNITY OF HOPE, THE COLLECTIVE IMPACT ENTITY THE OVERSEES THE COMMUNITY TRIAGE SERVICES EFFORT, WAS MODELED AFTER A VARIETY OF PROMISING AND EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICES, INCLUDING THE PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG FAMILIES IN GAINESVILLE FLORIDA; LINKAGES TO LEARNING IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY MARYLAND AND THE CENTER FOR FAMILY LIFE IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK. THE EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE UMBRELLA WHERE MUCH OF THESE EFFORTS ALIGN IS THE COMMUNITIES THAT CARE MODEL, WHERE WE ARE IN FULL IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE EFFORT (PHASE 5) AND ARE NOW RETURNING TO OUR PLAN IN 2018 (TWO YEARS POST FULL IMPLEMENTATION) TO REEVALUATE AND REDESIGN PRIORITY COMMUNITY NEEDS. WE HAVE PLACED A PARTICULAR EMPHASIS WITHIN THIS MODEL OF EMPHASIZING THE PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK.



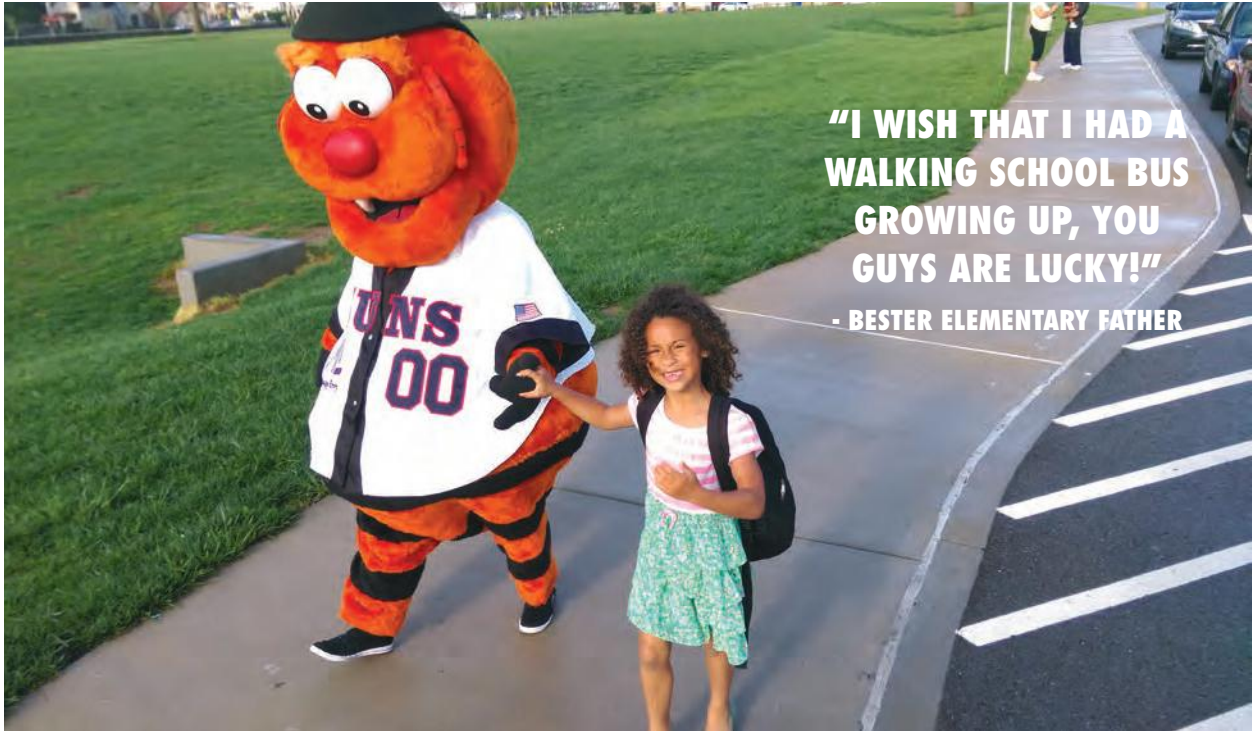
### WALKING SCHOOL BUS

A small idea from local parent Kay Papeskov to support children on their way to school has grown exponentially over the past 12 months. In the first half of 2017, BCOH agreed to support the effort on a monthly basis with community partners.

The year started with monthly activities highlighting and including local businesses, local community service providers, the Hagerstown Police Department, the Hagerstown Suns and ended with Congressman John Delaney accepting the invitation from Bester student Ornella to join her on our Walk to School activity. In the summer, the Washington County Health Department awarded BCOH a

\$40,625 grant to support the Walking School Bus effort and to develop "Safe Routes to School".





The significant funding allowed us to do several things, but primarily hire ten residents from the neighborhood to function as ambassadors to lead 4 different “walking school bus” routes on a weekly basis each Wednesday: Walking School Bus Coordinator Hollie Griffith and ten neighborhood ambassadors: Brooke & James Grossman; Kay Papeskov; Ed Barrick; Cassandra Thompson; Leticia Diaz; Tyisha Richardson; Anthony Bostic; Rosie Crawley and Hollie Johnson.

Starting October 4th of the 2017-2018 school year, community residents, BCOH staff and local partners have provided special activities, food and relationships with families traveling to school on Wednesday mornings.

Local partners are showing that the enthusiasm is contagious, crossing guard Sara Nelson explained, “This is really great, and the kids seem real excited. I’ve been a crossing guard for 50 years, and in this exact spot for 40 years, so I’m crossing the kids of the kids I used to see.” One Bester father added, “I wish that I had a Walking School Bus growing up, you guys are lucky!”



### READY, SET....RIDE!

As a part of the Walking School Bus grant we hosted a bicycle safety event, because in the past three years there have been 33 accidents in the City of Hagerstown involving bicycles, including fatalities, and of those only two were wearing helmets.

We gave out free helmets, set up fun obstacle courses for kids on bikes, and much more. Almost 200 people were in attendance at the old City hospital lot!



## HISPANIC RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

We are working to develop a comprehensive network of information to support minority families around issues of immigration and systems navigation. We are hoping to bring together existing providers that are operating in isolation, to strengthen a shared effort. The beginning of the school year brings the excitement of meeting your new teacher and getting back to the daily routines of returning to school. For some families this new opportunity poses a greater challenge. “How am I going to voice my concerns, desires, or needs if I can only speak Español?”

Early on, school staff saw a dramatic increase in Spanish speaking families with little to no connection between home and school. In an effort to support these families, we worked with Bester Elementary school to connect them to Bester Community of Hope. The Community Triage Services program began to provide in-home family support services while exploring how to best support the Hispanic community. While sitting in many living rooms and listening to details of isolation, it was evident that families were yearning for a connection to their school & community. Together, with the in-home supports already established for some families; conversations, site visits, and meetings were held to explore best practices. All in the hopes of establishing a group that would have the mission to provide families with basic and essential tools to communicate needs and identify solutions while supporting each other through language acquisition to address the broader Hispanic community.

Families identified by the school with their preferred language as Hispanic were offered continuous two hour weekly sessions held in the school cafeteria. Each week families grew more confident in their skills, got connected to community resources, and fostered relationships with local houses of faith, partner agencies, as well as Hagerstown Police Department and School Administration. 75% of the participating families reported making new relationships that extended to the community; such as: going grocery shopping, church, and parks.

Above all, 100% of participants expressed feeling welcomed in the school through the efforts of the initiative. Eventually the initiative was named by the participants, and H.O.P.E – Helpful Opportunities for Parent Enrichment, came to fruition.





## 2ND ANNUAL SOUTH SIDE COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY

SEPTEMBER 2017

There's a movement happening in the south end of the city of Hagerstown, and it was on full display as close to 2,000 people attended the 2nd Annual South Side Community Block Party at Bester Elementary Field. The legendary Chuck Brown Band from Washington D.C. and Washington County favorites Staff Infection provided the music, local artist Spencer Jackson helped emcee and manage the stage, South Hagerstown High School's men's basketball team played against area kids on the court and also volunteered in the dunk tank, Life House Church provided a never-ending supply of snow cones and popcorn, It's a Blessing to be a Blessing provided endless free prepared food and snacks, and close to 50 community resource vendors, community groups and kids activities were onsite to provide resources and build connections. People from very different backgrounds joined together in the bright sunshine of the first weekend of fall to create lasting memories in the heart of their neighborhood. There was a tangible sense of unity and community pride, and one thing was clear, we belong here.

In a short time, this event has become a tradition, where families are able to establish partnerships with providers in their community who can help them become stronger, residents can collaborate with their peers, and children can strive for excellence in their schools and neighborhoods.

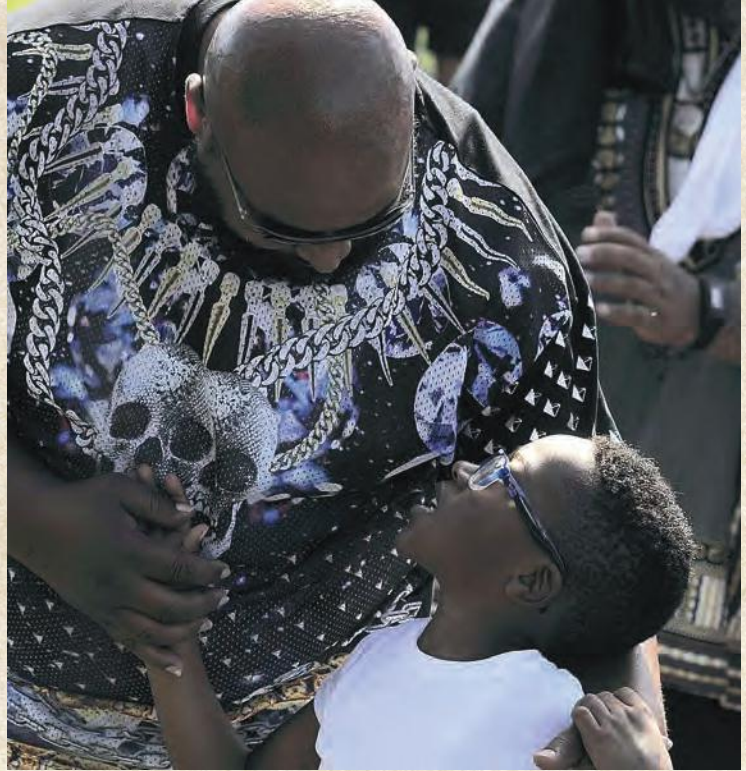
"I have hope today. I didn't know there was anyone who could help me with my criminal background. I'm stuck because it's always right in front of me and I can't get a job. I want to move on with life for my kids and I can't. But, I just found out Goodwill does expungement and I'm going on Monday to get this started. I have hope. I might be able to move on and get this weight off. If I didn't come here today, I would have never known." - Neighborhood resident

**"... I HAVE HOPE TODAY. I MIGHT BE ABLE TO MOVE ON AND GET THIS WEIGHT OFF. IF I DIDN'T COME HERE TODAY, I WOULD HAVE NEVER KNOWN."**

**- NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENT**









## BABYPALOOZA 2017!

NOVEMBER OF 2017

In November of 2017, close to 250 people filled Bester Elementary School to celebrate young families at Babypalooza 2017! The event was planned by a committee comprised of staff from Bester Community of Hope, Early Childhood Advisory Council, Washington County Safe Kids, and the Towson University nursing program at USMH came together to host the 2nd Annual Babypalooza!. The focus was on supporting and celebrating families while providing information on parenting, child development and family life in the neighborhood. The event was possible due to ongoing financial support from the Washington County Department of Social Services and the Fletcher Foundation.

Special guest host for the event was WDVM news anchor Tasmin Mahfuz, connected with kids and families and helped announce various door prizes for the event. Tasmin shared that she “loved being around so many wonderful families and their cute kids!”

Thanks to Scholastic, Clifford the Big Red Dog even made a special appearance during lunch, swooping down to meet and take photos with children who often stood back in stunned amazement. The Hagerstown Artists Group was doing intricate face painting as well as belly painting for expectant mothers.

One mother getting her belly painted cried tears of joy when her name was drawn to receive a baby basket provided by Meritus Health.

Randy Scott, manager of Chick-Fil- A in Hagerstown, and his crew graciously donated and served 300 boxed lunches to the crowd and vendors for lunch. “Chick Fil A has a reputation of giving and it’s about stewardship. Scripture says ‘to whom much is given much is expected’ and in the case of Babypalooza, it’s about magnifying the impact on the community in such a way that if we can help get more people through the door, then more people have the opportunity to learn and be connected with resources to help their families.”

One mother with an elementary age student was at the event celebrating her expectant newborn. She related that she never expected to be pregnant at this point in







BABYPALOOZA CONTINUED

her life and was in need of some additional support for her child that was due soon. There was a donated stroller provided from a partner and the mother was emotional in sharing her gratitude; she was even able to bond with another parent at her table while eating lunch. They were relieved to make a connection with each other and see that they aren't alone in their unique parenting situations. Two other parents were already connected on social media, both attended the event and brought in clothes for an exchange sponsored by Children In Need.

They ended up trading items unaware that they were both in need of what the other had to offer. Many attendees were excited to find out about ways to address safety issues in the home. Several related that they were learning about safe sleep for the first time and others expressed surprise to find out that the batteries in some children's books/toys could burn their children. "I thought it was an urban legend" said one parent. Electric outlet plugs, drawer latches, and other supplies were available to improve the child safety in the home.

No one walked away empty handed as guests filled their bags with information on parenting, early learning, health and safety as well as complimentary items from a variety of vendors. The Knit Wits, a local crocheting group, donated handmade baby blankets and accessories that were also given away for free at each table. Guests were able to connect with local providers, gain valuable information, and had the opportunity to learn about services and supports available in their community. Local parent Robin Hines said, "It was awesome and (there were) so many community resources. We need to do this more often and bring the families and their children together."

**"WE NEED TO  
DO THIS MORE  
OFTEN AND BRING  
FAMILIES AND  
THEIR CHILDREN  
TOGETHER"**

**- ROBIN HINES, LOCAL PARENT**



## BESTER COMMUNITY OF HOPE

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### NEIGHBORHOODS 1ST

We are a regular listener in the four active Neighborhoods 1st groups in our catchment, and are working to support and catalyze other neighborhood groups including reassembling Elizabeth Town West and resident groups through the Hagerstown Housing Authority at Frederick Manor and Potomac Towers. This will allow us to take our neighborhood survey information and continue to implement changes and continue a dialogue with local groups. We dispersed two micro grants, one to the Historic City Park group for plantings to beautify the space near the park band shell, and the other to South End Neighborhoods 1st to support a large mural project on Memorial Boulevard. Our hope is by participating in this local process we can genuinely support the desires and needs of local residents.

### CUPCAKES & CONVERSATIONS

Held at Frederick Manor with Rokia Ballard of *Sweets by Ro* helps community members build a vision for future and discusses topics of interest to local residents ranging from goal setting to economical tricks of the trade, and of course, cupcakes!



### COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Our staff members are participating in many community dialogues on important issues including but not limited to: The Hagerstown Police Department rewriting the policy and procedures on policing youth in our city as well as supporting the Office of Consumer Advocates in their ongoing conversation regarding the opioid crisis.





## **SOUTH END FAITH NETWORK**

In partnership with the Hagerstown Area Religious Council we have convened all churches since our creation within the Bester catchment, and held formal gatherings in May and November of 2017, and April of 2018, to support a dialogue on shared beliefs and collaborate on neighborhood outreach, as well as providing supports to clergy tasked with managing complex social service needs while maintaining their primary role as faith leaders. We also manage a calendar highlighting all the activities occurring in each house of faith as a tool for local discussion. Our goal is that churches can maintain their unique and important individual traditions while finding commonalities with neighboring houses of faith to break down local barriers.

Collaborations this year included: (May 17') Otterbein Church Fair (protective factors table); Hagerstown Church of the Brethren Block Party; (October 17') "Day of Hope" large community outreach festival at Suns stadium sponsored by For Our City and Life House church; (December 17') New Life Ministries and Hagerstown Church of the Brethren joint community Christmas dinner; (December 17') Faith partners join the Walking School Bus. (June 18') "Schools Out Party" with Life House, Emmanuel United Methodist and St Andrews United Methodist.

In the Fall of 2018: Supporting Hub Network efforts around data access; Coffee & Conversations between faith leaders; Adverse Childhood Experience Study training for faith leaders.



## BESTER COMMUNITY OF HOPE

### COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

We held quarterly board meetings this year at the Alice Virginia and David W. Fletcher branch of the Washington County Library, and our gatherings are comprised of typically 50% residents, 25% local businesses and 25% local organizations. This year we focused our discussions around reviewing neighborhood survey findings to prioritize goals based on resident feedback and local data. Additional focus areas included exploring the abandoned city hospital location for revitalization with the property owner, exploring the needs of the growing Hispanic community and gathering resources around computer usage for the public.

### CHOOSE KIND ART SHOW

Featured at the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, we worked with students and staff at Bester Elementary to create 50 pieces of art for an exhibit where we held a family engagement event to celebrate successes which was attended by 140 people and received a variety of media coverage.



### EARLY OUTPUTS

- Community Triage Services is now serving exponentially more children and families than this time last year, thanks in large part to additional staffing and clarity of new service delivery model
- Trust has been established with neighborhood residents through events and actions big and small and taking the time to genuinely listen and let them guide their own process



# TRAINING

**A SERIES OF TRAININGS AND COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSIONS BRINGING TOGETHER INNOVATIVE MINDS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN CONCERT WITH THE WISDOM AND PRACTICALITY OF FRONT LINE PRACTITIONERS TO ALIGN EFFORTS IN VARIOUS NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.**

## COLLECTIVE IMPACT

A broad coalition of 650 community stakeholders came together on March 29, 2018 to learn from national speakers at “Collective Impact” at the Maryland Theatre. Hosted by Bester Community of Hope, this event was the fifth installment in a series of trainings focused on beliefs and strategies for social progress within families, schools and neighborhoods. Targeted grant funding from the Community Foundation of Washington County, Washington County Department of Social Services and Casey Family Programs made this event a reality.

“Are your expectations high enough? It can be done,” explained Geoffrey Canada, President of the Harlem Children’s Zone. Canada, a prominent national figure in education reform and social change who has been at the forefront of innovation, and whose work has led others to replicate his efforts including President Obama through the Promise neighborhood program. He had the audience regularly laughing as he told stories of raising money, trying to work with politicians and developing a plan for the success of the neighborhood.

He also emphasized, “No one is coming to save your kids. If you don’t do it, it’s not going to get done.” His call to action also highlighted, “and if you don’t believe something, you are not going to do it.”

At past events BCOH screened the films Resilience and Paper Tigers along with their Director Jamie Redford, the latter of which highlighted the efforts of school Principal Jim Sporleder and the amazing outcomes happening at Lincoln Alternative School in Walla Walla, Washington. Sporleder joined our event where he described his transformation from using traditional discipline practices as an administrator and a self-described “relationship guy” to using a trauma informed approach to working with young people. “When I realized that what I was doing was hurting kids it was like I was struck by a bolt of lightning and it changed my life.” He was able to walk through a variety of research and practical examples both personal and professional explaining how to shift the dialogue towards restoration. He described a situation recently when he engaged with former struggling students whom he reconnected with in the community where he told them, “If I knew then what I know now, I would have done it differently. I want to ask you for forgiveness.” They said, “Well, we were no angels you know!”

Other notable speakers included longtime San Mar CEO Bruce Anderson and Dante DeTablan of the United Way of Central Maryland at the Benjamin Franklin Center for Community Schools.



Geoffrey Canada

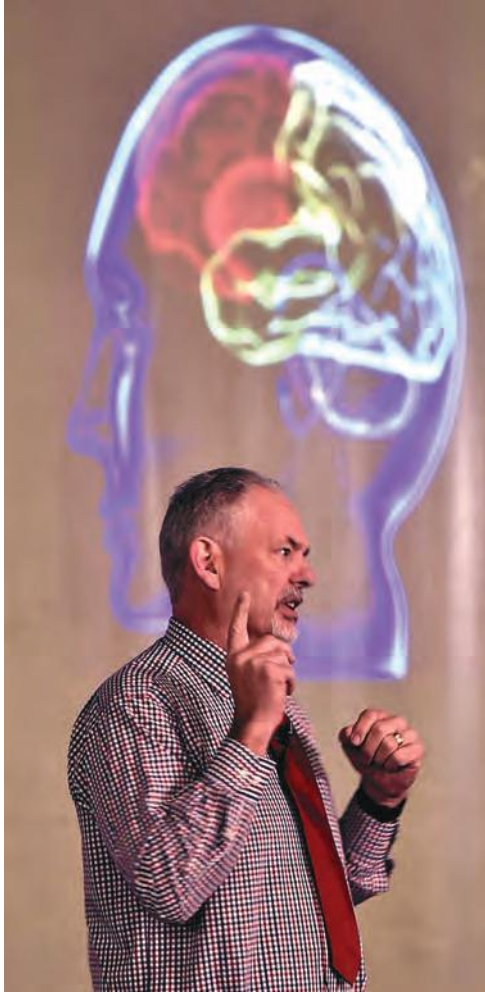


Dante DeTablan



Jim Sporleder





**"NO ONE IS COMING TO SAVE YOUR KIDS. IF YOU DON'T DO IT, IT'S NOT GOING TO GET DONE."**

**- GEOFFREY CANADA, HARLEM CHILDREN'S ZONE  
SPEAKING AT COLLECTIVE IMPACT 2018**





## HEALING COMMUNITIES

In September 2017, our “Healing Communities” training hosted two national speakers in Dr. Robert Anda and Father Gregory Boyle at the Kepler Theater was attended by 350 individuals, building upon the efforts in previous community trainings to take the principles of and trauma informed practices and resilience to scale in community organizations.



Dr. Robert Anda



Father Gregory Boyle





**BUILDING RESILIENCE**

In March 2017, 475 attendees represented a broad cross section of community stakeholders focused on trauma informed practices, the implications of race in foster care, self-care and strengths-based solutions. Speakers included “Paper Tigers” Director James Redford, Dr. Lonise Bias, Rev. Darrell Armstrong and a screening of the film “Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope”.



James Redford



Dr. Lonise Bias



Rev. Darrell Armstrong





## TRAUMA FOCUSED COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (TF-CBT)

We brought in Vicki Beck, CNS, BS, a nationally renowned trainer from the University of Maryland School of Medicine who specializes in working with children and families who have experienced trauma. In August, she trained 15 individuals, 10 staff members from San Mar and our Jack E. Barr Center for Well-Being, and five staff members from the Washington County Department of Social Services in trauma focused cognitive behavioral therapy.

## CENTER FOR THE COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM

We partnered to provide a comprehensive training in June of 2017 for all teachers at Bester around best practices for behavior management and lessons from the book "The Caring School Teachers Guide to Discipline". Understanding the differences that punishment is about making kids suffer for their wrongdoing whereas discipline is about teaching them how to do better in the future, with the ultimate goal being to teach kids to develop the self-discipline they'll need to make better choices down the road. Teachers committed to a shared value system and focused on setting the stage for future success.

**"THANKS SO MUCH FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT AND SEE YOUR WORK. YOU GIVE ME LOTS OF INSPIRATION AND HOPE ABOUT THE WORK WE NEED TO DO WITH FAMILIES."**

**- DR. JERRY MILNER, ACTING COMMISSIONER OF THE ADMINISTRATION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**

## SHARING THE MODEL

(March 17') Attended a national convening of Communities of Hope sites in Memphis (June 17') Met with DHS Secretary and Anne Arundel DSS including sustainability committee to provide full day training on BCOH model (August 17' and May 18') Hosted a group of stakeholders from York, Pennsylvania interested in replicating a portion of the work in their community (September 17') Attended national convening of Communities of Hope sites in Newark. (Feb 18') Hosted leadership from the Children's Bureau and the Maryland Department of Human Services (May 18') Attended National Forum on Community Schools in Baltimore (May 18') Attended National Family Support Network Conference in Washington D.C.



## EARLY OUTPUTS

- Identified as trusted leader in trauma informed practices in Washington County
- Local organizations are making changes big and small: e.g. Faith leaders are beginning ACES training in 2018; people working with at-risk populations are demonstrating changes in their beliefs and approaches towards children



## NEXT UP:

Partnering with Josh Cole of A New Angle consulting for school culture building, and Ali Smith and his team from the Holistic Life Foundation to add strategies for teachers and students at school.



# WELLNESS

UTILIZING LESSONS LEARNED FROM BEST PRACTICE PROGRAMS SUCH AS LINKAGES TO LEARNING (MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND) TO ADDRESS ACUTE HEALTH CONCERNS PRESENTING BARRIERS TO SUCCESS. IN ADDITION, ADDRESSING THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HOLISTIC WELLNESS.

## BESTER HEALTH CENTER

During the 2016-2017 school year at Bester Elementary, we started a brand new operation with the Community Free Clinic of Washington County to offer all families who complete a simple one page registration form access to free acute care with no insurance required. At the start of the 2017-2018 we directed our energy to increasing the number of families registered in the program and eventually our goal is to make sure there is ongoing awareness and utilization.



## ONLINE ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION

An online form was created to allow easier access for some families to register for urgent health care services.

## BESTER WELLNESS COMMITTEE

A strong group of teachers at Bester Elementary already committed to promoting wellness, and our goal has been to come along that effort and support in any way possible. Examples of efforts we supported in 2017 were purchasing water bottle fillers, supporting family fitness day, supporting the “Wake Up, Warm Up” morning exercise program and a healthy food tasting event with Washington County Technical High School.

Strong City Baltimore AmeriCorps VISTA Rafi Hoq finished his yearlong placement with BCOH in July of 2017. He was a special part of our team as he put tireless effort into a variety of efforts including starting our new health clinic, supporting the organization and distribution of resources at the school food pantry program and clothing closet at Bester, grant writing and helping to build our new database with software from Salesforce. He was willing to do “whatever it takes” and we know he will have great success in his future endeavors!

We were awarded our 2nd consecutive AmeriCorps VISTA from Strong City Baltimore, pre-med student Christine Gou, who worked on special projects and data analysis in the Fall of 2017.



## HEALTH CLASSES

In collaboration with Tammy Bowers of the Towson University Nursing Program at USMH and Mary Perkins of the Community Free Clinic, we began offering health classes monthly in 2017 for all intermediate students at Bester, 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. Topics included hygiene with supplies provided, nutrition, as well as presentations on lice, in fun and engaging discussions to over 300 students each month.



## MOBILE DENTAL TRUCK

The dental truck provided by Family Healthcare of Hagerstown comes to Bester Elementary on a semi-regular basis, our role has been to provide support to ensure children are delivered to and from those services and to maximize efficiencies and take advantage of this wonderful resource.

## EMERGENCY HEALTH BAGS

Purchased and placed in every classroom to ensure that as teachers travel throughout the school or outside they have access to basic medical supplies in the absence of direct access to a nurse.



## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Now in operation for over a full year, the Jack E. Barr Center for Well-Being, a new outpatient mental health clinic based on the San Mar campus in Boonsboro has is now accommodating families at sites in the Bester neighborhood, including our new Elgin Center location and our Mill Street office, to reduce barriers and improve convenience. They also completed a Memorandum of Understanding with Washington County Public Schools allowing them to see youth at Bester Elementary and beyond.

## HEALTHY NEW YEAR DANCE

Special memories that will last a lifetime were created as close to 400 students and parents attended the "Healthy New Year" celebration at Bester Elementary in January of 2018. The Bester Wellness Committee comprised of school teachers and the Bester Community of Hope partnered to create a unique dance event celebrating strong families and healthy resolutions. Teachers worked together and the gymnasium and cafeteria was transformed into a winter wonderland with lights and music, and children and their parents wore the best attire for a special night out. During the event children ate healthy snacks, made resolutions as a family and most importantly, danced together!

## EARLY OUTPUTS ON OUR JOURNEY TO MOVING THE NEEDLE

- At the end of 2017, only 18 months into the effort, 294 were registered and that number is increasing with now well over 50% of the students at Bester registered
- HEAL of Washington County named Bester Elementary the "Most Improved School" for their Healthy Schools Challenge for the 2016-2017 school year, and then "Healthy School" for 2017-2018.
- BCOH was awarded a \$250,000 grant from the American Academy of Pediatrics to provide sustainability to the Bester Health Center effort for the next five years, as well as provide some expansion opportunities. This funding will begin implementation in March of 2018.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO THE FALL OF 2018

- Implement the HRSA Grant to expand the scope and impact of the Bester Health Center to eventually include services at E. Russell Hicks Middle School
- Support implementation of "Mind Up" program at Bester to help children understand the most productive ways to self-regulate through mindfulness.



# EDUCATION

ADAPTING THE PRACTICES STUDIED AT *THE CENTER FOR FAMILY LIFE* (BROOKLYN, NEW YORK) WHERE THEIR COMPREHENSIVE FOCUS TO THE INTERSECTION OF SCHOOL AND NEIGHBORHOOD BASED PROGRAMMING HAS ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANT OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES DURING AND AFTER SCHOOL TIME FOR THE PAST 40 YEARS.

## BOOST AFTERSCHOOL CLUBS

Developed from an expressed community need at our first ever Community Advisory Board, these programs focus on relationships, enrichment and a safe welcoming environment for children to be after traditional school hours.

### SPRING 2017

#### LEGO ROBOTICS

In collaboration with HCC, 11 girls from grades 2, 3 and 4 developed STEM related skills while learning how robotics are currently used in a variety of industries.

- Total enrollment: 11
- Total completed: 11
- Average attendance: 94%



#### BASKETBALL

Led by a local neighborhood resident and coach, Thomas Rawlings, and supported by St. James basketball players, students learned teamwork, leadership and skills. At the end, they showed their skills in a game against teachers and a few parents.

- Total enrollment: 20
- Total completed: 18
- Average attendance: 90%

**"CAN WE KEEP DOING BASKETBALL AND THE DRILLS? I DON'T WANT IT TO END."**

#### MUSIC AND VIDEO

Michael Tyson, local musician and teacher, helped students compose music, write lyrics and create videos while learning a variety of musical concepts. Students received a DVD with their songs and videos and enjoyed a "release party" with their parents.

- Total enrollment: 11
- Total completed: 6
- Average attendance: 84%



**"I'M SO EXCITED TO WRITE MY OWN SONG!"**



### MINDFUL MONDAYS

Students practiced self-regulation and mindfulness techniques as taught by Open Minds. Each student received a yoga mat to practice skills at home.

- Total enrollment: 7
- Total completed: 6
- Average attendance: 88%

**"MY FAVORITE POSE IS THE LOTUS POSE BECAUSE IT HELPS ME FEEL BETTER."**



### OUTDOOR ADVENTURERS

Led by Bester teacher, Ryan Rau, students explored the importance of nature and conservation and participated in a hike along the C&O canal where they received hiking kits that included healthy snacks and safety related items.

- Total enrollment: 9
- Total completed: 6
- Average attendance: 86%

**"I DIDN'T KNOW I COULD WALK 4 MILES, NEVER MIND OUT IN THE WOODS!"**



### GEOLOGY

Bester parent, Kay Papeskov shared her passion for Earth sciences in this interactive, STEM centered club. Students collected gems and minerals, and took home a science project.

- Total enrollment: 7
- Total completed: 6
- Average attendance: 88%

### KUNG FU KIDS

St. James teacher and martial art instructor, Andrew Howard, and St. James students led this club which focused on bullying prevention, self-protection, and self-discipline. At the end, students demonstrated what they learned to parents and earned a certificate.

- Total enrollment: 19
- Total completed: 19
- Average attendance: 93%

**"IF I SAW SOMEONE BULLYING, I'D TELL THEM TO STOP AND GET A TEACHER."**





### KIDS COUNCIL

The Washington County Community Mediation Center supported the launch of a student government initiative with 4th and 5th grade students. Students were nominated by school staff. The students focused on bullying prevention as a key issue.

- Total enrollment: 10
- Total completed: 7
- Average attendance: 74%



### GIRLS ON THE RUN

This running program supported by Bester staff and BCOH intern, Krystal Holl, built confidence and endurance in girls and ended with participation in a local 5K.

- Total enrollment: 15
- Total completed: 13
- Average attendance: 87%

**"I MADE ONE OF MY  
BEST FRIENDS BY BEING  
AT GIRLS ON THE RUN!"**

### GARDEN CLUB

Begun in the fall, AmeriCorps Vista Rafi Hoq and Bester 4th grade teacher, Jen Buhrman and her team, continued to work with parents and students to learn gardening and nutrition.

- 70 students registered for the club with an average of 25 remaining engaged year round.

## BOOST FALL 2017

### ABRAKADOODLE

Students were immersed in creativity while exploring various art techniques, mediums and approaches. Led by local teacher and artist, Kanika Pinto. Each student received a drawing pad and art supplies to continue to create at home.

- Total enrollment: 15
- Total completed: 15
- Average attendance: 73%





### CHECK MATE

Led by local chess champion, Joe Hall, students developed skills around logic, focus, perseverance and memorization while learning the game of chess. Students participated in a tournament and each received a chess board to keep at home.

- Total enrollment: 8
- Total completed: 6
- Average attendance: 85%

**"MY DAD IS REALLY GOOD AT CHESS, BUT THE OTHER DAY...I BEAT HIM!"**



### FIT KIDS

Academy The importance of physical activity, nutritious eating, and a healthy lifestyle was the focus of this club geared towards grades 1, 2, and 3 and facilitated by Anne Marie McPherson, Bester teacher, and Christine Gou, AmeriCorps VISTA. Each student received a digital fitness tracker to monitor their steps and heart rate.

- Total enrollment: 17
- Total completed: 12
- Average attendance: 74%

**"(MY CHILD) LEARNED A LOT ABOUT BEING HEALTHY!"**

### GIRL TALK

Confidence, personal integrity, and self-esteem were promoted through a variety of activities led by Ladetra Robinson of Blossom School of Etiquette. The students enjoyed a formal meal together for their last club meeting.

- Total enrollment: 11
- Total completed: 6
- Average attendance: 73%



### GLOBE TROTTERS

Led by Bester parent, Elizabeth Alberding, students travelled virtually around the world to discover the culture, foods, and contributions of other countries. Each student received a world map at the end of the club.

- Total enrollment: 14
- Total completed: 11
- Average attendance: 87%

**"I THINK WE HAVE SOME STUDENTS FROM THERE AT THIS SCHOOL! WE SHOULD TALK TO THEM ABOUT PERU."**



### UNIQUE SOCCER ACADEMY

Students improved footwork and overall skills on the field while developing a better understanding of teamwork, respect and persistence while working with coaches from Unique Soccer Academy.

- Total enrollment: 15
- Total completed: 15
- Average attendance: 100%

### STEMazing!

Designed and facilitated by the University of Maryland Extension 4H Coordinator, this club sparked student interest with experiments and hands on activities focused on Earth and animal sciences. Each student received a copy of the book "The Everything Kids' Magical Science Experiments Book" and membership to 4H.

**"IF YOU FOLLOW DIRECTIONS, YOU GET THE RIGHT THING IN THE END."**

- Total enrollment: 16
- Total completed: 11
- Average attendance: 77%



### KIDS COUNCIL

BCOH and the Washington County Community Mediation Center continued to support the student government initiative with 4th and 5th grade students. Students were nominated by school staff. The students focused on bullying prevention as a key issue.

- Total enrollment: 12
- Total completed: 11
- Average attendance: 91%



### WE CAN

Led by Bester teacher, Ryan Rau, students worked together to identify a common goal of having a cleaner city. After developing an action plan, the students created a Public Service Announcement style video with the City of Hagerstown which aired at Leitersburg Cinema and on the City social media sites.

- Total enrollment: 11
- Total completed: 7
- Average attendance: 88%



**"THANK YOU FOR DOING THIS WITH MY DAUGHTER AND THE KIDS. THIS IS LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE FOR HER, TO BE ON TV, AND YOU MADE HER THINK OUTSIDE HERSELF, TOO."**



### GIRLS ON THE RUN

This running program supported by Bester teachers and BCOH staff, Monica Johnson, built confidence and endurance in girls and ended with participation in a local 5K. Each student received a new pair of sneakers and a GOTR t-shirt.

- Total enrollment: 20
- Total completed: 17
- Average attendance: 71%

## BOOST SPRING 2018

### UPCYCLED ART

Led by a WCPS substitute art teacher, this club focused on the principles of recycling and repurposing. Students were introduced to a variety of old, broken or obsolete technology which would not decompose naturally and used the pieces and parts to create art, jewelry, and novelties.

- Total enrollment: 16
- Total completed: 13
- Average attendance: 88%

**“I REALLY LIKED THIS CLUB BECAUSE I WOULDN'T KNOW HOW TO GET RID OF LIKE, MY OLD PHONE OR SOMETHING. I CAN REPURPOSE STUFF LIKE THAT AND MAKE NEW THINGS.”**



### BASKETBALL

Led by a local neighborhood resident and coach, Thomas Rawlings, and supported by St. James basketball players, students learned teamwork, leadership and skills. At the end, they showed their skills in a game against teachers and a few parents.

- Total enrollment: 22
- Total completed: 20
- Average attendance: 88%

**“YOU KNOW, THESE KIDS DID PRETTY GOOD. I KNOW SOME OF THEM ARE DEALING WITH HARD THINGS IN LIFE, BUT THEY COME HERE AND CAN BE KIDS PLAYING BALL.” - COACH RAWLINGS**



### KUNG FU KIDS

St. James teacher and martial art instructor and St. James students led this club which focused on bullying prevention, self-protection, and self-discipline. At the end, students demonstrated what they learned to parents and earned a certificate.

- Total enrollment: 18
- Total completed: 16
- Average attendance: 87%



### UNIQUE SOCCER ACADEMY

Due to popularity, two sections of this club were offered. Students improved footwork and overall skills on the field while developing a better understanding of teamwork, respect and persistence while working with coaches from Unique Soccer Academy.

- Total enrollment: 24
- Total completed: 20
- Average attendance: 83%

**“SOMETIMES I GET HERE EARLY AND WATCH TO MAKES SURE SHE IS PLAYING AND DOING WHAT EVERYONE ELSE IS. THE OTHER DAY, SHE WASN’T AND ONE OF THE OTHER GIRLS COAXED HER BACK OVER. IT WAS NICE TO SEE THEM WORK TOGETHER.” – CLUB PARENT**



### WALK THE BEAT

Led by new Hagerstown Police Community Resource Officer Alec Routhier, students participated in a variety of physical activities including walking the neighborhood while learning more about what police officers do to stay fit and protect the community.

- Total enrollment: 16
- Total completed: 15
- Average attendance: 80%



### STEMazing!

Designed and facilitated by the University of Maryland Extension 4H Coordinator, this club sparked student interest with experiments and hands on activities focused on Earth and animal sciences. Each student received a copy of the book "The Everything Kids' Magical Science Experiments Book" and membership to 4H.

- Total enrollment: 12
- Total completed: 11
- Average attendance: 87%

**“I WISH WE DID MORE SCIENCE IN SCHOOL BECAUSE THIS IS KINDA FUN!”**

### I HEART ART

Bester Elementary art teacher invited students with an aptitude for art to participate in this specialized club that exposed students to a variety of methods and mediums.

- Total enrollment: 11
- Total completed: 9
- Average attendance: 76%

**“I CAN’T BELIEVE MRS. DELANEY PICKED ME FOR THIS CLUB!”**

# EDUCATION SPECIAL EVENTS AT BESTER ELEMENTARY

**JANUARY 2017-JUNE 2018**

- Washington County Historical Society brought artifacts from President George Washington to Bester and presented to 5th grade
- "Hidden Figures" VIP screening at Leitersburg Cinemas for all 5th graders
- Family STEM Career Night with external stakeholders including Western Maryland Consortium, One Stop Job Center and Hagerstown Community College to promote opportunities for parents and inspiring higher education for kids
- "Sail into Learning" Kindergarten Readiness event at Bester
- Annual South Hagerstown High School graduation walk at Bester Elementary and E. Russell Hicks Middle School
- Girl Scout Courtyard revitalization project at Bester
- Bester Blitz teacher neighborhood outreach event
- Supported Comfy Cozy Family Night; Supported Maryland Food Bank Heart Party and Food Drop - 2500 pounds of food distributed in 45 minutes!
- "Wonder" VIP screening at Leitersburg cinemas for 5th grade
- Teacher appreciation week
- Annual 5th grade graduation celebration

## MENTORING AND GROUPS

In December of 2017 we finalized an MOU with Washington County public Schools to provide therapeutic mentoring to students in need of additional support at school. Last spring, we facilitated two ongoing groups at school: Gender specific groups for females and males. Krystal Holl guided two groups of girls to a variety of confidence building and social skill conversations, ending with a culminating activity of attending E. Russell Hicks and navigating their eventual new middle school with Bester staff and having a lunch outing. Keith Fanjoy LCSW-C managed groups of 4th and 5th grade males focused on leadership, social skills and community service opportunities. We also have been able to provide various lunch groups and sporadic student supports.

## TRAUMA INFORMED SCHOOL CULTURE

In the Spring of 17' we held a series of lengthy meetings with all Bester teachers having a dialogue around tools for behavior management, self-care and developing forward motion for the school. The process led to focus areas and solution oriented decisions around behavior and culture. In the Spring of 18' we rolled out the bullseye program, where students wore one of three bracelets each day: Green (Ready to Learn!), Yellow (Connect) or Red (Pause, Breathe) to increase awareness and communication in the classroom. We continue to make incremental steps forward in this journey.







**BESTER BLITZ** ▲

**FOOD  
DROP** ▶



**YMCA SUMMER SUPPORT** ▼



**SHHS GRADUATION WALK AT  
BESTER ELEMENTARY** ▼



## CARING SCHOOL COMMUNITY MODEL

Following a test year in 2016-2017, Bester fully adopted Caring School Community weekly meetings in all of their classrooms, each teacher took advantage of a classroom toolbox to promote relationship building, communication and social emotional skills. In October of 2017, the Center for Classrooms hosted several Bester staff members in Chester, Virginia at Ecoff Elementary to explore how they were able to achieve significant universal outcomes with their Principal Josh Cole. Our next steps are focused on deepening adoption and utilization in each classroom and expanding to include other aspects such as “homeside activities” to promote family engagement and themed school activities to establish deeper community connections.

## SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES

Provided major staffing capacity to the YMCA Summer Program at Bester in 2017: 3 FTE employees funded by the Western Maryland Consortium: Jordan Rawlings, Cortez Patterson, Makaylah Partlow; 2 FTE employees from South High funded by a grant from Delaplaine foundation and BCOH operating dollars: Nathaniel Wilson, Anna Touhey; 3 part-time Summer volunteers from Saint James school (via Fletcher Foundation): Joseph George, Harry Masker, Christa Bartlett

## HCC COLLEGE FOR KIDS

Partnered over the past two summers to facilitate scholarships to week long camps at Hagerstown Community College for over 10 Bester students.

## EARLY OUTPUTS

- Bester Elementary was identified by Washington County public Schools as having the most improved attendance in Washington County.
- Jack E. Barr Center for Well-Being is established and providing mental health supports to Bester Elementary and the community at-large
- The Caring School Community model is now implemented in all Bester Elementary classrooms
- Bester Out of School Time (BOOST), an expressed need from the Community Advisory Board and school, is in place providing vibrant relationship and enrichment opportunities at no cost.
- The Maryland Center for Character Education at Stevenson University awarded Bester the 2017 - 2018 School of the Year award



## LOOKING AHEAD:

- New branding and collateral for school – Focused on building pride and identity with excellence
- Exploring opportunities to continue to support youth as they transition, specifically to E. Russell Hicks Middle School



# DATA DRIVEN DECISIONS

## CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

FOR OUR EFFORTS TO REMAIN RELEVANT AND STRATEGIC, WE MUST CONSTANTLY BE IDENTIFYING IF WE ARE ACHIEVING THE GOALS LAID OUT IN THE LOGIC MODEL FOR OUR COMMUNITY INITIATIVE.

### DATA ADVOCACY

Significant work from AmeriCorps VISTA Christine Gou in the fall of 2017 researching best practices of neighborhood indicators at the state and national levels. Developed a presentation sharing findings and catalyzing a local conversation around a shared decision making tool in November at Healthy Washington County. In 2018, we hope to clarify the key academic, philanthropic and governmental stakeholders ready to commit to sustain a shared and open source community data platform.

### SALESFORCE

We received a grant from Salesforce to have free start-up licenses and partnered with Candoris Technologies to implement a local solution to track our activities in the community with the ultimate goal to connect our efforts to local outcomes. In 2018, Provisio Partners will support us in deepening our reporting and data analysis needs.

### OUTCOME REPORTING

Working with leaders in the field of outcome reporting including the University of Maryland Institute on Innovation, Casey Family Programs and others to identify the best ways to track and report on our holistic efforts to support children & families.

### NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

We successfully completed an intensive effort to become a nationally accredited community change initiative through the Council on Accreditation in June of 2018. The feedback we received was that there were no deficiencies and that we were an innovative and exciting model for the future of child welfare.

## UPCOMING

- We are developing an updated shared resource directory for partners and families to navigate local systems; exploring a public education process around data driven decisions to inform partners on the importance of a shared tool; exploring vendors to inform our neighborhood based child welfare efforts.
- Multiple logic model consultants including the University of Maryland Institute on Innovation is supporting us in 2018 as we update our future efforts with local partners and key stakeholders.

# KEY UPDATES FROM BCOH

## SECOND LOCATION

In order to effectively implement a variety of evidence based practices and facilitate community supports we needed an additional space for new staff members to work with families in their community of origin. In June of 2017, we were fortunate to partner with the Hagerstown Housing Authority to allow our growing Community Triage Services team a location on the second floor of the Elgin Station Community Center.

We still are one integrated team including our neighborhood and school efforts located at our original Mill Street office, our goal in the long-term remains to consolidate into a single location, but we are excited about how this resource allows us to better serve families today!

## NEW STAFF

Thanks to the Department of Human Services and the Title IV-E Waiver program, we were able to make significant additions in the Summer of 17' to our team to respond to major needs for families experiencing crisis. We hired three new family support workers, Monica Johnson, Joan Balbuena, and Sandy Roberts, who serve families who originate from the Bester neighborhood and are focused on partnering to help them achieve lasting success at the conclusion of our services. Thank you for your commitment and belief in this important work!

Patsy Harne joined us part-time in June as an Executive Assistant through a generous grant from the Department of Labor's Senior Community Service Employment Program and is based out of our Elgin Station location.

In the last school year, Bester Principal Kristi Bachtell was transferred to another Washington County Public School and we bid farewell to one of our original team members. We also welcomed Kristin English as the new principal and are excited to begin the next chapter of exciting outcomes.



In August of 2017 we welcomed our largest group of student and volunteer supporters to date: Cassandra MacKareth and Kaitlyn Semler (Shepherd University Bachelors of Social Work program); Emily Leedy and Ellen Sassaman (Salisbury University Masters of Social Work program); Starling Hathcock (University of Maryland at Baltimore), Christine Gou (AmeriCorps VISTA, pre-med student via Healthy Futures program at Strong City Baltimore); Mark Douglas (Salisbury University Bachelors of Social Work program).

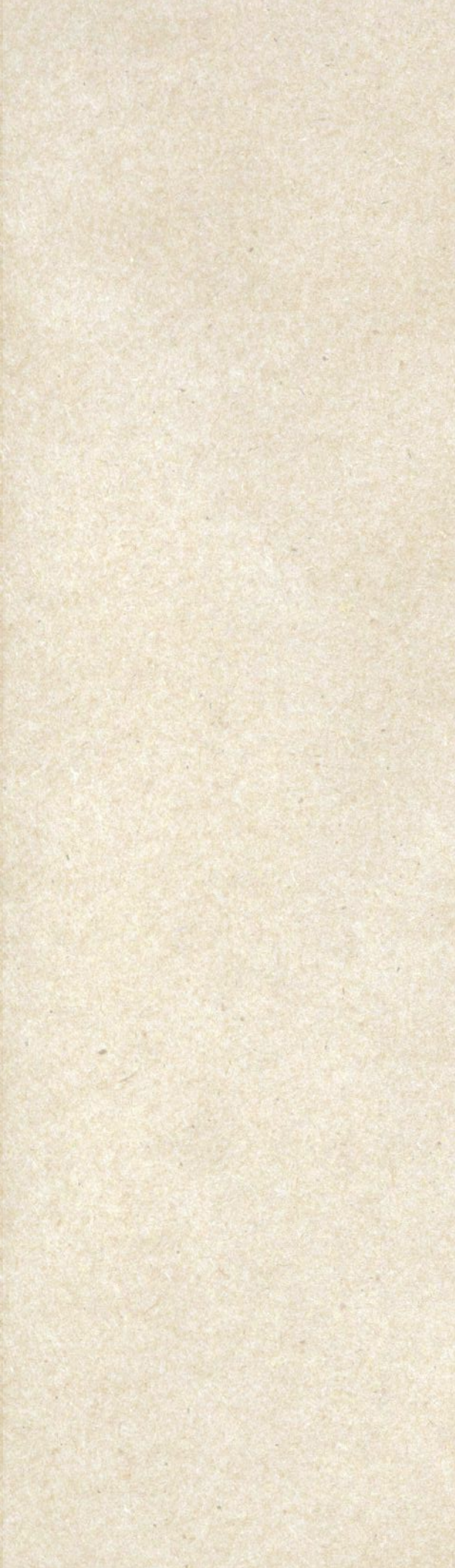


# BLENDING & BRAIDING RESOURCES

BCOH is possible due to a large variety of community partners coming together with a shared vision for success for children and families, to all of those who make a difference, large and small, we thank you!











Washington County  
Department of  
Social Services

THE ALICE VIRGINIA AND  
DAVID W. FLETCHER FOUNDATION

