



**SHERMAN
CENTER**

for Early Learning
in Urban Communities

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



It is an understatement to say that 2020 was a year of unexpected challenges. I am happy to share how the Sherman Center met these challenges while pursuing its mission “to build a strong foundation for lifelong learning among young children in Baltimore City and develop best early childhood education practices for urban schools.” In this Annual Report, you will meet some of the exceptional individuals who made 2020 a success despite COVID-19. You will learn about the research interests and contributions of our new faculty, our new partner school and principals, the first recipient of the Childhood Literacy Scholarship and the alumni donors who made it possible, the 2020 Sherman Center Faculty Research Award recipients, and participants and leaders in our various programs including the Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program. These individuals were adaptable, gracious, cooperative, and dedicated in the face of unprecedented and unpredictable circumstances. Their commitment to early childhood education was inspirational and made 2020 a year of growth on which the Sherman Center will build in 2021!

Mavis G. Sanders

NEW SHERMAN CENTER FACULTY

EXPANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERTISE AT UMBC

In 2020, the Sherman Center welcomed two new early childhood faculty members: Drs. Karrie Godwin and Shana E. Rochester. Dr. Godwin holds a joint appointment with the psychology department at UMBC and conducts research on the development of attention, executive function, and reasoning in young children. Her expertise was especially useful this fall when she conducted professional development for Sherman Center Literacy Fellows Program volunteers on strategies to maintain attention during online learning, information they could apply while volunteering and as adult learners in virtual classrooms. Dr. Godwin will continue to work with early childhood educators and volunteers in her joint appointment with the Sherman Center.

Dr. Rochester holds the position of Research Associate with the Sherman Center. Her expertise in early childhood literacy and family engagement will help to advance the Sherman Center's and UMBC's impact in these areas. Dr. Rochester has played a significant role in developing and evaluating content and materials for two Sherman Center initiatives: the Diverse Books Project and the Families, Libraries, and Early Literacy Project. She also represents the Sherman Center on the Baltimore City-Wide Judy Center Steering Committee.

Drs. Godwin and Rochester brought a wealth of energy and insight to the Sherman Center in 2020, for which we are extremely grateful.



"As a Sherman Center research faculty member, I have a unique opportunity to be part of an interdisciplinary team that is committed to improving learning outcomes for children through research and meaningful partnerships with educators and families."

Dr. Godwin earned her Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from Carnegie Mellon University where she was also an IES fellow in the Program for Interdisciplinary Education Research. She also holds a M.Ed. in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard University and a B.A. in Psychology (with elementary education licensure) from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Her research has been funded by SRCD, NSF, and IES, and has been published in peer-reviewed journals including *Child Development*, *Learning and Instruction*, *Psychological Science*, and *npj Science of Learning*.



"I was drawn to the Sherman Center because of its research-practice partnership model with Baltimore City Public Schools. Sherman Center projects are jointly developed in collaboration with Center partners to ensure that the needs of children and their families are met."

Dr. Rochester earned her Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of Michigan (UM), her M.A. in educational studies from UM, and her B.A. in psychology from Spelman College. Prior to joining the Sherman Center, Dr. Rochester completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Boston University's Wheelock College of Education and Human Development. Her research on how educational contexts support the academic and social development of children during early and middle childhood has been published in *Child Development*, *Early Education and Development*, and *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*.

NEW SHERMAN CENTER PARTNER AND PRINCIPALS

EXTENDING OUR REACH IN BALTIMORE

In 2017, the Sherman Center began its work with two partner schools in South Baltimore: Lakeland (Najib Jammal, Principal) and Maree G. Farring (Benjamin Crandall, Principal). In 2018, we expanded to two additional schools in the area: Curtis Bay (Mark Bongiovanni, Principal) and Bay Brook (Monique Reese, Principal - May 2020). Our partnerships continue to deepen at these schools as we collaborate with their early childhood educators, families, and principals to improve learning experiences and outcomes for young children (birth to age 8).

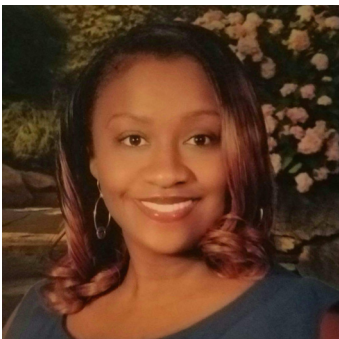
In 2020, we welcomed a new principal to Bay Brook and the Sherman Center, Mr. Christian Licier. Mr. Licier, former assistant principal at Garrison Middle School and Patterson High School in Baltimore, took the reins of leadership at Bay Brook in July at a momentous time in the school's history. In January 2020, Bay Brook moved into its new 21st Century School Building - a state of the art facility that is part of Baltimore's educational renewal and revitalization efforts. Mr. Licier brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position and a commitment to students' learning and well-being.

In 2020, the Sherman Center also added a fifth partner school, Arundel Elementary School, led by Principal Rochelle Machado. Arundel Elementary is also housed in a 21st Century School Building and serves children birth to Grade 2 in the Cherry Hill community of Baltimore. Its singular focus on early education makes Arundel unique in the city and a perfect partner for the Sherman Center. Before arriving at Arundel, Principal Machado spent 11 years serving students and their families in City Schools as a Special Education Teacher, Instructional Support Teacher, and Assistant Principal. We look forward to working with all our amazing partner schools and principals to extend our reach in Baltimore.



Mr. Christian Licier

"I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to partner with the Sherman Center. Through this partnership we are able to provide students with the one-on-one time they so desperately need to improve their skills."



Ms. Rochelle Machado

"In collaboration with the Sherman Center, we hope to provide families additional resources to support early literacy skills at home and offer teachers professional development opportunities to increase the percentage of students reading on or above grade level."

— THE CHILDHOOD LITERACY SCHOLARSHIP

STRENGTHENING LITERACY AND ALUMNI-STUDENT CONNECTIONS

In spring 2020, two UMBC alumnae, Donna Helm '70 and Louise Goodrich Izat '70 endowed a scholarship in honor of their late professor, Dr. May Roswell. Dr. Roswell, a professor of French and German, was a founding UMBC faculty member, the architect of its modern languages program, and beloved by her students and peers. In fall 2020, the Sherman Center selected the first recipient of the Childhood Literacy Scholarship, Ayodele La Veau. Ayodele is currently pursuing a double major in Psychology and Theater, and plans to pursue a career as an art therapist. She is passionate about education and supporting others in the "process of learning and discovery." Demonstrating this commitment, she served as a Sherman Center Literacy Fellows Program volunteer in fall 2019 and spring 2020 at Bay Brook Elementary/Middle School. As a volunteer, Ayodele assisted students "in their literacy skill development, meditation, and mindfulness," and was gratified "to witness the effects of investing in children's lives through healthy and safe learning environments." Donna, Louise, and Ayodele had the chance to meet virtually via Zoom and discuss their mutual love of UMBC and children's literacy development in October. The Sherman Center is honored to know these outstanding women and build connections between UMBC's current and past students.

Ms. Ayodele La Veau



"The Childhood Literacy Scholarship is so wonderful and has been a major blessing for me."

Ms. Donna Helm and Ms. Louise Goodrich Izat



"With this Childhood Literacy Scholarship, our goal is to provide financial aid to a promising UMBC student who will become part of the solution to the childhood literacy problem in our country. We are delighted that Ayodele La Veau is our first recipient"

NEW FACULTY SCHOLARS

DEEPENING THE KNOWLEDGE BASE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Since the first Faculty Research Award was made in 2018, the Sherman Center has granted \$304,689 to UMBC faculty and their colleagues at other Maryland universities and organizations. These grants support studies aimed at better understanding and improving early childhood educational experiences and outcomes. In 2020, two research teams, led by Dr. Patricia Young (Education) and Dr. Jane Lincove (Public Policy) received awards.

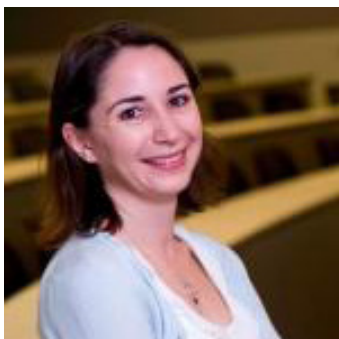
Dr. Young and co-investigator, Ms. Deborah Kariuki (Master of Arts in Education Graduate Program, UMBC), were funded to conduct a yearlong study entitled, "Infusing a Culture-based Computational Thinking Curriculum in Urban Preschools". They are creating and evaluating a computational thinking curriculum for young learners that early childhood educators and parents can use to enhance children's problem solving skills and creativity.

Dr. Lincove with co-investigators, Dr. Lieny Jeon (Johns Hopkins University) and Ms. Sarah Bollard (Baltimore City Public Schools), received funding to conduct a three-year study entitled, "Judy Centers in Baltimore: Improving Data-Informed Decisions". This study will investigate the effects of Judy Center services on young children's kindergarten readiness, the relative impact of different Judy Center programs and services, and the potential for measuring outcomes for children participating in Judy Center activities before they enter kindergarten. Both Sherman Center-funded projects will produce timely and significant findings for policy and program improvements in early childhood education, deepening the knowledge base in the field.



Dr. Patricia Young

"My Co-PI (Deborah Kariuki) and I are excited to work with preschool teachers and parents to prepare children for the computational demands of the 21st century."



Dr. Jane Lincove

"The Sherman Center award supports my partnership with Baltimore City Schools' Judy Centers in our efforts to build evidence of program impacts and provide guidance for program improvements."

SHERMAN CENTER ACTIVITIES BY THE NUMBERS IN 2020

The Sherman Center implements five key partnership, professional development, and leadership development activities: the Literacy Fellows Program; the Teacher Summer Institute; the Families, Libraries, and Early Literacy Project; the Diverse Books Project; and the Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program. In the next few pages, you will learn more about these activities, participant engagement, and activity impact.

THE LITERACY FELLOWS PROGRAM

Established in fall 2018, the Literacy Fellows Program (LFP) is a collaboration between the Sherman Center and the Shriver Center (a service-learning center at UMBC) to provide literacy volunteers for two schools. The LFP is led by UMBC student leaders (literacy fellows), who serve as literacy volunteers and are also responsible for recruiting and organizing an additional three to five volunteers for their assigned school. Fellows and volunteers reflect UMBC's highly diverse student population, and serve as classroom helpers two days per week for 60-90 minutes during the first and second grade language arts blocks. Volunteer activities are determined by the classroom teacher. UMBC faculty and staff provide support, guidance, and professional development to facilitate volunteers' work and include individual and small group literacy support for students success.

In March 2020, the activities of the Literacy Fellows Program abruptly ended when Maryland's Governor, Larry Hogan, issued a stay-at-home order in response to COVID-19. Based on teacher feedback, the Sherman Center resumed the LFP to provide literacy support to first- and second-grade teachers during online literacy instruction. Despite challenges faced in 2020, UMBC student volunteers made an impact. As reported by Nihira Mugamba, literacy fellow at Bay Brook for two years:



The volunteers who worked with students and teachers at Bay Brook EMS this semester were engaged, flexible, and determined. They demonstrated unique traits not seen from past volunteers due to the experience being entirely virtual, this in itself was a major success. The volunteers enjoyed working with the students at Bay Brook; they participated in creating a positive learning environment as they worked hard to gauge and strengthen the various levels of reading and writing among students. Many of the tutors fulfilled leadership roles, as they were tasked with communicating with their assigned teacher regularly.

Literacy Fellow, Nihira Mugamba, with students at Bay Brook

20 ELP VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTED TEACHERS AND STUDENTS (10 IN SPRING 2020 AND 10 IN FALL 2020).

19 ELP VOLUNTEERS ATTENDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON KEY ISSUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TO IMPROVE THEIR SUPPORT OF YOUNG LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

241
VOLUNTEER HOURS
WERE SERVED IN
10
FIRST- AND SECOND-GRADE
CLASSROOMS.

THE TEACHER SUMMER INSTITUTE

In response to COVID-19 restrictions, we launched our very first virtual Teacher Summer Institute (TSI) on July 26-29. Forty-two early childhood teachers at our five partner schools as well as UMBC faculty, staff, and guests attended the four-day event focused on promoting young children's socioemotional development. Sandra Evers Manly kicked-off the TSI with a reading and discussion of her children's book, *Raised Up by Mrs. Manly and Her L's*, sharing how to promote young children's socioemotional development through diverse books. Next, Dr. Patricia Jennings, author of several books on childhood trauma and mindfulness practices in education, conducted a two-day professional development based on her book, *The Trauma Sensitive Classroom: Building Resilience with Compassionate Teaching*. On the final day of the TSI, early childhood teachers developed action plans for promoting children's socioemotional development during the new school year; they also selected materials to facilitate virtual instruction. These materials were purchased by the Sherman Center and distributed to students and families by the teachers. On December 2, Dr. Jennings conducted a virtual TSI follow-up session where 30 early childhood teachers gathered to discuss trauma sensitive classroom practices and self-care.



2020 Virtual TSI Curtis Bay teacher distributes Sherman Center-funded school supplies to families.



2020 Virtual TSI attendees receive instructional materials for students and their classrooms.

AFTER THE 2020 TSI...

98% of participants rated the 2020 TSI as "very good" (28%) or "excellent" (70%).

36% Increase in the number of participants who rated their knowledge about teacher self-care when working with children who have experienced trauma at the "advanced" or "expert" levels compared to the "novice" or "intermediate" levels.

40% Increase in the number of participants who rated their knowledge about trauma sensitive practices for early childhood classrooms at the "advanced" or "expert" levels compared to the "novice" or "intermediate" levels.

TEACHER FEEDBACK

"The Sherman Center always values our time, supports us with so many amazing resources, and truly reenergizes me for the upcoming school year!"

"I really enjoyed the breakout groups with my school and being able to bounce ideas off each other."

"I really enjoyed the sessions with Patricia. I felt that I learned a lot about how trauma works and how we as teachers can best respond and support students."

"I loved the topic and the speaker, and I loved how we had breaks in order to help us with the virtual aspect of this year's summer institute. Also the \$300 worth of supplies-amazing!!!"

SHERMAN CENTER ACTIVITIES BY THE NUMBERS IN 2020 CONTINUED

FAMILIES, LIBRARIES, AND EARLY LITERACY PROJECT

Currently in its second year, the Families, Libraries, and Early Literacy Project (affectionately known as ELP) involves quarterly family meetings designed to provide caregivers of young children (birth to age 3) at Curtis Bay and Lakeland Judy Centers with information, resources, and books to promote their children's kindergarten readiness. We held three ELP meetings at each site in 2020 (a fourth meeting was canceled due to COVID-19): a spring in-person session on cooking, a summer virtual session on toilet training, and a fall virtual session on learning outdoors. In total, we distributed 113 books and kindergarten readiness information and materials to an average of 20 families (10 at each site) per session.

In collaboration with the Enoch Pratt Free Library and Judy Center staff, we adapted our virtual meetings to respond to families' needs in several ways. First, families received hotspots from the Brooklyn Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library and tablets that the Sherman Center purchased for the Curtis Bay and Lakeland Judy Centers to enable them to participate in the virtual meeting. Next, we created activity cards that promoted kindergarten readiness through outdoor play and reinforced information shared during the session. Then, we made COVID-19 kits with masks, wipes, and hand sanitizer for families to ensure safe outdoor exploration. Finally, families received all materials in advance of the session along with frozen pizzas, snacks, outdoor-themed books, and explorer kits.

FAMILY FEEDBACK

Families who attended our fall ELP meeting were asked how COVID-19 impacted their reading frequency with their child(ren). The majority of families (69%) reported reading more during COVID-19 than before, while 25% reported that their reading frequency was the same during COVID-19. When we asked returning families how participating in ELP has helped them to understand kindergarten readiness on a 5-point scale (1 = The ELP didn't help me at all to 5 = The ELP helped me a lot), caregivers had an average rating of 4.5. Taken together, these findings emphasize the importance of the ELP in connecting with families to support their children's literacy development and kindergarten readiness.



Families at the spring meeting designing aprons and bibs for their children.



A child at the spring ELP wearing the apron made for her and holding cookie mix.



Curtis Bay families at the spring meeting listening to a read aloud with their children.



Fall ELP family supplies for Curtis Bay families shown with frozen pizzas and snacks.



Fall ELP family bags for Lakeland Judy Center families, which included COVID-19 kits, books, activities, and explorer toys.



A child who attended the virtual fall ELP playing with his explorer toys.

THE DIVERSE BOOKS PROJECT

The Diverse Books Project aims to increase early childhood educators' access to high quality children's books at Sherman Center partner schools. Our current collection includes over 100 books, most of which have been curated by UMBC experts in children's literature. We have also included educator recommendations for books that celebrate authentic stories about children from different racial/ethnic backgrounds. All five partner schools participated in the project this year.

Each grading period, educators reviewed 15 exemplary diverse books and requested books for their classroom library or a designated place in their school (the "Book Nook"). Early childhood educators could request up to six copies of one book in the spring, and to accommodate remote learning due to COVID-19, request one copy of up to two titles this fall.

The Sherman Center distributed **127** books from the Diverse Books Collection to **29** early childhood educators at our five partner schools in 2020. Educators submitted **67** requests for **30** different books to use with their students.

EDUCATOR FEEDBACK

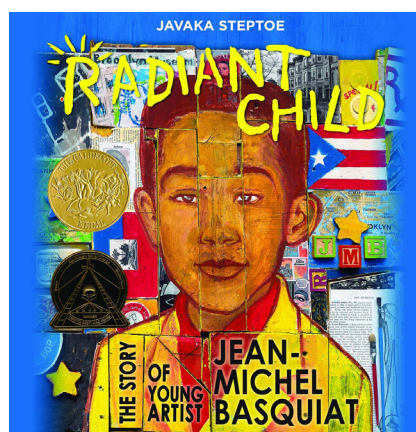
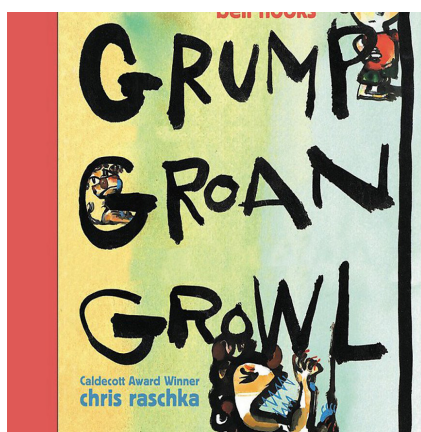
Educators selected texts that addressed current topics and affirmed their students. They noted the following when asked to describe why they selected their chosen books and how they planned to use the books in their classrooms:

"I selected [Separate is Never Equal (2014) by Duncan Tonatuih and My Princess Boy (2010) by Cheryl Kilodavis] because they touch upon topics that are relevant in today's classroom. Both of the texts that I chose are about social issues that my students should learn about."

- Megan Chester, Special Educator, Lakeland Elementary/Middle School

"I selected [I am Every Good Thing (2020) by Derrick Barnes and You Matter (2020) by Christian Robinson] to help our students understand how important they are and that they do matter. I want to continue working on [socioemotional learning] components for our students who are struggling."

- Melinda Moody, Director of Early Childhood Education, Maree G. Farring Elementary/Middle School



Most Requested Books of 2020
(tied with 5 requests each)

MARYLAND EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (MECLP): BUILDING EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP CAPACITY IN MARYLAND

The Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program (MECLP) is a Sherman Center initiative that seeks to position Maryland as the vanguard in developing strong early childhood leaders nationally. In 2020, MECLP made significant progress toward this goal. Specifically, it graduated its inaugural cohort of MECLP Fellows and selected the second cohort. It welcomed new members to its Advisory Committee, secured additional funding to support MECLP activities, and began the process of evaluating its impact. In the next few pages, you will read more about MECLP's continued growth and success.

A centerpiece of the MECLP program is SHER 601, an innovative post-baccalaureate 12-month hybrid course, designed by Dr. Anne Douglass to develop leadership skills in visioning, values, personnel and resource management, organizational capacity, data analysis, creativity, innovation, and public policy. In December 2020, the first cohort of MECLP Fellows graduated from the course after presenting capstone projects that not only reflected what they learned but also what they will continue to contribute to their organizations and the early childhood field in Maryland. The 2019-20 MECLP Fellow Capstone Projects and Fellows are listed below.

Leading Organizational Change to Improve Early Childhood Outcomes

Erin Bonzon, Howard County Office of Children and Families

The Rebirth of the Building Blocks Network: Supporting the Transition to Formal School

Stephanie Geddie, Instructional Facilitator for Early Childhood Programs, Howard County Public Schools

Improving Communication and Increasing Participation in Early Childhood Services in Western Maryland

Cheri Helmstetter, Birth to 4 Literacy Coach, Allegany Public Schools

Increasing At-Risk Students' School-Readiness by Supporting Parents

Candise Hill, Literacy Coach, Robert W. Coleman Elementary School, Baltimore City Schools

TIPPS (Trauma-Informed Practices Peer Support)

Laura Hutton, Associate Professor and Education Department Coordinator, Harford Community College

Advancing the Professional Identity and Capacity of Family Child Care Professionals through Multiple Avenues

Tiffany Jones, Level 5 EXCELS and Level 6 NAFCC credentialed Family Child Care Provider, Montgomery County

Creating Effective Systems: Building Interest for a P-3 Alignment in Maryland

Christina Lopez, Early Childhood Instructional Resource Teacher for Pre-K Classrooms, Prince George's County Public Schools

Empowering Early Childhood Teachers to Achieve Higher Education.

Carolina Reyes, Owner/Director, Arco Iris Bilingual Center, Prince George's County

Montgomery County Infants and Toddlers Program Cultural Competency Initiative

Naina Schneiderman, Infant and Toddler Special Educator, Infant and Toddler Program, Montgomery County

Improving Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Public Pre-K and K Classrooms

Rudi Zelman, Program Manager, The Literacy Lab, Baltimore City



Dr. Anne Douglass,
SHER 601 Instructor

"Reflecting the rich diversity of early childhood settings, programs, and systems in Maryland, our first cohort of early childhood Leadership Fellows employed innovation and creativity as they iterated solutions to problems of practice—including those brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic—and developed skills in entrepreneurial leadership. As the field of early care and education continues to adapt and ready itself for a post-pandemic future, the commitment, energy, and resilience of MECLP's first cohort of Leadership Fellows will be a vital leadership resource."

MECLP WELCOMES ITS 2020-2021 LEADERSHIP FELLOWS

In summer 2020, MECLP received 31 applications for its second cohort of Fellows despite the challenges presented by COVID-19. Fourteen Fellows were selected from this excellent pool of candidates, representing Maryland's diverse early childhood sector.

2020-2021 COHORT II

Poised to lead innovation and change in early childhood systems and programs across Maryland



Alicia Cross

Assistant Director/Teacher, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Department of Commerce Child Care Center in Gaithersburg; Co-Chair of the Organization of Child Care Directors of Montgomery County

Rossana Espinoza-Thorndahl

Owner, My Home is Your Home Early Childhood Child Development Program in Olney; Co-Founder of the Latino Childcare Association of Maryland (LCAM)

Crystal Harris

DRU Judy Center Coordinator, Dorothy I. Height Elementary School, Baltimore City

Heather L. Hutson

Child Development Coordinator, Caroline County's Early Head Start Program, Caroline County Public Schools

Vanessa Jones

Assistant Program Coordinator, Early Childhood Education Services, Baltimore City Head Start, Mayor's Office of Children and Family Success

Jenelle King

Kindergarten Teacher, Grade Level Chair, G3 Teacher Leader, Rosa L. Parks Elementary School, Prince George's County Public Schools

Kaymi Plank

Judy Center Service/Site Coordinator, Judy Center Early Learning Hub at Robert Moton Elementary School, Carroll County Public Schools

Krista Respass

Managing Director, Early Childhood Education Services, Maryland Public Television

Melissa Romano

Special Education Coordinator, Birth to 5 Programs, Harford County Public Schools

Emily Samuels

District Director, Celebree Learning Centers

Christina Segura

Executive Director, Parents of Preschoolers Inc., National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Amy Walstrum

Early Childhood Literacy Coach, Talbot County Public Schools

Anzer Nichelle Woodward

Early Intervention Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Montgomery County Infants and Toddler Program

Nkenge Yasin

Director, Busy Bee's Child Care Center, Baltimore City

MECLP ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

GUIDING MECLP'S PROGRESS AND GROWTH

A team of policy makers, education experts, and national advisers focused on developing and supporting early childhood leaders and practitioners, MECLP's Advisory Committee has been the engine of its evolution. In 2020, it welcomed three new members to guide its continued development.

CONTINUING MECLP ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 2020

Meredith Callanan

Chair, Ready at Five; Retired President, T. Rowe Price Foundation

Louise Corwin

Visiting Executive in Residence, Sherman Center; Retired ED, Ready At Five

Lisa Davis

Director, Program Innovation and Student Well-Being, Howard County Public Schools

Dr. Rolf Grafwallner

Program Director, Early Childhood Education, CCSSO; former Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Early Childhood Development, Maryland State Department of Education

Dr. Nancy Grasmick

Presidential Scholar, Towson University; Board Chair and Director, Center for Innovation and Leadership in Special Education, Kennedy Krieger Institute; former Superintendent, Maryland State Department of Education

Dr. Lisa Herbst

Program Director, Pearl Education Inc.; Adjunct Faculty, Department of Early Childhood Education, Towson University

Tracy Jost

Owner, Kid's Campus Early Learning Center; Policy Advisor with NIEER

Jana Martella

Senior Advisor, Education Development Center Inc.

Dr. Gilda Martinez-Alba

Assistant Dean, College of Education, Towson University

Dr. Mavis Sanders

Director, Sherman Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities; Professor, Department of Education, UMBC

Dr. Michele Stites

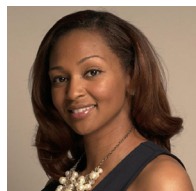
Assistant Professor, Early Childhood Education, UMBC

NEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS - 2020



Janine Bacquie is a dedicated leader with a passion for supporting issues surrounding the care and education of young children and advancing the achievement of all children. She has extensive experience in birth to five issues, teaching and learning, educational leadership, community and parent outreach, program

development and management and data analysis at both local, state, and national circles. Janine's experience is extensive. Janine is currently the Program Director of the Judy Center Early Childhood Partnership at Cradlerock Elementary School in Howard County Public Schools. Previously, she served as the Director of Early Childhood Policy and Practice, Key Liaison to the Black Community Crusade for Children at the Children's Defense Fund and Division Director of Early Childhood Programs and Services in Montgomery County Public Schools.



Felicia Jones is a skilled and motivated interdisciplinary professional with experience analyzing, monitoring, implementing, and evaluating education and community-wide programs; successfully managing collaborations; coordinating across stakeholder groups; and communicating across diverse audiences.

Felicia is currently Project Director of the Prenatal to Three Strategic Policy Initiative at Maryland Family Network. Her professional experiences include serving as a Senior Manager, DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative; opening and directing the Judy Center in Park Heights, Baltimore City; and serving as Senior Director of Parent Initiatives at Martha's Table in Washington.



Sonia Pruneda-Hernandez is a Professor and Coordinator of the Early Childhood Program at Montgomery College, Rockville and Takoma Park Campuses. Sonia is Co-Advisor of the College's Early Childhood Education Club and Coordinator of the Maryland State Department of Education Child Care Development Fund. She was awarded the College's Faculty Outstanding Service

Award and the NISOD Excellence Award. Previously Sonia was in early childhood education with the Navy Child Care Programs where she directed Child Care Centers for the Department of Defense, and worked with government early childhood centers in Rockville, Maryland.

ADDITIONAL MECLP 2020 UPDATES

MECLP's Evaluation Plan: Building the Early Childhood Leadership Capacity in Maryland

As part of its continuous improvement process, MECLP commissioned The Policy Equity Group to develop an evaluation plan for of the program. To hold MECLP accountable to its goals, the multi-year evaluation will address questions related to the quality and short- and long-term effects of its activities on Fellows, children, families, communities, and the early childhood system in Maryland (see figure below). The plan outlines a “rapid-cycle iteration” approach to refine and incorporate lessons learned into the program design on an ongoing basis. The evaluation will collect quantitative and qualitative data from multiple data sources and at several time points.

INPUTS	WHO BECOMES A MECLP FELLOW?	MECLP successfully identifies, recruits, and retains a diverse set of fellows with strong leadership potential.
ACTIVITIES	WHAT DO FELLOWS EXPERIENCE?	Program design and implementation incorporate best practices and the needs of fellows.
OUTPUTS	WHAT DO FELLOWS LEAVE WITH?	Fellows develop the competencies and social capital necessary to engage in effective leadership practices.
OUTCOMES	WHAT ACTIONS DO FELLOWS TAKE?	Fellows demonstrate applied learning through changes in behavior and career growth .
IMPACT	WHAT CHANGES AS A RESULT?	The leadership contributions made by fellows result in improved outcomes at the child, family, community, and system levels.

Early Childhood Leadership Survey: Who Comprises Maryland's Early Childhood Workforce?

A survey of Maryland early childhood leaders, commissioned by MECLP, was released in late fall to better understand the demographics and characteristics of state early childhood leaders, including state administrators, early childhood program directors, county government administrators, school system staff, and higher education faculty and administrators. Once the data are analyzed and the findings presented to MECLP and the Maryland early childhood community in early 2021, we expect to have a comprehensive report on the current state of early childhood leadership in Maryland and the dramatic need for leadership development.

Partnering with the Maryland State Department of Education: Investing in an Alignment of Vision

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) awarded MECLP \$150,000 to support its workforce development initiative designed to create a network of early childhood leaders. Steven Hicks, Assistant State Superintendent in the Division of Early Childhood at MSDE, views investing in MECLP a benefit to the department's overall goals and the early childhood infrastructure his Division is promoting. According to Hicks, “MECLP advances our goal in Maryland Ready: A Path to School Readiness and Success – Strategic Plan 2020-2025 to expand and enhance workforce development opportunities by providing critical support for early childhood educator leadership development.” Our ongoing partnership with MSDE integrates MECLP and MSDE goals into a shared vision for building strong early childhood leaders in its workforce.



Leadership Institute: Creating Leaders from Within

MECLP hosted its inaugural Leadership Institute, Early Childhood 2020 - What Just Happened - What Happens Next, headlined by Dr. Joan Lombardi, a seasoned early childhood pioneer, innovative leader, and policy advisor to national and international organizations and foundations. Dr. Lombardi's remarks focused on the need for leader advocacy, the leadership opportunities presented by COVID-19, and the importance of motivating a younger generation of leaders. Dr. Lombardi's energizing conversation was followed by a panel of leaders in education who engaged in an interactive conversation with participants. Panelists included Steven

Hicks, Assistant State Superintendent of Early Childhood at the Maryland State Department of Education; Dr. Sonia Pruneda-Hernandez, Early Childhood Program Coordinator for Montgomery College Rockville and Takoma Park Campuses; and Tracy Jost, Owner of Kid's Campus Early Learning Center in Calvert County and Policy Advisor with NIEER. Professor Anne Douglass, Director of the Institute for Early Education Leadership and Innovation at UMass Boston and Instructor of MECLP's SHER 601, facilitated the Q&A session.

SHERMAN CENTER FUNDERS

GEORGE AND BETSY SHERMAN

George and Betsy Sherman have a profound belief in the power of education to create better opportunities, better communities, and stronger families. Through their foundation, they make long-term, strategic investments in programs that are scalable and have compelling evidence of helping vulnerable, economically disadvantaged children and their families achieve better outcomes in all aspects of their lives. George Sherman says about his wife, “Betsy’s lifelong commitment to child advocacy drives our family’s focus to improve the lives of children.” George and Betsy Sherman have been recognized for their philanthropy through several awards. Most recently, they were named honorees of the Baltimore Sun’s Business and Civic Hall of Fame and 2018 Maryland Outstanding Philanthropists by the Association of Fundraising Professionals.



The Sherman Center would also like to thank the following individual donors for their generosity.

Dr. Linda Baker

Ms. Louise Goodrich Izat

Ms. Meredith Callanan

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Professor of Biology at UMBC, Dr. Jeff Leips is an inaugural member of the Sherman Center Campus Advisory Committee. Dr. Leips earned his bachelor's and doctoral degrees in biology from Florida State University. He began as an assistant professor at UMBC in 2001 and has had a productive career of scholarship, teaching, and service. His research focuses on identifying the genes that influence the age-related changes in traits that directly affect fitness using the *Drosophila melanogaster* (fruit fly) as a model system. Dr. Leips is an advocate for expanding funding for basic science research in the United States and has acted as an expert witness on Capitol Hill. He is also a community-engaged researcher, committed to inspiring and training the next generation of scientists.

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