

2019 ANNUAL REPORT





**“YOU WALK IN AND YOU KNOW THAT NO ONE IS
JUDGING YOU. IT FEELS LIKE HOME.”**

*– Martez Moyd Jr.,
Client Advisory Committee Member*

Dear Community,

I hope this letter finds you safe and healthy. I write from the security of my house, amidst a global pandemic, looking at this extraordinary testament of the past year at Charm City Care Connection.

This period of time has us reckoning with the past and imagining the future. The novel coronavirus pandemic has amplified the gross inequalities that have plagued Baltimore City for centuries. We are watching our community struggle to access basic resources, such as housing, food and bathrooms, as they face greater exposure to the coronavirus precisely because of their lack of resources.

When I first looked at this annual report, it felt like a historical document. Since the pandemic hit Baltimore, our organization has had to shift in so many ways: our drop-in center temporarily shut down in early March and we have responded by creating an emergency hotel program, and increasing phone case management, outreach and door-front services.

But as is often said, the past is prologue. The work that we did in 2019 set us up to navigate and succeed in the current crisis:

- **We created space for a beautiful, loving, and quirky community to grow and strengthen in our drop-in center.** These social networks have allowed us to continue to provide vital services and share information by word-of-mouth, and have given people a broader support system outside the space, to help them navigate these challenging times.
- **We built a strong community advisory committee, a network of people impacted by drug use, to guide the direction of the organization.** As we respond to COVID-19, we continue to rely on the guidance of people directly impacted by drug use.
- **We changed cultural norms and affirmed the human rights of drug users to have access to healthcare, sterile drug use materials and a non-stigmatized space that upholds dignity.** Even though our drop-in center has temporarily closed, people continue to visit us to access supplies they need to stay safe.

And what about the future? While we don't know what the coming year holds, we will continue to center our work in community, love, dignity and respect. In partnership with our neighbors and colleagues, we will work to build a better city and to change the structures that have always been inequitable, dangerous, and unhealthy. We can't predict the future, but with patience, perseverance and partnership with all of you, we can shape it.

Wishing you all safety, health, and love,



Natanya Robinowitz

Executive Director



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MISSION

The mission of Charm City Care Connection is to connect those impacted by drug use in Baltimore City to high quality healthcare services and address any obstacles that might threaten that connection. We do this by providing comprehensive case management, harm reduction services, health screenings, and community space. All of our work is rooted in dignity, justice, and respect and centers members of affected communities in the planning and programming of our organization.

FOUNDATIONS OF OUR WORK



People are the experts of their own lives; only they know what they need. All services at Charm City Care Connection are client-centered.



All people are deserving of dignity, no matter what they put into their bodies, where they sleep, or how they make their money. At Charm City Care Connection, we aim to uphold dignity for all people, in particular those from marginalized communities.



The undoing of decades of harmful drug policies must be led by people who are most impacted. At Charm City Care Connection, we strive to involve people who use drugs at all levels of decision-making.

OUR IMPACT

Since opening our drop-in center in January 2019, our number of client encounters has increased by **505%**. In 2018 we had 447 visits. In 2019, we had **2,702 visits.**

We distributed **35,587 sterile syringes** to **653 unique participants.**

We handed out **2,386 fentanyl test strips.**

207 people received comprehensive case management services and were connected to insurance, food stamps, benefits, mental health counseling, drug treatment, and much more!

We handed out **4,110 doses of naloxone** to people who use drugs.

OUR WORK



First Client Advisory Committee!

In 2019, we launched our first Client Advisory Committee. Over the year, Client Advisory Committee members logged over 1,000 hours and implemented several community events including a community feedback dinner, our first annual harm reduction block party, and regular participant outings.

During our drop-in hours, we offered a number of engaging activities for clients. These included yoga, a drug user health group, movie screenings, ladies night, and creative art projects.



The Miller brothers, teachers of Yoga and the Drug User Health Group!



The Outreach Team!

Our outreach team connected with people in alleys, abandoned houses, and parks. We linked people to harm reduction services, drug treatment, and food resources. Literally and figuratively, we meet people where they are.

OUR WORK



The Staff!

Our staff doubled in 2019. For the first time in Charm City Care Connection's history, we now have a full-time executive director. We also added a part-time case manager, outreach specialists, an operations manager, and drop-in hosts.

This year we started a community lunch program, serving hot lunch twice a week, which we received from our partners at Amazing Grace Lutheran Church. Lunch is a time to connect, build relationships, and grow community.



A casserole filled with love for lunch!



Bmore POWER, a community partner

We built connections and grew relationships with our community partners in Baltimore. We are grateful to have worked with BRIDGES coalition, Bmore POWER, Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition, SPARC, Amazing Grace Lutheran Church, and Baltimore Save Haven (to name a few)!

HIGHLIGHT



George Tucker

*Founding Client Advisory
Committee Member*

On a rainy morning in February, Mr. George Tucker overheard a Charm City Care Connection outreach worker talk to his friend about the services one could receive at the community drop-in center down the block. As Mr. Tucker remembers, "They told me to come in for some free stuff". Initially, Mr. Tucker thought, "How are these people going to help me when I have so much stuff on my plate?" Over the course of a couple of months, Mr. Tucker worked with our case manager, Aleah Robinson, tackling and addressing each hurdle that arose. It was during this time that Mr. Tucker was able to receive health insurance, SSI, and an ID card. Mr. Tucker continued to stay involved with CCCC, utilizing the drop-in space services and activities, and eventually becoming a member of our Client Advisory Committee. In October, Mr. Tucker represented Charm City Care Connection at the International Drug Policy Conference in St. Louis, Missouri. In December, he and his wife moved into their very own home. Mr. Tucker is still active on Client Advisory Committee and often works as our drop-in host. "Charm City Care Connection is the best thing to happen to East Baltimore," he says, "you come in for the free coffee, you stay because they treat you like family."

HIGHLIGHT

Ro Johnson

*Community Relations
Coordinator*

In 2017, Ro joined Bmore POWER, a local group providing and advocating for people who use drugs. As Ro explains, it only makes sense that she got involved in Bmore POWER as she has always been drawn to helping others. While Ro has been doing harm reduction work her adult life, in the past three years she has become a leader in Baltimore's harm reduction community. As Charm City Care Connection began to grow its harm reduction program, staff immediately turned to Ro for her expertise. In the summer of 2018, Ro became a founding member of the Charm City Care Connection's Client Advisory Committee, spearheading our first harm reduction block party and community feedback dinner. In the summer of 2019, Ro became Charm City Care Connection's Community Relations Coordinator, where she currently manages and organizes all things outreach. Nowadays, you can find Ro all over Baltimore - attending community meetings, providing wraparound harm reduction services during street outreach, and always advocating for the most vulnerable.

WHAT'S AHEAD

PEER-RUN SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Charm City Care Connection prioritizes hiring and promoting people with lived experience of drug use. Our staff currently has 2 such experts, as well as 8 members of the Community Advisory Committee, who are paid a stipend for attending meetings, and receive hourly pay when they serve as drop-in hosts and outreach specialists. In 2020, we intend to hire more peers to lead and run the services and programs.

SHOWER & WASHER/DRYER UNIT

In December 2019, The Shelly and Ira Malis Philanthropic Fund gifted us \$18,000 to reconstruct our space to address client needs, and include a washer/dryer unit and shower area. In 2020, we will work with an interior designer at Neighborhood Design Center to design the space according to the direction of the Community Advisory Committee and clients.

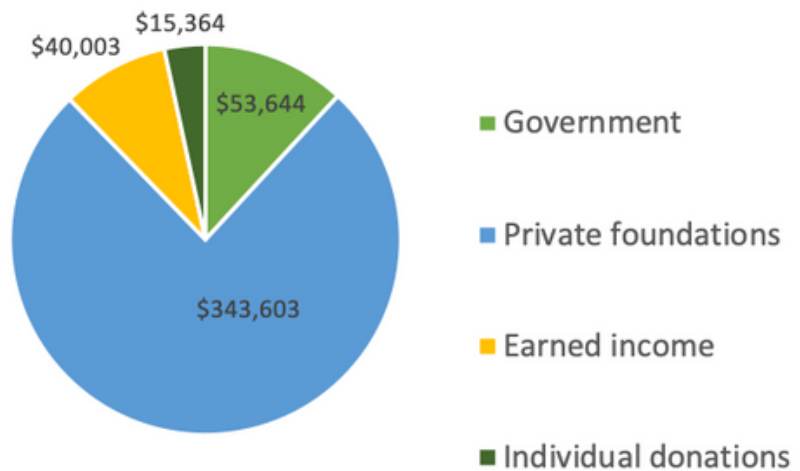
STRATEGIC PLANNING

In 2019, we received funding from The Stulman Foundation to conduct a 12-month strategic planning process with our board, staff and clients between January 2020 to December 2020. One of the central goals of the strategic planning process is to strengthen the ways that our power structure and decision-making processes center people who currently use drugs.

FINANCIALS

We are committed to full financial transparency. As we look forward to growth and deeper involvement in East Baltimore, we are dedicated to sustainability and accountability in all our programming and funding.

Revenue Report 2019



“You come in for the free stuff and you realize how unsafe and stressed out you had been. You can finally relax.”

- Iesha Street
Client Advisory Committee Member

SUPPORTERS

Thank you to all our contributors. Your support upholds our mission of dignity, respect, and justice.

Charm City Care Connection received significant financial support from the following individuals, private foundations, and public institutions:

Open Society Institute – Baltimore

Lenard and Helen R. Stulman Foundation

Maryland Department of Health

Zanyl and Isabelle Krieger Fund

Shelly and Ira Malis Philanthropic Fund

Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation

Abell Foundation

Johns Hopkins University

Baltimore General Dispensary Fund

Johns Hopkins Neighborhood Fund

David Nathan Meyerson Foundation



DONOR SPOTLIGHT



Lizzie Spradley

*Nurse Manager, Baltimore Health
Leadership Institute*

WHY I DONATE

"It's important to have a place in the community where people can go and be themselves. I give monthly to Charm City Care Connection because it's easier to give on a monthly basis to an organization I care about rather than scrambling during fundraising time" - Lizzie Spradley

DONOR SPOTLIGHT



Shelly and Ira Malis

The Shelly and Ira Malis Philanthropic Fund

WHY WE DONATE

"We decided to give to Charm City Care Connection because the the services the center provides are really needed. We believe having access to a shower and washer/dryer will add a new service and provide people dignity. It is important for us to look at charitable giving for the grace of God and to treat people as you want to be treated. " - Ira and Shelly Malis

OUR TEAM

Staff

Cola Anderson

Aleah Robinson

Ro Johnson

Jeffery Brandon

Natanya Robinowitz

Onyinye Alheri

Augusta Gribetz

Christian Diamond

Board of Directors

Ramy El-Diwany

Eugene Shenderov

Andrew Gaddis

Dr. Leonard Feldman

Maya Venkataramani

Gary Dittman

Debra Hickman

Mike Rogers

Ernest Smith

Anne Langley

Tiana Wynn

2019 Community Advisory Committee

Douglas Arter

Martex Moyd Jr.

Leslie Brown

Cecil Mitchell

Tanya Alexander

George Tucker

Ilesha Street

Louise Adams

GET INVOLVED

Support our work

Become a monthly donor:

Monthly donors support us by providing a steady funding source for items that aren't funded - like laundry detergent, shampoo and coffee.

Sponsor a project:

Support a specific project or program at Charm City Care Connection. This type of financial commitment allows us to expand our scope and deepen our services.



Volunteer

Your skills:

Volunteers bring valuable skills to Charm City Care Connection. We are always looking for new ways to expand our drop-in activities. Volunteer your talents!

Your time:

As a growing organization, we are always looking for extra hands to help organize, sort, and maintain our supplies. Volunteer your time today!



DROP-IN HOURS

Monday: 10am- 4pm
Tuesday: 10am-4pm
Wednesday: Closed
Thursday: 10am-4pm
Friday: 10am-4pm

CONTACT US

1212 N. Wolfe St,
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(443) 478-3015

Charm City Care

Connection

Justice, Dignity, Respect