



THE JUDGE ALEXANDER WILLIAMS, JR. CENTER FOR EDUCATION, JUSTICE & ETHICS

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BE CURIOUS. BE COURAGEOUS. BE COMPASSIONATE.

"The hallmark of any great society is measured by the extent and degree of involvement or engagement in activities and projects benefiting the community and advancing the public good."—Hon. Alexander Williams, Jr., Nov. 2018

The C.I.V.I.C. Baltimore Initiative at The Justice Thurgood Marshall Amenity Center

Few understood the importance of the 14th Amendment better than Justice Thurgood Marshall, and there are few aspects of American life that have been shaped more profoundly by the ethical standard of equal protection than public education. In fact, many of the most valued judicial, legislative, and public policy advancements in American society today are a direct result of the impact of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (1954). In short, Marshall is a founding father of the Second Reconstruction, which helped to re-establish the standard of nondiscrimination policy and equal justice through *Brown v. Board*, the Civil Rights (1964), and Voting Rights (1965) Acts.

The societal legacy of Justice Marshall is just one of the myriad reasons why The Judge Alexander Williams, Jr. Center for Education, Justice & Ethics (Judge AW Center) is honored to partner with Cross Street Partners and The Beloved Community Services Corporation in the revitalization of West Baltimore, MD. Current renovations to the historic Henry Highland Garnet School (PS103) will transform it into the Justice Thurgood Marshall Amenity Center at PS 103, which will honor the legacy of Justice Thurgood Marshall and other Civil Rights leaders who called Upton home while also providing needed community services, resources, and education in the historically underserved community. The Amenity Center will be a major step forward in establishing Upton as a cultural tourism destination to celebrate and honor the community's significance in the nation's Civil Rights Movement. As the anchor tenant in this soon-to-be renovated space, the Judge AW Center will bring applied research and community-based educational programming to a newly renovated space that will serve as a forum where solutions addressing the systemic challenges confronting Baltimore can be pushed *fearlessly forward*.

We are excited to announce the launch of The Judge AW Center's [Community Invested Violence Intervention Collaborative \(CIVIC\) Baltimore Initiative](#). The C.I.V.I.C. Baltimore Initiative will add value to The Justice Thurgood Marshall Center (JTMC) at P.S. 103 by bringing a blend of applied academic research, youth engagement, violence intervention programming, health advocacy, and professional development education in the area of ethical public leadership to the beloved community of West Baltimore, MD. A dynamic speaker series applied gun violence intervention research, juvenile diversion programming, and student-centered social justice education are just a few exciting aspects of this multifaceted initiative, which will transform the JTMC into a forum where solutions addressing the systemic challenges confronting Baltimore can be advanced in partnership with, for, and by West Baltimore community leaders.

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The Judge AW Center 2024 Signature Programs

Through the implementation of the following signature intervention programs and strategic initiatives, the Judge AW Center aims to make a meaningful difference in West Baltimore, which has been disproportionately impacted by vicious cycles of structural and interpersonal violence.

- ❖ **Gun Violence Intervention** – Based on applied gun violence intervention research by Dr. Joseph B. Richardson, *Life After the Gun Shot* is an interdisciplinary, mixed methods research study on the biopsychosocial effects of gun violence through the lens of public health. This study will use an innovative mixed methods research approach to improve our understanding of the victim-offender overlap among victims and perpetrators of firearm-related violence. This proposed study uses Baltimore as the context for generating scientific knowledge on the victim-offender overlap. Baltimore has one of the highest rates of firearm-related violence in the U.S., averaging over 300 homicides per year in the past four years (2015-2019). The proposed study will create a unique comprehensive database on firearm violence, drawing from medical records of victims of violent injuries from the Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) and the University of Maryland R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center (STC) in Baltimore, combined with offending, victimization, and criminal justice involvement data from the Baltimore Police Department, as well as the state's court and criminal history databases. *Life After the Gun Shot* is also the title of a documentary film about Dr. Richardson's research, which is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institute of Health (NIH), and the Judge AW Center in collaboration with the Department of African American Studies.

- ❖ **Juvenile Diversion and Youth Leadership Development** – The Life's Blueprint Project (LBP) aims to operationalize the practice of restorative social justice by shifting the trajectory of at-risk, vulnerable, and resilient youth from juvenile detention to, as Dr. King phrased it, achieving excellence in various fields of endeavor. This is achieved by empowering youth to transform their lives, and, ultimately, their communities. The purpose of this innovative beloved community partnership for juvenile diversion program is to serve as a catalyst in the revitalization of fractured communities in Prince George's County and Baltimore City, MD, which have been adversely, unduly, and disproportionately impacted by the social determinants of health and education in the wake of the national, mass incarceration crisis, 2 and persistent gaps in opportunity. 3 The LBP juvenile diversion program will work in collaboration with State's Attorney's Offices, law enforcement, the Courts, the Maryland Dept. of Juvenile Services, Public High Schools, and other community-based stakeholders to divert and redirect at-risk youth who complete a 16-week modular course emphasizing resilience, social and emotional development, leadership, decision-making, financial literacy, and other important life skills. Program participants may include referred youth from schools, community centers, and pre-and-post arrest and/or trial youth from the criminal legal system. Mental and emotional health support will also be available to program participants.

- ❖ **Social Justice Education** – The Social Justice Boot Camp (SJBC) is a signature program dedicated and designed to prepare the next generation of Social Justice Engineers (SJE). High School participants in this HIGH Y.I.E.L.D. (Youth Initiative for Empowered Leadership Development) program are encouraged and equipped to imagine transformative solutions to five persistent challenges, which impact our lives locally and globally. These challenges include (1) climate change and environmental injustice; (2) epidemic gun violence; (3) structural racism and inequalities; (4) socioeconomic disparities in health outcomes; and (5) knowing one's civil and human rights when interacting with law enforcement and the criminal legal system. These issues continue to shape the future of our nation, and it is vital that our youth are proactively and critically engaged in tackling them. Moreover, the Boot Camp's curricular emphasis on social justice education is intended to inspire, engage, and galvanize students to become catalysts for social change in their communities. In the spirit of organizers like Ella Jo Baker, the SJBC

- ❖ challenges youth to become Social Justice Engineers who are critically informed and engaged in developing solutions to contemporary problems.

- ❖ **Public Ethics and Accountable Leadership Development** – The Academy for Ethics in Public Service, Leadership, and Accountability will promote and provide certified professional development training, classes, discussions and presentations on the role, nature, purpose and importance of ethics and successful leadership in our contemporary society for both public servants as well as private entities interested in ethics. The Academy will include scheduling webinars/seminars, conferences, lectures, and workshops to
 - (1) develop and understanding and appreciation for policies, principles and standards of conduct to achieved by public officials and public employees;
 - (2) to provide public servants with the kinds of activities, conduct, behavior, responsibilities and requirements that fall within the jurisdiction and scope of ethic;
 - (3) to provide information and training with respect to reporting, disclosing and complying with ethical requirements;
 - (4) to provide and understanding of the legal, administrative, monitoring, navigating [and managing issues of compliance], and the enforcement mechanisms established by the rules of ethics by navigate and manage issues of compliance;
 - (5) to provide state approved police ethics training (including integrity police training), and sensitivity and implicit bias training for public officials; and (6) to provide best practices and guidance for the promotion, and implementation of a culture of equity, inclusion and diversity for both public and private entities.

- ❖ **Health Advocates In-Reach and Research (HAIR)**: Established by the School of Public Health in 2010, the Maryland Center for Health Equity has a well-established track record of building community trust, building bridges to social services and building a sustainable infrastructure for training local health department staff and medical care providers in ways that center equity for sustainable public health programs in underserved communities. One of M-CHE's notable innovations is the HAIR program, which served as the model for the state of Maryland's GoVax COVID-19 vaccination campaign, leading to the establishment of [Maryland Barbers and Stylists United for Health](#). The HAIR program has been recognized by the White House as the national model for the [Shots@Shop](#) COVID-19 campaign, which reached 1,000 Black barbershops and salons across the nation (2021-2023). By leveraging the scientific expertise of M-CHE and the groundbreaking HAIR program, the C.I.V.I.C. Baltimore Initiative aims to advocate for health equity and the inclusive revitalization of community-based services and solutions to systemic challenges. The Judge AW Center is proud to partner with M-CHE to bring the HAIR program to The Justice Thurgood Marshall Center in 2024.

The Judge AW Center's social impact efforts in these areas are a reflection of our mission and data-driven approach to developing solutions that address the needs of people living in vulnerable communities. Our efforts are strengthened and complemented by community-based partnerships and collaborative approaches to addressing social issues that bring multiple stakeholders together in order to drive positive change. It was out of our efforts to leverage the collective

expertise of community partners that the Judge AW Center's Community Invested Violence Intervention Collaborative (CIVIC) Baltimore Initiative at The Justice Thurgood Marshall Center was born.¹²³



¹ In a recent Baltimore Sun article by Jessica Anderson entitled, [“Report: Proportion of Maryland black prison population is more than double the national average of 32%,”](#) Anderson cites the following statistics from a Nov. 2019 report published by the [Justice Policy Institute](#): **“As recently as July 2018, more than 70 percent of Maryland’s prison population was black, compared to 31 percent of the state population.** The latest data from the Department of Justice show that the proportion of the Maryland prison population that is black is more than double the national average of 32 percent,” and is higher than any other state in the nation. Moreover, according to the [Maryland Department of Juvenile Services](#) (DJS), “youth of color” are most over-represented in juvenile detention, and **black youth constitute an average of 77% of the youth incarcerated in secure detention facilities throughout MD from 2017 to 2019.**

² See, [“My Kids are in Survival Mode”](#) by Jessica Yarmosky, NPR, April 30, 2019; Forman, J. (2017) *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America*. First edn. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. For additional information on the negative social and economic impact of mass incarceration, reference the following: Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow* (2011), Dominique DuBois Gilliard, *Rethinking Incarceration: Advocating for Justice That Restores* (2018), Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (2010), Christian Parenti, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis* (2000), *The Sentence* (Film) by Rudy Valdez (2018).

³ Persistent gaps in educational opportunity and outcomes have a significant impact on upward social mobility throughout the U.S. For more information about these gaps and data on the regions most impacted by low upward social mobility, visits [The Opportunity Atlas/Opportunity Insights](#), a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization based at Harvard University and directed by Raj Chetty, John Friedman, and Nathaniel Hendren that conducts scientific research using “big data” on how to improve upward mobility and work collaboratively with local stakeholders to translate these research findings into policy change. Opportunity Insights is dedicated to developing scalable policy solutions that will empower families throughout the United States to rise out of poverty and achieve better life outcomes.