

THE LIGHT RACIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY E-NEWSLETTER

Joining BUILD to Make a Difference

BY TIFFANY JAMES
EDITOR

After many months of discussion, the Racial Justice Ministry Working Group recommended to the Session last month to join Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) and the Session approved it.

According to [their website](#), BUILD is a “broad-based, non-partisan, interfaith, multiracial community power organization rooted in Baltimore’s neighborhoods and congregations.” The largest and oldest organization of its kind in Baltimore, BUILD has worked to improve housing, increase job opportunities, and rebuild schools and neighborhoods, among other issues.

Becoming a member of BUILD shows our dedication to creating a stronger foundation for Baltimore’s residents. Our financial contributions will be matched by dedicating volunteer service hours to the various causes championed by the BUILD organization.

“BUILD acts on issues with people, not for people,” they state on their website, “That’s why we listen to communities, identify and develop leaders out of those communities, and work alongside them to achieve our interests.”

Opportunities to volunteer are regularly emailed to RJMWC members. If you would like to learn more about BUILD, please go to their website at <https://www.buildiaf.org/>



With gratitude,
Tiffany James
Editor



Racial Justice
Ministry

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“The opposite of poverty
is not wealth. The
opposite of poverty is
justice.”

Bryan Stevenson



Hispanic Heritage Month - September 15 - October 15

Exploring Latino Diversity in the United States

The Smithsonian is working to build the National Museum of the American Latino in Washington, D.C. This museum honors the dreams, challenges, and triumphs of U.S. Latinos, elevating our stories within the national narrative.



While the permanent museum building is still in the planning stages, check out “Exploring Latino Diversity in the United States” on [their website](#).

Fiesta Baltimore 2025

October 4th & 5th, 2025 | 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM daily
Patterson Park, Baltimore, MD
Free, family-friendly, and open to the public

The event is the largest Latino cultural celebration in the Baltimore region, featuring live music, dancing, traditional foods, artisan vendors, and family-friendly activities. A highlight of the festival is the Parade of Latino Nations, which takes place on Sunday, October 5th, at 2:00 PM in Highlandtown (4000 Eastern Avenue).



Hispanic Heritage Month Performance: SOROCHE

Thursday, September 18, 2025, 6:30–7:30 p.m.
The Walters Art Museum
Location: Graham Auditorium
[Registration](#) is required.

Born in DC, based in Baltimore, SOROCHE seeks to transmogrify cumbia, punk, ska, and folk, and everything in between into a danceable alchemy that crosses cultural dance floors.





COMMUNITY EVENTS

Baltimore City Civil Rights Week

Rub elbows with elected officials and special guests during a week of events starting Friday, October 17th, 2025, with the 32nd Baltimore City Civil Rights Breakfast. Hosted by the Baltimore City Office of Equity and Civil Rights, this yearly tradition aims to celebrate the equitable advancement of Baltimore City while uniting community leaders, residents, scholars, policymakers, and business leaders.

Events:

- I Am A Veteran, a storytelling circle: Sunday, October 19, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
- Prayers for the City: Wednesday, October 21, Noon at City Hall
- State of the Womb- A Community Conversation and Art Project: Join Baltimore City Women's Commission and Empact Art for an intimate evening of conversation, connection, and creativity centered on Black maternal health., October 21, 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM, at Empact Art - 3601 Clipper Mill Road, Baltimore, MD 21211.



Relationship Comes First: Building Peer-to-Peer Institutional Partnerships

By Baltimore Racial Justice Action
Thursday, September 18, 2 - 3:30pm EDT
Online

BRJA and Friends is where we invite friends of ours to come talk about their areas of expertise. Join us this fall for Relationship Comes First, Part I: Building Peer-to-Peer Institutional Partnerships

Collaborating with other organizations can be difficult. Unsurpassed differences in values, expectations, and organizational norms – not to mention professional analysis – can show up at any time. How can organizations begin to thoughtfully build relationships of trust before embarking upon important projects and weathering the storms that are sure to arise? Join BRJA and Friends for this in-depth discussion about organizational relationships.

The conversation is donation-based - pay what you can!



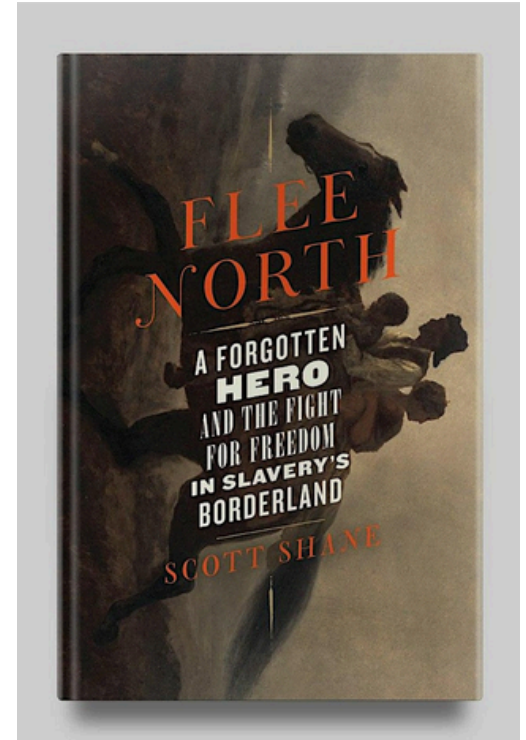


Thoughtful Readings & Resources

FREE NORTH: A Forgotten Hero and the Fight for Freedom

by Scott Shane

The astonishing story of Thomas Smallwood, born into slavery near Washington, who bought his freedom, became a shoemaker and began organizing mass escapes from slavery from Washington, Baltimore and the surrounding counties. With the help of a younger white abolitionist, Charles Torrey, Smallwood took wagonloads of men, women and children into Pennsylvania, urging them not to stop until they reached Canada. And Smallwood wrote about the escapes in satirical newspaper dispatches, an extraordinary work of journalism and literature in which he gave the underground railroad its name. Many of those Smallwood helped to flee north approached him after learning that they were about to be sold south by domestic slave traders like Hope Slatter, who operated his private "slave jail" near Baltimore's harbor.

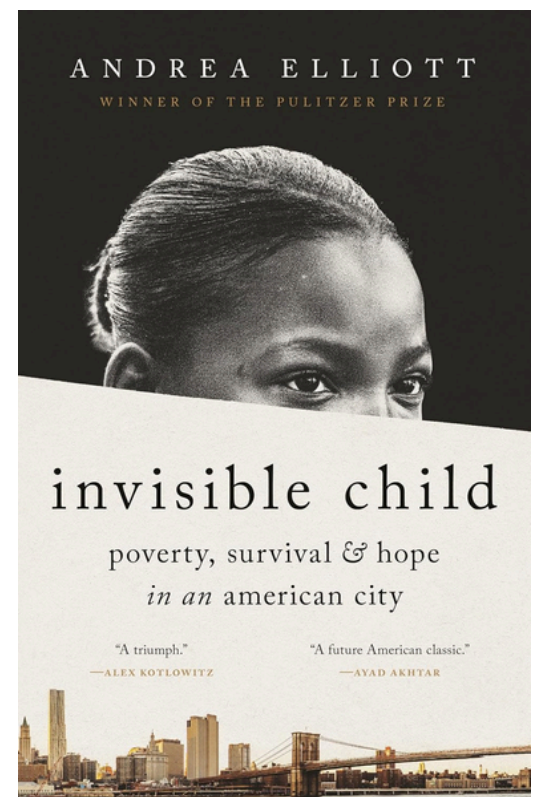


Invisible Child: Poverty, Survival & Hope in an American City

by Andrea Elliott

In *Invisible Child*, Pulitzer Prize winner Andrea Elliott follows eight dramatic years in the life of Dasani, a girl whose imagination is as soaring as the skyscrapers near her Brooklyn shelter. In this sweeping narrative, Elliott weaves the story of Dasani's childhood with the history of her ancestors, tracing their passage from slavery to the Great Migration north. As Dasani comes of age, New York City's homeless crisis has exploded, deepening the chasm between rich and poor. She must guide her siblings through a world riddled by hunger, violence, racism, drug addiction, and the threat of foster care. Out on the street, Dasani becomes a fierce fighter "to protect those who I love." When she finally escapes city life to enroll in a boarding school, she faces an impossible question: What if leaving poverty means abandoning your family, and yourself?

A work of luminous and riveting prose, Elliott's *Invisible Child* reads like a page-turning novel. It is an astonishing story about the power of resilience, the importance of family and the cost of inequality—told through the crucible of one remarkable girl.





Racial Justice Ministry Committee

Leader Lea Gilmore Chair Julie McDill

Members Secretary Tiffany James

Kamila Alexander	Kaye Gooch	Susan Saunders
Beth Allen	Deletta Gillespie	Keith Snipes
Myra Brosius	David Harris	Wendy Smith
Laila Ali	Gwen Lloyd	Maria Wong
Lisa Beacham	Julie McDill	McKenna Traynham
Shelley Ensor	Tanya Morrel	Becky Hornbeck
		David Hornbeck

Advisory Members Rev. Dr. Heber Brown, III
Professor Ron Williams
Rev. Jennifer Williams
Akilah Atkinson

Mission

We are Govans Presbyterian people who have come together in response to what we believe is God’s call to understand, address, and dismantle racism in ourselves, and our society.

We want to:

- Provide opportunities and a safe environment at Govans where we can openly share thoughts and feelings, and ask questions about racism.
- Educate ourselves about the history and continuing presence of personal and systemic racism.
- Publicly advocate for racial justice in our society.

To generate this kind of learning and action, we will utilize book discussions, films, speakers, museum exhibits, prayer groups, partnerships with other organizations, and other modes yet to be determined. We are open to ideas and suggestions, and would welcome your participation in any aspect of this work.

“You can’t separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom.”

**—MALCOLM X,
AMERICAN MINISTER**

For more information about the racial justice ministry, please email lea@govanspres.org or go to <https://www.govanspres.org/what-we-do/racial-justice/>.

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