



## International Giving Circle Group Honors Crickett Woloson

If you know Crickett Woloson, it will be no surprise to you to learn that when she got the news that she was a finalist for the prestigious Philanos Willoughby Award, she was on a ski slope in Wyoming. It is also no surprise that when she got the news that she was selected for the honor by the international giving circle network, she was about to start running a marathon in Japan.

A member of the Baltimore Women's Giving Circle since 2009, Crickett has served as treasurer, secretary, and co-chair of the leadership/nominating and REDI committees. She was a leading voice in forming and guiding the task force that recently reviewed and modified the Circle's mission, values, and vision statements. She was also influential in introducing the Circle to the concept of trust-based philanthropy (TBP) for the grants process.

In addition to her commitment to the Circle and its mission, Crickett is engaged with the greater Baltimore nonprofit community by supporting small community-led groups, which are notoriously underfunded, through a donor-advised fund (The Elbow Fund) that she and her husband founded. She serves as an advisor to several community groups that incorporate TBP in their work, including B-more Invested and The Greenlight Fund. She is actively involved with and financially committed to CLLCTIVLY, an organization committed to supporting Black-led groups to increase their social impact and to foster collaborations.

It is no wonder that this award, which recognizes visionary women in philanthropy and women who are leaders in collective giving, was awarded to Crickett.

Congratulations, Crickett. We thank you and appreciate your support of the BWGC.

(Link to Philanos announcement: <https://philanos.org/Philanos-Blog/13472221>)

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### OUR LEADERSHIP PILLARS/PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS



Building  
Membership



Strategic  
Planning



Circle Visibility/  
Public Relations



Leadership  
Development



## Co-Chairs Message

We have exciting things going on in the Baltimore Women's Giving Circle to share with you.

A strategic plan is in the works. Members have asked the Circle to do a strategic plan, and we heard you. Patty Prasada-Rao, who served as the outside consultant for the Circle's Mission, Vision, Values project will be returning to assist with the Circle's strategic plan. More specifics are coming soon, including an all-members Zoom meeting to outline more details on the process for the strategic plan.

The Circle turns 25! Through the hard work and generosity of Circle members, the Circle has made more than \$8.4 million in grants to more than 215 nonprofits (and those numbers don't include the grants that will be announced at the next annual meeting). We are making plans to celebrate the Circle's 25th anniversary in FY2026. Stay tuned for updates.

The Circle kicked off its new younger philanthropist program to introduce women 50ish and younger to philanthropy and the Circle. We held a happy hour at La Cuchara on April 24 for interested women as well as all of our current members in this age range. If you know a young woman who might be interested in our younger philanthropist program, please let us know at [bwgcchair@thebwgc.org](mailto:bwgcchair@thebwgc.org).

We have been trying to stay on top of the many changes at the federal level which directly affect our grantees. Grantee Connect is leading a small group, including Communications, REDI and Post Grants, to reach out to all Circle grantees to learn how they are being affected.

Our annual meeting, the last Full Circle of this year, promises to be a can't-miss event. We'll be announcing the BWGC's newest grantees and introducing the new members of the Steering Committee. We'll also get a peek at some of this year's grantees and their successes. As this Circle year ends, we will share its highlights and plans for the next Circle year, which starts in September. For something extra special, we've invited Patty Prasada-Rao to give a brief introduction to the strategic plan. Mark your calendars for May 21 at 5 PM, when we meet at Chizuk Amuno for a short business meeting followed by a wine reception.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Renee &amp; Barbara". The script is elegant and cursive.

Renee Gordon and Barbara Epke

## GRANTEE PROFILE

## Rob's Barbershop Community Foundation (RBCF)

**The backstory:** In 1991, Robert W. Cradle became the first African-American to open a barbershop in Odenton (Anne Arundel County). He noticed that clients of a nearby homeless shelter had no access to regular grooming services, established his foundation (<https://therbcf.com/>) in March 2000, and serves as its managing director.

**The mission:** RBCF administers funds for projects that make no-charge grooming accessible to targeted populations with barriers to receiving regular hygienic care such as the residents of residential, transitional, and emergency housing projects.

The BWGC grant has been used to contract and manage a licensed cosmetologist who provides weekly grooming services to the 148 women of the T.I.M.E. transitional shelter in southeast Baltimore City.

A Success Story From The Past Year

According to Cradle, Kim, a transplant from North Carolina, was unable to find a livable-wage job or affordable housing in Baltimore and entered the T.I.M.E. homeless shelter at the Fairfield Inn over the winter. In February, Kim landed an interview for a job as a medical clerk at Johns Hopkins Hospital. To prepare for it, she utilized the free weekly grooming services offered by RBCF.

"I provided her with a half-up, half-down braided hairstyle," said Chantay Ambrose, the onsite RBCF-contracted hairstylist. "That style is easy to care for, lasts long, and looks professional too." Ambrose uses a portable salon assembled by RBCF in June 2023 that enables her to perform hairstyles such as braids, cornrows, ponytails, and thermal hair pressing.

"Guess what!" Kim told Ambrose at her last hair appointment. "I finally got the job, and I start this week!"

Cradle says: "We (RBCF) are always excited and happy not only for enabling individuals experiencing homelessness to go to an interview with a neat and clean appearance, but when they secure employment; it's another indicator that increased accessibility to grooming is a tremendous outcome for targeted populations. Kim says that now that she has a job, she will start looking for permanent housing and hopes to one day save up the funds to start her [own] restaurant."





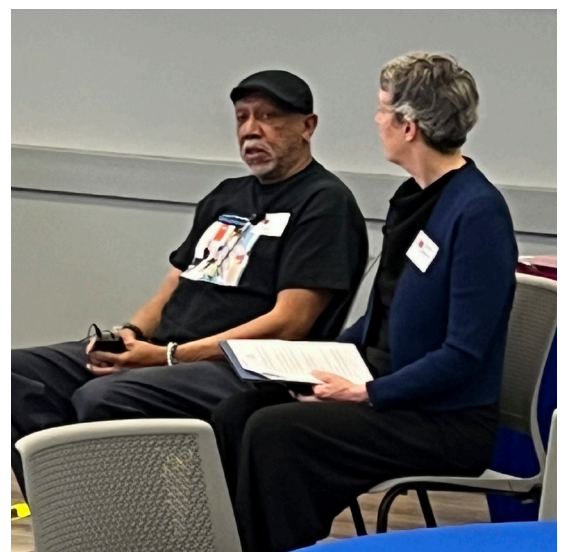
## March Full Circle

On March 26, more than 100 women came to the Full Circle meeting in-person or via Zoom to hear Sarah Szanton, dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, speak about a program in community nursing, known as the Neighborhood Nursing Program.

The program focuses on Johnston Square in East Baltimore and is working out of a senior housing building with individuals who need health services. Szanton was joined in the presentation by two community workers and a nurse practitioner who shared stories about the neighbors who participate.

Building trust is a foundation of the program, which monitors neighbors' health concerns and links them to on-going primary care. Primary prevention programs such as exercise and neighborhood walking have also grown out of the [Neighborhood Nursing Program](#). The program, which is based on a similar program in Costa Rica, is currently funded by philanthropy and insurance. For more information, click [here](#).

Before the meeting, members donated art supplies and gift cards for programs of Immigration Outreach Service Center, a past BWGC grantee.



## COMMITTEE REPORTS

## Communications

In response to BWGC member requests a Monthly Member Memo has been created to give regular updates and event lists. It will be distributed in addition to the quarterly newsletter. Communications continues working on social media posts and newsletters.

## Education

More than 30 members heard Violet Project co-founder and medical director Dr. Janell Coleman speak at the April 4 Circle Forum event; the Violet Project is a past Circle grantee.

## Grantee Connect

The May 6 Grantee Connect Forum will have a new speaker, Barb Van Winkle of the Women's Giving Circle of Howard County, and a new title, "Engaging the Next Generation of Female Donors."

Committee members are strengthening relationships with grantees by updating their contact information. They plan to follow up with grantees who do not attend the May forum to learn why they did not attend, which may inform planning for future events.

## Grants

Eighteen teams of grant readers reviewed 181 applications and selected 50 that qualified for the first round of voting.

First-round voting was limited to grant readers. Circle members who have voted in the past three years or who participated in the voter orientation session on April 1 are eligible to vote in the second round, which will determine the organizations that will receive BWGC grants. Grantees will be announced at the Full Circle meeting on May 21.

To participate next year as a grant reader, contact [grants@thebwgc.org](mailto:grants@thebwgc.org).

## Membership

Pat Jones from Immigration Outreach Service Center (IOSC) will speak at the Prospective Member Event on April 30 from 5-6:30 PM. IOSC has been serving immigrants since 2000 as they rebuild their lives. BWGC members are asked to invite their friends and colleagues to attend.

All members are invited for a hike in Lake Roland Park on Saturday, May 3 at 9:30 AM (rain date, Sunday, May 4). Feel free to bring a friend who is interested in learning more about the BWGC.

## Nominating and Leadership Development

The Circle is looking for members with tech skills to help with website updates, assist members in managing Zoom meetings online, and to run an online grants management program; training will be offered. Contact [nominating@thebwgc.org](mailto:nominating@thebwgc.org).

## Post Grants

The 20 liaison teams contacted grantees for third-quarter updates. All but one (which ceased operations in 2024) cited success with their programs and efforts. Most have spent all of their grant funds. Cancellation of funding from federal and pass-through state grants has begun, which for many will severely impact their operations going forward.

Subcommittee Circle Works: The next Circle Works event will be held with ShareBaby at its warehouse and headquarters at 1972 Union Avenue in the Clipper Mill complex on May 12. Members are needed at two sessions (10 AM-1 PM and noon-3PM). Donations of sizes 5 & 6 diapers, baby wipes, and diaper cream are needed.

## Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI)

The Steering Committee has asked REDI to research how advocacy might work for BWGC. REDI will ask how other circles define “advocacy” and make it work for them, and how BWGC might engage with grantees and their concerns.

The committee was proud to nominate former REDI co-chair Crickett Woloson, who received Philanos’ prestigious Willoughby Award (page 1).

April - May

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

24 April	Younger Philanthropists Program Happy Hour
30 April	Prospective Member Event
03 May	Member Hike
06 May	Grantee Connect Forum
12 May	Circle Works Event With Sharebaby
21 May	Annual Meeting