




## **A Community-Based Holistic Approach to Empowering African-American Men**


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# MISSION STATEMENT



The Men's Center improves the quality of relationships between fathers and their children, thus enhancing the preservation of families.



The Center is a nexus of the Greater East Baltimore community, creating greater access to services and a community awareness for residents. We address specific needs through a holistic array of services that are designed to meet men where they are and move them towards self empowerment.

# OUR Principles

Are based on the West African Principles

## Umoja (Unity)

To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.

## Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)

To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves.

## Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)

To build and maintain our community together and to make our brothers' and sisters' problems our problems and to solve them together.

## Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)

To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit together from them.



*"We feel that African Americans should practice the principles of the Nguzu Saba. It could bring Black people together and improve communities socially and economically."*

**Leon Purnell**  
Executive Director

## Nia (Purpose)

To make as our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

## Kuuba (Creativity)

To do always as much as we can, in the way that we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than when we inherited it.

## Imani (Faith)

To believe with all our hearts in our parents, our teacher, our leaders, our people and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

## Heshema (Respect and Honor)

To treat people, especially the elders and even the children with humility that recognizes dignity and worth of human beings.

# Past and Present Partnering Organizations

- Center for Poverty Solutions
- Maryland Food Bank
- Johns Hopkins Health Systems
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- Baltimore City Police Department
- Tuerke House
- Maryland Institute College of Art
- Lead Paint Coalition
- Kids Scoop
- Success by Six
- Casey Family Services
- DaySpring
- Dee's Place
- Urban Health Institute
- Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition
- Johns Hopkins School of Nursing
- The GATE
- The Door
- Christopher's Place
- Maximus
- CFWD
- Mattie B. Uzzle Outreach Center
- Baltimore City Health Department
- Baltimore Medical Systems
- Re-entry Program (Enterprise Foundation)
- Maryland Regional Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families
- Baltimore Urban League
- Office of Employment Development/Eastside Career Center
- Baltimore Youth Opportunities - YO
- Baltimore Goodwill
- HERO
- Rose Street Community Center
- Project PLASE
- Bea Gaddy
- I Can't We Can
- Poverty Solutions
- Department of Human Resources

# OUR Programs

## Parenting Skills

Through weekly Parenting and Life Skills Groups, The Men's Center

- ❑ Restores the male parent to its traditional significance in the lives of children
- ❑ Creates stable families of of committed men and women

In addition, The Men's Center provides a series of community forums, including the "P's of Fatherhood":

**P**otency

**P**rocreativity

**P**rovider, and

**P**rotector

# Parenting and Life Skills: Vessels to Success

*“The Men’s Center helped me find myself when my mind was lost. They have shown me how to ask for help when I need it; to stop letting pride get in the way of learning. I learned how to love myself and respect myself. I also learned how to stand on my feet as a man and face my responsibility without running away from it. I learned how to talk with people when I have a problem. I learned how to talk with my mouth and not my hands. The Men’s Center has become a second home, it is my second family. Coming to The Men’s Center was one of the best things I have done and I am very proud of myself for doing that. I will always continue dealing with The Men’s Center and the people that run it.”*

**Mr. Gerrod Smith**

**Thomas Moore** was a 23 year old father of two when he came to The Men’s Center to seek assistance with a legal matter. After meeting with a case manager who completed a thorough needs assessment, it became clear that Mr. Moore was dealing with other issues as well. A case plan was developed and he was enrolled in, and completed, a four-week parenting and life skill session as well as an “Adult Rites of Passage” program. When the date came for him to appear in court, he was accompanied by his case manager who brought a letter of reference from The Men’s Center explaining his participation in and success with his case plan activities. Mr. Moore was found not guilty. However, shortly thereafter, he was laid-off from his job in Washington, DC. Again, The Men’s Center stepped in and referred Thomas to Casey Family Services, where he began working on a part-time basis as a youth advocate. He was later hired in a full-time capacity working with youth. Thomas continues to support the Men’s Center by participating in its activities, assisting with our youth Rites of Passage, and referring men to the program.



**Mr. Thomas Moore**

## **Daddy Duty** (partnered with Success by 6)

Daddy Duty courses are offered to clients based on assessed needs. This program teaches fathers how to:

- Make the home safer for their children
- Deal with support enforcement
- Resolve issues around visitation and access to children

## **Job Placement Assistance**

- Each person receives a free physical to see if they are, in fact, able to work
- The Men's Center assists residents with securing employment
- The Men's Center has a library and resource room
- Computer access is provided to assist with job placement

# Rites of Passage

The purpose and function of the Egbe Akokonrin Rites of Passage, developed by The Men's Center, is to facilitate community-conscious manhood development in East Baltimore.

*If we are to change the conditions that make life in the HEBCAC area risky and, at times, perilous, we cannot afford to randomize the development of males who are the source and victims of much of the “crime” in our community.*



The Rites of Passage program targets:

- boys 8–12 years old
- youth 13–18 years old
- young men 19–25 years old
- men over 25 years old



## Job Placement Assistance: Vessels to Success

Picture  
not  
available

**Mr. Corey Butler**

**Corey Butler** is a 40 year old father of one who was referred to The Men's Center by another client. Corey came to the Center because he believed he was the *"employee we were looking for and we were the employer he wanted to work for."* He came into the Center dressed and prepared for an interview. When informed of the Center's function, he became noticeably disappointed and frustrated. However, he was persuaded to continue with the Center's process. The first job lead he was given by the Center staff did not work out and his frustrations began to grow again. The staff detected a strong and immediate sense of urgency from Mr. Butler.

After meeting again with a member of the staff, the source of Corey's stress and frustration became clear. The holiday season was approaching and purchasing clothing for his 3 year old daughter, Briana, was Corey's major priority. After more clearly defining his skills and career desires, Corey was referred to another possible job opportunity with the Baltimore Sun Newspaper. He received an interview and one week later he was working. Corey has since referred two other men to the Center who are now his co-workers at the Baltimore Sun Newspaper Company.

*"Serving the rites of passage made me realize the worth of life and understand how to be the best man I could be."*

# HEALTH GOALS

The Men's Center strives:

- To provide free physicals, ensuring that men are able to work
- To monitor blood pressure and blood sugar levels
- To prevent heart attacks and strokes
- To provide free oral HIV testing
- To provide mental health counseling
- To provide smoking cessation classes and counseling
- To provide nutrition and health education seminars



In order to continue doing this, we need to:

- Improve our existing health clinic
- Extend the hours of operation, from one day a week to three days/week
- Launch health messages throughout the community and hold health fairs to get people tested



# A Health Partnership: The Men's Center and Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing

- 5 year JHU School of Nursing randomized clinical trial with 309 hypertensive urban African American men aged 21 to 54 at baseline (Hill MN, et al.)
- Study designed to evaluate the effectiveness of two approaches of controlling blood pressure
  1. a more intensive comprehensive educational-behavioral-pharmacologic intervention by a nurse practitioner-community health worker-physician team
  2. a less extensive education and referral intervention in controlling blood pressure.
- At completion of study, participants were referred to The Men's Center for continued care.

# A Health Partnership: The Men's Center and Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health

- Kellogg Community Health Scholar post-doc joined research team to aid in adding CBPR methods to the transition plan designed to move men from the study protocol to care at The Men's Center.
- Focus groups were conducted to determine what men learned about hypertension from being part of the study and what components of the study protocol were most beneficial to them.
- Study results were presented to participants at a study wrap up party at The Men's Center
- Focus group transcripts were translated and key points were used to create health communication campaigns by art students at the Maryland College Institute of Art.

## Hypertension Awareness



# Hypertension Awareness



The  
Men's  
Center

CALL 410 614 5353 TO GET CHECKED  
FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

  
MEN'S CENTER  
410-614-5353

HIGH **BLOOD**  
PRESSURE CAN  
**KILL** ANY TIME

# The Men's Center and Johns Hopkins University Schools of Public Health and Medicine: Where are we Now?

- Many men are uninsured and having problems getting medications they were prescribed while participating in original study
  - We are working to establish a partnership with MedBank of Maryland so that patients can receive free medications
- Medical students from Johns Hopkins volunteer at the weekly health clinic and attend to patients as part of their training and are actively involved in all aspects of the clinic
- Working with MICA and former study participants to disseminate health communication materials to members of surrounding community
- Applying for grants to improve services and facilities available to patients

# *Imagine This!*

## **Scenario**

300 men, who were part of the Young Black Male Blood Pressure Study, are forced to stop taking their medications because they have no place to receive medical care and no insurance coverage. After living for months and years with uncontrolled hypertension, four of these men suffer from a heart attack or stroke and each of these men are rushed to the Emergency Room in a nearby hospital. Imagine that they each require surgery, are put in the ICU (intensive care unit), stay in the hospital for two to four weeks and are prescribed a number of medications. Due to the seriousness of their illnesses and their lack of health insurance, they will need SSI (supplemental security insurance). The cost would be over \$300,000 for **each** of them for one year, a total cost of 1,200,000!

The Men's Center has a clinic that sees 300 men annually and addresses their health needs and other stressful situations they are faced with on a daily basis. Through case management, life skills, mental health counseling, and nutrition and health education sessions, we help support **everything**. For a little over \$300,000 per year. **What makes sense to you?**

## Health Center: Vessels to Success



*“The Men’s Center has helped me with food and through some of their programs: blood pressure, cholesterol, and prostate. Through the health clinic I have received medical treatment from the doctors and free medication. It has also helped people with drug abuse. I attend the NA meetings held here at night, which have helped me get my life together.*

*I thank GOD for the Men’s Center. I’m just thankful that they’re here. I hope The Men’s Center continues to be here to help me continue my life. It has really helped me and I need it.”*

**Mr. Gregory Brown**