

PRESS RELEASE

Baker Donelson Announces Community Grants Program Recipients

May 26, 2020

The law firm of Baker Donelson has selected the three recipients of its annual Community Grants Program, which awards \$35,000 in community grants to aid local non-profit organizations serving at-risk youth living in Baltimore City and Washington, D.C.

The grants are awarded as two \$10,000 grants and one \$15,000 special grant, which also includes a volunteer supplement through which Baker Donelson employees volunteer time to the grant recipient.

The organizations selected this year are:

- **Open Works**, recipient of a \$10,000 Baker Donelson Community Grant, partners with the Greenmount West Community Center (GWCC) to offer the Greenmount West Youth Maker Shop. Open Works provides once-per-week science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics, programming through the GWCC that covers digital design and fabrication techniques, allowing students to design, develop and fabricate items to sell or to fill a community need. The programming is designed for neighborhood youth ages 6-14 and is focused on leadership development, academic success, character development, financial management, self-awareness and conflict resolution. The \$10,000 grant will be used to pay for a portion of the Youth and Family Education Coordinator's salary, as well as the hourly pay for the instructor and costs to provide necessary supplies for the students.
- **St. Ann's Center**, recipient of the second \$10,000 grant, was incorporated in 1860 and was the region's first home for at-risk children and single women approaching childbirth. The center moved from Washington, D.C. to Hyattsville, Maryland in 1962 and has adapted to the needs of the community, continuing to serve women and children in crisis. The grant money will be used for St. Ann's Transitional Housing/Rapid Rehousing program (TH/RRH), which accepts women with young children as well as homeless youth without children and utilizes the center's Clinical and Social Work Services and Education and Employment Program services to combat barriers to employment and financial stability. The goal is for clients to reach full-time employment and financial literacy skills and ultimately obtain permanent rental housing, and the funds will support the purchase of necessities including furniture, bedding and kitchen supplies.
- The recipient of the \$15,000 Baker Donelson Community Grant with a volunteer supplement is the **Maryland Book Bank**, which helps bridge the literacy gap through increased access to quality age-appropriate books in pre-K through 12 homes, classrooms, and community settings by helping students, teachers, parents, and local organizations to select books to build their own libraries. The grant will help expand the Book Bank's Home Library Program (HLP) by partnering with Baltimore City Schools to build home libraries for children during their critical years of literacy, focusing on grades 1-3. The goal is to implement the program in 27 schools deemed in need of intensive literacy support. Baker Donelson employees will participate in a volunteer event involving the Maryland Book Bank's Bookmobile, which visits each school once in the fall and once in the spring, allowing students to select books that will challenge and interest them.

Established in 2003 on the occasion of Ober|Kaler's 100th anniversary, the Ober|Kaler Community Grants Program continues as the Baker Donelson Community Grants Program. Now in its 16th year, the program has distributed more than \$570,000 to community organizations and has donated countless hours of community service to tax-exempt organizations serving at-risk youth living in Baltimore City and Washington, D.C. A committee comprised of the Firm's staff members, associates, and principals chooses specific programs focused on enriching the lives of underprivileged children, improving living standards for lower income families with children, and creating educational opportunities for at-risk youth. The committee reviews each application thoroughly and bases its selections on perceived need, the community served, and the impact the grant would have on the youths who will be served by the selected organization.