a haven of HOPE

healing beyond the hospital
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We started by asking questions of community members and partners, involving many of you in a community engagement process that has endeavored to answer some of those questions. We embarked on a West Baltimore Primary Care Access Assessment and Strategic Planning Project to determine, among other things, what more we could do to ensure our community members have access to quality primary care. And we’ve reviewed prior years’ plans, initiatives and outreach work and have compiled the recommendations that you and others have made over the years.

That’s where Community Works comes in.

Under a new vision and corresponding strategic plan — designed to expand our 20-year role as a trusted resource for healthcare, education, community, social and housing services — last fall we renamed the Bon Secours of Maryland Foundation, which became Community Works.

The name change is more than words on paper — it’s a call to action. As we look to implement a new patient-centered “Medical Neighborhood” — a holistic approach to health care in which we work in partnership with community organizations and other health care providers — we are sharpening our focus on creating programs to address the needs of our community.

We are working ever harder to ensure our residents have access to healthy food, housing, jobs, recreation facilities and an array of health care services.

We have recommitted ourselves to engaging our neighbors, residents and community members to be true partners in our shared work.

And we look forward to a new and healthier future.

Together, more than ever, our Community Works.

For many months now, the Bon Secours Baltimore Health System has been engaged in valuable work: We have been trying to understand more fully how to help our residents live significantly healthier lives.

Samuel L. Ross, M.D., M.S.
Chief Executive Officer
Bon Secours Baltimore Health System
I see you.

I see how hard you’re working to continue your education, prepare for careers, manage your money, take care of your families and rebuild your lives. I see the efforts you make to keep this community beautiful and to be active civic participants.

I see you doing all these things even when you find yourselves in tough spots, not quite prepared and needing a helping hand.

That’s why Community Works is here.

When I started as executive director in the spring of 2012, I had an idea about the myriad services and programs connected to 26 North Fulton. But I quickly learned that there was so much more.

This Community Support Center, at the corner of Fayette and Fulton, is not just a sum of its services. I truly believe it is a “Haven of Hope.”

Twenty years ago, you told the Sisters of Bon Secours what you and our community needed, leading to the creation of Community Works — and a critical component of our mission: to be Good Help to Those in Need.

Today, under the auspices of Community Works, we are doing more than ever before to reach beyond the walls of the hospital to help you — our neighbors — on your paths through life.

We provide career coaching and training through our Workforce Development programs. We help moms and dads understand child development. We provide financial services, from income-tax preparation to wealth creation.

We create gardens and clean up our neighborhoods. We provide a shower and a free hot breakfast to women who are struggling.

Most importantly: We listen. We serve. We see you.

As the new leader of Community Works, I want you to know that what you say matters to us.

And that’s why we’re circling back to provide you with this publication, letting you know about all the things we’ve accomplished together.

We’re excited about the people we’ve served, the communities we’ve touched, the lives we’ve changed and the friends and partners who have helped us along the way. But we have more work to do to create a community that is healthy — in every meaning of the word.

So we want to hear from you. Come tell us what you need. Bring a friend or a family member. Bring your honest criticism and your best ideas.

Working together, we know we can live out the promise given to us in Philippians 3:13-14: 

*Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, we press on toward a higher calling.*

And that higher calling is... Community Works.

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Friends, neighbors and supporters of Bon Secours Community Works,

Roslyn M. Brock is the new executive director of Bon Secours Community Works. She also serves as vice president of advocacy and government relations for Bon Secours Health System’s corporate office in Marriottsville.

Ms. Brock started with Bon Secours Baltimore Health System in 2001 as director of business and community development — right here in this building. Prior to Bon Secours, she was employed for 10 years in Health Programs at the W. K. Kellogg Foundation in Battle Creek, Mich.

“I’ve come full circle,” she says.
“To help these women become self-sufficient, you have to first bring back their pride and their dignity.”

women’s resource center

In many of our neighborhoods, women are the backbone. But when women need help, where can they turn? Since 1997, the Women’s Resource Center has been the place in the community for women in need.

Operating as a day drop-in center for women struggling with substance abuse, domestic violence, homelessness, anger, depression and other mental health issues — among other things — the Women’s Resource Center helps to connect them to resources and services they need to right themselves.

Along with social and education services, The Women’s Resource Center puts women in touch with essential health care services, either through Bon Secours Hospital or other agencies. And program director Verna Gentry is working to establish a state-of-the-art computer room at the center, to help teach basic computer skills and help with job searches and other necessities.

“We’re like the arms of a parent,” Gentry says. “We try to point them in the right direction, so that they can become whole again.”

One of the most important services the center provides is simple hospitality: Women can come have a hot breakfast, shower, wash their clothes and rest. Some days, up to 40 women come through the center’s doors. Gentry, who had lived in West Baltimore for more than 20 years, knows that such basic amenities are vital to women in search of a new and better path in life.

“To help these women become self-sufficient, you have to first bring back their pride and their dignity,” says Gentry, whose tough but nurturing personality has contributed to the center’s reputation in the community as a house of refuge and respite. “They have fallen down in life and they need a place where they can come where there’s no judging. Many of them don’t have any other outlet. People feel comfortable with me. They feel at home. They feel like this is a safe haven.”

From the practical...

Along with social and education services, the Women’s Resource Center puts women in touch with essential health care services, either through Bon Secours Hospital or other agencies.

To the personal...

In addition to providing the basic living necessities, the center celebrates birthdays with every woman who comes through the door.

BY THE NUMBERS: WOMEN’S RESOURCE CENTER

9,055 breakfasts served (FY 2012)
168 women were prevented from getting evicted (FY 2012)
What's Next for the Women's Resource Center?

Computers! Gentry is working to establish a state-of-the-art computer room at the center, to teach basic computer skills and help with job searches and other necessities.
Programs such as “Babyology,” — a series of educational workshops for expectant parents — as well as courses on such topics as fatherhood and teen parenting, help prepare families to make smart choices and become self-sufficient.

“The beauty of our center is that while mom or dad is getting all these services, baby is getting developmentally age-appropriate services” in the center’s child care facility, center director Lori Fagan says.

Staffers help parents understand child development and best practices for raising their children. They help parents navigate through child support issues and offer anger management help. They discuss literacy and language development, nutrition and safety.

The center serves more than 30 families a month — even providing transportation — and is making a real difference in the lives of community members. For example, the In-Home Intervention program provides prenatal services and promotes healthy starts for babies, resulting in higher rates of full-term pregnancies, healthy birth weights, and 100% child immunization rates.

The newly renovated center is a more colorful and larger facility, allowing for an expansion of the center’s child development programs and the ability to offer services to more families.

The renovations were prompted by Maryland Family Network’s choice of Bon Secours’ Family Support Center to be a statewide model for its next generation Family Support Hub Center. The first site to be selected as a hub, it will provide coordinated services for families with young children and will serve as a model for such programming state wide.

“So there will be more people who are job ready and more kids who are better prepared for school,” Fagan says. “That’s good for this community and for the city.”

Services provided:

- GED Program & ABE Classes
- Nurturing Parenting Classes
- On-site child care for participants
- Employment readiness
- Money management workshops
- Life skills training
- Health education
- Counseling
- Substance abuse workshops
- In-home support services
- Community outreach services
- Recreational activities
- Tutoring
- Parent support group
- Teen Parent program
- Fatherhood program
- Transportation to and from the center

**BY THE NUMBERS:** FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

- 44 home visits per month, on average (FY 2012)
- 32 participants completed “Babyology” course (FY 2012)
- 173 children served (FY 2012)
- 7 participants received GEDs (FY 2012)
Shakira Foster first tried out the services at the Family Support Center when she was 19 and her daughter was just a baby. She wanted to earn more than her McDonald’s position was paying and she knew she needed her GED to find a better job.

“I took it seriously, but I was still a little bit young,” says Foster, who is now 24. “So when I took the GED test and failed the math part, I didn’t reschedule. I didn’t quite understand a lot of the things that I understand today.”

Thankfully, staff members at the Family Support Center do understand.

“Everybody in that building was calling me, calling me, calling me,” Foster says. “And they encouraged me to come back.”

Three years later, after the birth of her son, Foster did come back. She fully availed herself of the Family Support Center services—including parenting classes, which she says helped her develop patience. Meanwhile, as Foster was learning so were her children. Her daughter, for example, learned to identify colors, shapes, ABCs and numbers. She learned to zip and unzip her coat. The Family Support Center staff helped to potty train her.

In July, Foster earned her GED and is now looking to enroll in college courses.

“The staff stuck by me and helped me in so many ways. Them sticking their neck out to help me made me want to help myself,” Foster says. “Now because of the Family Support Center, I’m able to live on my own and take care of myself and my children.”
The Workforce Development program is made up of two initiatives: the Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Program (YEEP), which is open to residents ages 13-17, and Project Connect for those 18 and older.

Starting with YEEP in 1999, the Workforce Development program has evolved from an initiative to teach basic job skills and help residents land entry-level employment to a comprehensive strategy that prepares participants to progress in their chosen fields of work.

Through YEEP and Project Connect, the Bon Secours Community Works initiative has worked tirelessly and creatively to help residents take steps toward creating stronger and healthier lives for themselves, their families and the community.

Participants learn good work ethics, workplaces dos and don’ts, anger management and conflict resolution, as well as computer literacy skills including Internet browser usage for the job search and email.

Upon completion of the program, clients are referred to an on-site job placement specialist to assist them with finding employment. They also receive three years of comprehensive follow-up services such as driver education and free or low-cost income tax preparation.

“People need to see themselves moving forward, getting around the barriers,” says Sterling Brunson, program director for Project Connect. “We’re trying to take our program participants to the next level, to learn and become good citizens.”

For more than a decade, the Workforce Development program has offered teens and adults the training and support to develop job-readiness skills as well as assistance with job placement. In that time, more than 1,800 residents from the southwest Baltimore community that surrounds Bon Secours Hospital as well as from other city communities have completed the program.
Each year, about 75 participants enroll in the program. In addition to job readiness, YEEP’s wide-ranging and life-changing strategies teach participants about civic responsibility, community awareness and personal growth and development. During the school year, YEEP students and parents complete community service projects, attend recreational and cultural activities, and attend meetings and training sessions.

“YouEP gives young people the job skills they need, as well as a sense of who they are,” says Jeneanne Collins, program director. “The potential goes from being simply completing an employment program to one where kids are going to college and moving into fulfilling careers.”

The program, which aims to break a community cycle of low graduation rates and poor employment histories, is divided into two phases of training. The first phase includes a 15-week job readiness program during the school year — classes meet 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday — that prepares participants for summer employment, internships and job-shadowing with area businesses. The topics covered include:

• Identifying life goals and passions
• Writing resumes and cover letters
• Dressing appropriately for the workplace
• Substance abuse in the workplace

Participants enter the second phase of the program, which is called Young Entrepreneur, after their first summer placement. The 10-week program focuses on career exploration, training and planning, as well as job retention.

Students also have run local enterprises, including a snowball stand and a coffee cart in conjunction with a local vendor. Participants learned how to use social media to help promote the businesses.

“We’re trying to give them the tools they need to compete in the world,” Collins says.
“We’re connecting people back to life.”

**PROJECT CONNECT**

In 2009, what had been known as the Our Money Place Career and Financial Development program changed its name to Project Connect and expanded its mission from a program that helped participants land entry-level jobs to an initiative that would help participants redefine their lives.

“We started looking for people who were really interested in getting a better life, not just getting a job,” says Sterling Brunson, the program’s director. “We’re connecting people back to life.”

Project Connect is a comprehensive three-year program that offers participants who are at least 18 the educational, workforce development and financial literacy resources they need to succeed in the workplace and in life. The program prepares participants for success in the workplace and setting and achieving career and personal goals.

With the new name came new expectations. To rev up Project Connect’s emphasis on education, Brunson made it mandatory that all participants enroll in the General Education Development (GED) program if they didn’t already have one or a high school diploma. To accommodate this new focus, Project Connect expanded from a four-week program to five weeks of intensive education, job readiness and financial literacy.

About 20 new enrollees begin each five-week session. They attend classes and seminars from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Monday through Friday, learning such critical skills as:

- Interviewing for a job
- Cultivating a strong work ethic
- Becoming self-sufficient
- Dressing appropriately for work
- Workplace do’s and don’ts
- Anger management and conflict resolution
- Computer literacy skills including how to use the Internet for job searches and email
- Household budgeting
- Short- and long-term savings

Upon completion of the job readiness five-week session, participants are referred to an on-site job placement specialist to assist them with finding employment.

And because research has shown that it can take several years for a person to get back on track financially, Project Connect includes three years of extensive follow-up services. Those follow-up resources include ongoing job search assistance, job retention counseling, and financial services provided by Our Money Place.

“Education is the biggest equalizer of them all,” Brunson says. “This is their chance at a second life.”

**BY THE NUMBERS: PROJECT CONNECT**

- 170 participants enrolled in GED prep course (FY 2012)
- 53 landed jobs including 8 placed as Clean & Green landscape trainees and 5 participants as employees of Bon Secour’s Baltimore Health System or Bon Secours contractors (FY 2012)
When Shelly Clark signed up for Project Connect in 2009, she had been unemployed for several years, was beginning her recovery from drug addiction and was looking for a path to a different kind of life.

Three years later, she is working full-time as a peer recovery coach in Bon Secours Hospital’s emergency department, where she screens patients for drug addiction and intervention prospects. She bought her first car earlier this year, and she was voted in this summer as the newest member of the board of directors for the Women’s Housing Coalition in East Baltimore.

“Project Connect gave me the skills I needed to get to where I am today,” says Clark, 44. “It helped instill confidence in me and taught me how to manage everyday life in an economic world.”

Through Project Connect, Clark learned employment skills such as how to interview for jobs, how to build a resume and how to dress for work. She also learned how to manage a bank account, how to save money and how to develop a household budget.

“I learned how to manage my life,” she says. “They taught me how to be a responsible person. They brought out the potential in me.”

Clark says her experience at Project Connect encouraged her to pursue a job as a peer recovery coach because she wanted to find work that would allow her to give back.

“I like to help people who are in transition because learning how to live life is one of the most wonderful things you can experience. I recall the joy I experienced when I could feel good about myself, and I like to see that same smile and joy in those I am able to help,” she says. “It’s a good feeling to watch someone grow into a better self.”
In the shadow of one of our nation’s worst economic downturns, many Southwest Baltimore families struggle to manage daily needs. For most, saving for big purchases, such as a house, or planning for retirement seem out of reach. Some have never planned a household budget, bought a car or saved money in a bank account.

This is where Our Money Place Financial Services has stepped in to help hundreds of residents learn how to manage their finances and begin to build strong financial futures for their families. The program’s services are available to residents of all income levels.

“Our mission is to help families become more financially aware and build assets,” says Althea Saunders-Ranniar, program director for Our Money Place. “The goal is economic self-sufficiency.”

Since opening in 2003 as a result of a partnership with Security Plus Federal Credit Union and Operation ReachOut Southwest (OROSW), Our Money Place has taught participants about financial tools and resources such as savings accounts, market rate loans, free debt counseling and low-cost tax preparation and retirement planning.

The financial literacy program teaches participants how to pay off debt and improve their credit, develop a plan to set aside six months savings to cover emergencies and set realistic retirement goals. Participants also learn about will and estate planning and receive tax preparation assistance.

The program also teaches participants the ins and outs of homeownership, such as learning how to live by a budget to save up funds for a down payment on a house.

Additionally, Our Money Place collaborates with the Workforce Development program to incorporate financial literacy into the job readiness initiative. Through this arrangement, Our Money Place provides 15 hours of financial literacy instruction during each five-week class, one-on-one financial counseling for participants and an additional three years of services for each graduate to help them improve their incomes, reduce debt, develop savings habits and accumulate assets.

“We want to give families the information they need to keep moving forward,” Saunders-Ranniar says.
Starting in 2005, Tanya Smith, 37, began coming to Our Money Place for help with preparing her income tax returns. Smith (not pictured) soon began attending seminars about establishing credit and budgeting. And then she got her first credit card in 2007.

“I was trying to get myself ready for homeownership,” she says. “I didn’t have bad credit at the time. I had no credit, which I had learned wasn’t a good thing.”

But before she knew it, she had run up a $5,000 credit card bill that she was struggling to pay. Knowing that she someday wanted to buy a bigger home for herself and her two children, she sought help from the staff at Our Money Place to help her untangle the credit mess and get herself back on track.

She says they helped her get a low-interest loan from Security Plus Federal Credit Union to pay off the credit card company. Through the program, she learned to be more organized — instead of storing important files in a plastic bag, she began keeping them in files where she could keep receipts, bills and other documents together and easily accessible.

She credits Althea Saunders-Ranniar, program director for Our Money Place, with helping her sort out the credit card trouble and getting her enrolled in the homeownership program. With consistent payments, she now has the credit union loan balance down to about $400, and, by committing herself to putting aside at least $50 every paycheck she now has $3,000 in a savings account to apply toward a down payment on a house.

“I’m really happy that I’ve come a long way,” she says. “I’m not where I really need to be, but I’m heading in the right direction.”

Not only is she working on her own financial future, she is passing along her newfound knowledge to her children: her son, Rasheed, 16, and daughter Tacole, 12.

“I talk to them about budgeting and comparison shopping,” she says. “I’m trying to pass along what I’ve learned.”
“We’re taking care of the neighborhood and providing valuable work skills for residents.”

Since it was founded seven years ago as an outgrowth of the neighborhood Clean & Green Competition, the Clean & Green landscaping program has trained local workers and transformed more than 600 vacant, debris-filled lots in southwest Baltimore into well-maintained — and usable — green spaces. While developing on-the-job skills, participants have helped the city reduce rodent infestations and helped eliminate potential breeding grounds for crime.

“We’re taking care of the neighborhood and providing valuable work skills for residents,” says Erika McClammy, director of Bon Secours’ Neighborhood Revitalization initiative.

The program’s trainees — all of whom are graduates of Bon Secours’ Job Readiness Program — have spearheaded community beautification or environmental projects such as garden projects, composting education and neighborhood clean-ups.

Clean & Green operates two six-month training sessions per year, with four trainees in each session. Trainees learn specialized landscaping skills, such as plant identification and equipment safety; receive financial counseling; and continue to learn career development skills and create career and life goals. During training, participants also learn to work as a team to develop a community project to complete during their term.

Building on its early successes, the Clean & Green program is planning to develop a social enterprise that will enable trainees to build on their landscaping skills by operating a landscape nursery. With demand growing for anything locally produced, one proposed project would involve having the trainees maintain a nursery for the production and sale of flowers to Bon Secours and other area hospitals for families and patients.

### BY THE NUMBERS: **CLEAN & GREEN**

90 vacant lots have been landscaped or improved  
(FY 2012)  
114,750 square feet of property have been beautified  
(FY 2012)
Just a few years ago, Lionel Terrell, 48, was an eyesore in his own community — dealing drugs, and eventually landing in jail on a four-year sentence. Now, he’s the supervisor of a landscaping crew that is responsible for beautifying dozens of vacant lots in Southwest Baltimore, planting neighborhood flower beds and revitalizing formerly abandoned stretches of earth. The Clean & Green crew improved and maintained 90 vacant lots during fiscal year 2012 alone.

“Before I began the Bon Secours Workforce Development program back in 2006, I was in and out of trouble with the law,” Terrell recalls. “After serving two years of a four-year jail sentence, I was looking for a way to turn my life around and give back to my community.”

Terrell says that at the time, he hadn’t had a job in years, and needed an opportunity that would help him develop workplace skills. As a mechanically inclined person who enjoys working outdoors, Terrell says he gravitated to the Clean & Green program after completing his training with the Workforce Development program.

“Everybody needs a chance at a new start,” he says. “When I came here, they didn’t pass judgment. They welcomed me with open arms.”

He is most proud of two projects in particular: his role in helping to build a greenhouse at the corner of Fayette and Fulton streets; and his work on a project to beautify a lot along Bruce Street, which he describes as looking like a jungle with five-foot-high weeds before the Clean & Green team tackled it.

“Now it looks like a park, and kids can play outside in the area,” he says of the Bruce Street lot. “And now when I walk through my neighborhood, instead of people asking me for drugs, they ask me how I got where I am today. People see the transition in me, and that makes me feel good.”
The Community Works Neighborhood Revitalization program works to change that.

The program is designed to sustain strong, stable and thriving West Baltimore neighborhoods. It grew from a 20-year community revitalization plan, developed in 1997 in partnership with the influential coalition Operation ReachOut Southwest.

The program works with residents, organizations and community partners to address such things as abandoned houses and community blight, as well as to connect residents to needed services, and to one another.

Revitalization activities recognize Bon Secours Hospital's role as an anchor institution in the community. And they strive to build on communities’ strengths: neighborhood leadership, strong historic housing and the proximity to downtown Baltimore, to name a few.

“We engage residents to provide solutions and strategies for the challenges that they face, and to be in a position to take advantage of opportunities that come their way,” says Erika McClammy, director of Neighborhood Revitalization. “As a result, neighbors feel happier living on their blocks, they feel safer, they have more of a sense of ownership and they’re less fearful of their neighbors, especially their teen and young adult neighbors. And they’re more knowledgeable and empowered.”

One revitalization program, Weed & Seed, brought together scores of neighbors from various communities to help reduce crime, trash, rats and other public health and safety concerns.

Because of Neighborhood Revitalization efforts, Community Works hopes to see property values steadily increase, neighbors taking responsibility for vacant lots and the intergenerational stewardship of the community’s valuable resources.

And in the coming years, “we’ll be doing more with youth and young adult engagement,” McClammy says, “training young people in the community to become neighborhood and community leaders.”

Weed & Seed, a successful Neighborhood Revitalization program, pulled together neighbors, community associations and partners in four southwest Baltimore communities to “weed out” the negative and plant “seeds” of positivity.

Armed with flashlights, trash bags, notepads and neighborhood pride, residents joined forces with police, code enforcement agencies and other partners to stage monthly “Citizens on Patrol” walks, community-clean-ups and other activities.

Over a year, scores of dedicated residents helped crack down on public safety and quality-of-life issues such as illegal dumping, broken streetlights, overgrown lawns and minor crimes.

“It gave people a chance to know their neighbors and what to do about issues of concern,” says Thomas Denton, program coordinator for Weed & Seed. “We started out just being a presence in the neighborhoods. And it actually came to be about making your community safer, making it a better place to live, work, worship and play.”
Did you know?

Cooperative work with neighbors on block projects has resulted in numerous tree plantings, home and garden improvements, festivals and celebrations and youth activities.

All in YOUR communities!

**BY THE NUMBERS: NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION**

More than $500,000 distributed in home improvement grants to eligible homeowners

102 community-clean-ups and patrol walks organized by Weed & Seed program

3 communities participated in Lots of Art project, turning vacant lots into performing art spaces
Bon Secours Community Works secures resources and operates programs to further the mission of the Sisters of Bon Secours in the communities of West Baltimore. Community Works’ particular focus encompasses the housing and community development initiatives of the Bon Secours Baltimore Health System, including:

- the provision of needed community services that complement the healthcare services of the local system
- the initiation and support of neighborhood development and community capacity-building ventures

In all of its activities, Community Works attempts to develop enduring community partnerships that are marked by mutual collaboration, a comprehensive approach to community development and the ability to leverage additional resources — both financial and programmatic — for the community.

Sister Patricia Dowling, CBS  
President, Board of Directors  
Bon Secours Community Works

Lenwood Ivey, Ph.D.  
Chairman, Board of Directors  
Bon Secours Community Works