

Site Visits – Monday, February 27

1. *The 6th Branch - 923 East Chase Street

Founded after September 11th, the 6th Branch was part of the movement of young veterans who had experience, skill sets, and the desire to keep serving their country after returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. It has become a service organization that brings together veterans and civilians. Executive Director Scott Goldman joined the Army in 2010 and served for five years as a military prosecutor and advisor to infantry, medical, and intelligence commanders. He deployed in 2013 to Afghanistan where he led a team of U.S. advisors across five provinces to help build the capacity of the Afghan legal system. Scott and Program Manager Colin Lyman work closely with volunteers and the local community organization to create useable park and garden spaces in the vacant lots of East Baltimore where housing had been completely abandoned. A current project to rebuild Johnston Square and create Ambrose Kennedy Park has advanced thanks to volunteers and the support of Re-BUILD Johnston Square, a community organization.

Site Visit: We will meet at the Ambrose Kennedy Park to have lunch, do “light maintenance” – trash removal, weeding and similar tasks – and talk with Scott, Colin and community partners including Ms. Regina Hammond, President, Re-BUILD Johnston Square Neighborhood Organization. We’ll learn about the challenges facing East Baltimore and share perspectives on models for community service and redevelopment work. In case of inclement weather, we will meet at the 6th Branch office and make a brief visit to the park.

For more information: www.6thbranch.org

We are grateful to The Associated - Jewish Federation of Baltimore’s Jewish Volunteer Services - for arranging this visit and the visit to Paul’s Place.

2. Center for Urban Families - 2201 North Monroe Street

The mission of CFUF is to strengthen urban communities by helping fathers and families achieve stability and economic success. It provides a bridge for many who need to attain stability and is a leader in the national conversation on responsible fatherhood, workforce development, family strengthening and black male achievement. The Center for Urban Families (CFUF) located in the Greater Mondawmin Community in Baltimore City, the neighborhood that was the epicenter of the unrest associated with the death of Freddie Gray while in police custody. The afternoon will focus on the transformative work of CFUF and the way in which it approaches its mission.

Site Visit: The visit will start with a bus tour of West Baltimore on the way to the CFUF’s home, providing some history of the neighborhoods, including the Jewish community’s presence in prior eras and currently. The visit will include a tour of the facility and a

working lunch including members who have benefited from services provided by the Center. President & CEO Joseph Jones, along with members of his team, will share their work and passion grounded in the reality of the over 27,000 lives they have touched since the organization's inception in 1999.

For more information: <http://www.cfuf.org>

Presentations by two other Baltimore not-for-profit organizations will include **The Holistic Life Foundation and Wide Angle Youth Media:**

The Holistic Life Foundation was founded in 2001 by brothers Ali and Altman Smith, now Executive Director and Director of Fundraising of the organization. They became involved in yoga, mindfulness, and other contemplative practices as children growing up in West Baltimore. They will talk about their work in bringing these practices to elementary schools, prisons, drug treatment centers and homeless shelters everywhere, providing positive role models for children and adults alike.

For more information: <http://hlfinc.org>

Wide Angle Youth Media

Through media arts education, Wide Angle Youth Media cultivates and amplifies the voices of Baltimore youth to engage audiences across generational, cultural, and social divides. Their programs inspire creativity and instill confidence in young people, empowering them with skills to navigate school, career, and life.

For more information: <http://wideanglemedia.org>

Open Society Institute–Baltimore supports these organizations in their work in the community.

We are grateful to Evan Serpick, Director of Strategic Communications for his help in organizing this visit. For more information: www.osibaltimore.org

3. I.F.O - In, For, Of, Inc. - What Makes a “Good” Neighborhood? - Beth Am Synagogue - 2501 Eutaw Place

Our colleague Rabbi Daniel Burg, his congregants, neighbors and allies will lead an exploration of Beth Am Synagogue and its relationships with neighbors in the historic Reservoir Hill neighborhood.

* See the newly refurbished grand Moorish sanctuary built nearly 100 years ago by Chizuk Amuno Congregation

* Hear "stoop stories" from Baltimore legend and radio personality Gil Sandler, other Jews, and African-Americans from our extended community.

* Challenge assumptions about what makes a neighborhood successful, healthy or "good."

- * Learn about Beth Am's unique model of community engagement which includes a sister 501(C)3: IFO, enabling the shul to build meaningful relationships with neighbors and be "In, For and Of" their majority black community.
- * Listen to a panel discussion with IFO's co-chairs Cindy Paradies and Amani Coker.
- * Visit the new Dovecote Cafe, just one block from Beth Am, and meet its co-founders Aisha Pew and B. Cole who regaled Beth Am congregants this past Yom Kippur afternoon with a presentation on Sacred Space.

4. Paul's Place - 1118 Ward Street

Paul's Place is a catalyst and leader for change, improving the quality of life in the Southwest Baltimore communities; providing programs, services, and support that strengthen individuals and families, fostering hope, personal dignity and growth. Program areas include Health and Wellness, Children and Youth Programs, and Case Management involving various kinds of help and support for individuals. The vision of Paul's Place is that by 2020, the individuals and families living in Southwest Baltimore City will have full access to high quality health care, education, employment, and housing along with the other support necessary for stability and self-sufficiency.

Site Visit: Jayna Powell, an ordained minister and Volunteer Coordinator, will welcome us to Paul's Place where she has arranged for Ambassadors, regular volunteers from the community who are turning their lives around, to eat with us and speak to us. Upon arrival we'll see the dining room in action (a call for seconds at lunch is made at 12:30 so there will still be folks around), eat our boxed lunches and participate in a round table on issues of poverty in Baltimore led by 4 Ambassadors. Jayna will lead us on a tour of Paul's Place, explaining the array of services offered there and then we will be invited to have a little taste of volunteering, sorting and organizing clothing donations and making food bags.

For more information: <http://paulsplaceoutreach.org>

5. Institute for Islamic Christian Jewish Studies - 956 Dulaney Valley Road

The city of Baltimore is the focal point for a national conversation around questions of justice, race and community. The ICJS highlights the continued importance of bringing diverse religious perspectives to address civic and social challenges. In the yearlong initiative "Imagining Justice in Baltimore," the ICJS will contribute Jewish, Christian and Muslim perspectives to the public conversation about justice and healing in Baltimore. The ICJS mission statement is to "Build learning communities where religious difference becomes a powerful force for good."

Site Visit: We will visit their headquarters in Baltimore to learn more about the citywide "Imagining Justice in Baltimore" initiative in which they convened hundreds of residents to learn about Justice from the perspective of three faiths. We will study a piece of that curriculum, the writings of Amina Wadud on Islamic perspectives about gender justice,

taught by Islamic scholar Humayra Ziad and hear from faith leader Michael Hunt, pastor of congregational care at Baltimore's Open Church of Maryland, a progressive congregation, about how religion can be a force for positive social change.

For more information: www.icjs.org