

BESpeak

JUNE–AUGUST 2018

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

Ethical Education: Our Children are Our Future

by Hugh Taft-Morales, Ethical Leader

The success of our Ethical Education program for children is due to the support of many people – too many to mention here. But I do want to thank Argentine Craig who chaired the Ethical Education Committee for the last few years. She is handing over the reins of that committee to Maya Kosok, a current parent of Sunday School children and someone who grew up in Ethical Culture Sunday Schools. Thanks also to our current Sunday School staff – Monica Cooper, Jill Gordon, and Romy Smith – and to Linda Joy Burke, who spoke at BES this spring, who was the cornerstone of our Sunday School during my early years at BES.

I want to emphasize, however, that the Ethical Education program for children at BES is the responsibility of *all members* of our community. It is your contributions of funds and volunteer energy that allows us to support the staff and offer our children a chance to bring out their best. In some ways our education program may be our most effective ethical action project – the development of engaged, confident, and educated social justice advocates!

This is particularly appropriate for an Ethical Society that grew out of a search for ethical Sunday morning education. As many of you know, the Baltimore Ethical Society (BES) was founded after Ken Milford, Roy Patterson, Pell Kangas and others unsuccessfully searched for an existing integrated Sunday School. Finding none, they founded the Baltimore Ethical Society in 1950 and immediately grew a children's program. Dale Patterson, daughter of one of the founders, spoke at our 60th Anniversary dinner of how much the BES Sunday School experience meant to her.

Though BES was small in 1950 – with 28 charter members and an annual budget of only \$700 – in the context of the civil rights movement before the *Brown vs. Board* decision, the first integrated Sunday School in Baltimore made the news. The October 6th, 1951, edition of the *Baltimore Afro-American*, proclaimed that, "Baltimore has gained something unique in the way of race relations with the



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SUMMER SUNDAYS

10:30 a.m.

Informal discussions on topics related to social, spiritual, and philosophical issues – or just a little bit of fun.

(details on pages 4–6)

JUNE 3

"What You Always Wanted To Know About BES Finances But Were Too Polite To Ask"

Richard Heffern

JUNE 10

"Coast to Coast and Host to Host: Our Cross-Country Home-Hospitality Bicycle Adventure"

Max Romano & Maya Kosok

JUNE 17

"The Ethical Implications of Thinking Inside of Boxes"

Mike Kohut

JUNE 24

"An Interactive Presentation on Homelessness"

Bonnie "Raven" Lane

JULY 1

"AEU 103rd Assembly Report"

Karen Elliott, Thomas Higdon, Emil Volcheck, & Kathleen Wilsbach

JULY 8

"Metta, Meditation on Boundless Goodwill"

Shannon Whitaker

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questions: ask@bmorethical.org.

On the web at bmorethical.org

Our New Home

by Thomas Higdon, BES President

On May 19th, we moved from our home of 16 years at the Congress Hotel to our new home at the Village Learning Place (VLP). The VLP's commitment to diversity and lifelong learning make them a perfect fit for BES. For those of you who are unfamiliar with this wonderful organization, here is a brief introduction provided by the VLP.

About the VLP

The VLP is an independent non-profit library that houses educational programs, enrichment opportunities, and informational resources for Charles Village and throughout Baltimore City. It is founded on the belief that libraries are not only a repository for books, but also serve as community centers focused on the personal and professional growth of their patrons.

The mission of the VLP is to promote literacy, cultural awareness, and lifelong learning through access for all ages to information, resources, and educational programs. The VLP's vision is to be a model library, a leader in providing high-quality educational programs, enrichment opportunities, and informational resources in Charles Village and throughout Baltimore City. It serves as an anchoring institution, a symbol of local pride, and a gathering place for a diverse community. The VLP strives to integrate its core principles, commitment, compassion, honesty, and patience, into every level of its operations and throughout each program and service it offers.

The beautiful Victorian brick building in which the Village Learning Place is housed was one of the original six branches of Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Free Library, designed by Enoch Pratt and built in 1896. It is now a physical embodiment of community endeavor and neighborhood pride.

When the Pratt Library closed its Charles Village branch in 1997, residents rallied, restored the building with volunteer hours, and created the Village Learning Place to fill the neighborhood's need for accessible resources of all kinds. Since this grassroots inception in 2000, the Village Learning Place has directly responded to the needs and desires of its community, and its staff and board members are attuned to the changing requirements of its very diverse patrons. The original building at 2521 St. Paul Street houses the Village Learning Place's Library and computer lab, and it serves as the location for much community programming.

In an economic climate where many doors were closing, the VLP began its second decade of serving the friends and neighbors of the Charles Village community. Much growth happened in the Village Learning Place's first ten years, and there was great need for additional space to meet the demands of constantly expanding programs and services.

In 2011, the VLP expended across the street to the second floor of 2510 St. Paul Street. The new space houses permanent classrooms for the Let's Invest in Neighborhood Kids (LINK) after school and summer programs, community rental space, a reading resource room, and additional staff office space.

For more information about the VLP, visit www.villagelearningplace.org.



NEW ADDRESS FOR PLEDGE PAYMENTS

Our mailing address is moving with us to the Village Learning Place. Please use our new mailing address: Baltimore Ethical Society, c/o Village Learning Place, 2521 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, MD 21218

Also let this be a reminder that pledge payments for the current fiscal year (2017-2018) are due by June 30th. Thank you to those who've completed your pledge payments and to those of you who'll do so in the coming weeks.

For those who haven't yet pledged for the current fiscal year, there's still time to do so. All you have to do write a check and mail it or put it in the Sunday collection. It would help if you note on the check "FY-18 pledge".

As always, if you have any questions about your pledge or any other BES financial matters, you may contact our Treasurer, Richard Heffern, at treasurer@bmorethical.org.

Springing Into Summer

Springing Into Summer, the children carry with them the core values of ethical culture while being with and learning from children around the world, celebrating and protecting the Earth and sharing in community/family activities.

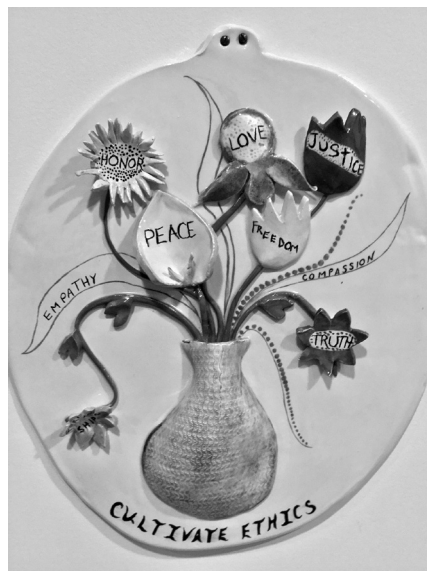
These can include the FREE Family Sunday drop-in workshops at the Joseph Education Center of The Baltimore Museum of Art; 2-5pm:

June: Nature (fog and mist painting, feathered caps, rock art)

July: Crafts (sewing, embroideries, quilts, soft sculpture)

August: Painting (animals in action; waterfalls; summer fruits).

September 9th: Ethical Education



Program commences with Teachers Jill Gordon, Monica Cooper, Beth Milstead and Aide Romy Smith.

CAN'T MAKE IT TO THE SOCIETY ON SUNDAY MORNINGS? INTERESTED IN A PAST PLATFORM THAT YOU MISSED?

Watch them on our Vimeo page! Simply go to vimeo.com/user4409178 to see video recordings of many of our platforms from the last several years.

SUMMER SUNDAYS

(continued from page 1)

JULY 15

"We The People"

Stuart Hirsch

JULY 22

"Working with People Living with HIV in West Baltimore"

Mary Beth Sodus RD/LD

JULY 29

"Multi-Dimensional Creativity"

Therese Spadaro & Karen Elliott

AUGUST 5

"Critical Thinking in the Age of 'Fake News'"

Thomas Higdon

AUGUST 12

"Improv at the BES"

Charlie Shafer & the BES Humanist Improv Group

AUGUST 19

"Colloquy: The Season's Introspection in the Now"

Omowale Elson

AUGUST 26

"The Ethical Roots of Yoga"

Joanna Brandt

SEPTEMBER 2

"Ethical Culture 101"

Stephen Meskin

SUNDAY SNACK SCHEDULE

All are invited to bring snacks for our coffee hour following platform. Snacks are especially welcome from those whose last names start with:

A to F	First Sunday
G to L	Second Sunday
M to R	Third Sunday
S to Z	Fourth Sunday

JUNE 3

“What You Always Wanted To Know About BES Finances But Were Too Polite To Ask”

Richard Heffern
BES Treasurer

A discussion of the BES budget. Our sources of revenue and what we spend it on.

The annual “Tax Letter” to members from the Treasurer and other information that members may request from the Treasurer.

Questions and suggestions are welcome. Feel free to ask Richard to address specific items by sending an email to treasurer@bmorethical.org.

JUNE 10

“Coast to Coast and Host to Host: Our Cross-Country Home-Hospitality Bicycle Adventure”

Max Romano & Maya Kosok

Max and Maya will share stories from their 2010 tandem cross-country bike adventure. They will especially focus on their experiences staying in 37 different people’s homes through three hospitality organizations: Couchsurfing, Servas, and Warmshowers.

Max and Maya will talk about how you can travel or host as a way to broaden your world and make travel affordable, how to build humanist relationships through travel, some tips for successful visits, and some highlights from their bike trip and other home stays throughout their travels.

JUNE 17

“The Ethical Implications of Thinking Inside of Boxes”

Mike Kohut

Psychological essentialism is a well-documented cognitive tendency or mental shortcut that underlies racism, sexism, and political tribalism. It also leads to misconceptions about evolution, human nature, and other scientific issues. By learning to recognize our own essentialist thinking, however, we can resist these -isms and cultivate a more fluid and accurate comprehension of the world.

JUNE 24

“An Interactive Presentation on Homelessness”

Bonnie “Raven” Lane

An interactive presentation on homelessness myself. I can also offer nonviolent direct action training.

JULY 1

“AEU 103rd Assembly Report”

Karen Elliott, Thomas Higdon,
Emil Volcheck, & Kathleen Wilsbach

BES members will report on this year’s AEU Assembly in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The theme this year is Seeds for the Future: Environmental Justice and Ethical Culture.

Ethical Culture holds sacred, and strives to protect and nurture, the web of interrelations between each other and our environment. Climate change adversely affects everyone, but especially marginalized populations in this country and around the world who bear the brunt of polluted air, water, and soil. We must help stop the environmental degradation of inner cities, poor rural areas, and places where many indigenous people live. Visit the Assembly website at aeu.org/event/aeu-103rd-assembly.

JULY 8

“Metta, Meditation on Boundless Goodwill”

Shannon Whitaker

The teaching, the experience, and what cognitive science is learning about the practice. Will include a brief guided meditation at the end (seated in chairs).

JULY 15

“We The People”

Stuart Hirsch

Stuart will explain what he perceives the role and limits of government power as envisioned by the constitution and federalist papers. He will explain that he believes that the constitution needs to be a dynamic document that promotes real social justice, personal and political freedom and equality, such as the 13th, 14th 15th, and 19th amendments do. He believes the intent of the constitution was to severely restrict

the federal government's power to tax and redistribute wealth. He will argue that programs such as social security, medicare, medicaid, student loans, and most welfare programs were not envisioned by the framers of the constitution, but the antithesis of the society they wished to create, and that we must transition to a more capitalistic economy if we are to have true freedom, social justice, and prosperity, and fulfill their vision.

JULY 22

“Working with People Living with HIV in West Baltimore”

Mary Beth Sodus RD/LD

Mary Beth will share her experiences working with people living with HIV in West Baltimore, white privilege, and what she has learned in her first year of patient care as a Registered Dietitian. She will share a powerpoint illustrating and describing her first year working as a registered dietitian, with people living with HIV at a clinic that seeks to serve all patient needs in a very impoverished area of West Baltimore. The job was certainly not what she expected.

The presentation will include lessons she has learned and is continuing to learn on:

- Working with people experiencing homelessness and poverty.
- Her experience of white privilege and how she has tried to increase her compassion for “the other”, and for herself.
- Finding resources to get fresh produce for her patients in a food desert.
- Stories illustrating the work she does with people who have a wasting disease.
- What she has learned about drug abuse, the diet of addiction and the treatment of opioid addiction.
- The rewards of working with the people who have compromised immune systems.

JULY 29

“Multi-Dimensional Creativity”

Therese Spadaro & Karen Elliott

Artist Therese Spadaro and poet Karen Elliott team up to get you playing in 3 dimensions (making maquettes out of some unexpected materials) and then adding some words to give your creativity a thorough workout.

AUGUST 5

“Critical Thinking in the Age of ‘Fake News’”

Thomas Higdon

Every day we are bombarded with “facts” by corporations, interest groups, elected officials, and the media (not to mention friends and family). In this war zone of ideas, how do we keep our cool, evaluate competing claims, and form sound judgments? This talk will use real world examples to illustrate common logical fallacies.

AUGUST 12

“Improv at the BES”

Charlie Shafer & the BES Humanist Improv Group

A year ago, we started our improvisational theater group on a drop-in basis, open to people having any level of improv experience. Six people (one of whom just moved) have been very committed and have participated just about every week we met. This group includes both BES members and non-members. Some have some prior experience while two have never done anything like this before in their lives. The name “Humanist Improv Group” is appropriate because really good improv is based on humanist principles, the chief one being that bringing out the best in others is the way to bring out the best in ourselves. While many view improv as a vehicle for getting quick laughs and being the star of the show, the core of good improvisational theater is paying close attention to and supporting scene partners along with maintaining the “truth” of the scene. The comedy naturally flows from that. In our presentation we will perform improvised scenes, discuss how the various skills we have been working are exhibited (or should have been exhibited) in the scenes, and engage in some personal reflection on our experience. We'll also give a brief history of improvisational theater, including some video excerpts of some amazing show from the past.

AUGUST 19

“Colloquy: The Season’s Introspection in the Now”

Omowale Elson

This is meant to be an expression of free flow of the inner experience of what a member brings or develops as a result of listening self and others. It reflects the themes of the season – vitality, generativity, celebration, peaceful coexistence, com-

SUNDAY PLATFORMS

passion, humanity... One might speak impromptu, sing, read a poem, or share a quotation, or a (sleeping or waking) dream.

In reflecting these brief thoughts and sharing associations, it is hoped that the collective consciousness of the members will ripple into the wider ethical and unethical communities in Baltimore, in the counties, and in the state.

The reflection is expected to be spontaneous, but measured between moments of silence so that the members can acknowledge the reflection of others. One might be moved to stand behind or at the side of a member whose reflection needs emotional support.

AUGUST 26

“The Ethical Roots of Yoga”

Joanna Brandt

The most common misconception about yoga is that it puts the body in strange positions for the purpose of developing flexibility. This superficial understanding is based on a lack of knowledge of yoga's 6000 year history pre-being introduced to the West. The highest goal of yoga is to develop in the individual such a profound degree of integration that every action serves the greater good.

SEPTEMBER 2

“Ethical Culture 101”

Stephen Meskin

Highlights of the history of Ethical Culture from its founding in 1876 by Felix Adler up to the present time will be discussed with particular attention to our relationships with similar movements, such as Humanism.

A HEARTFELT “THANK YOU”

to all the BES folks who helped make the move to VLP a success:

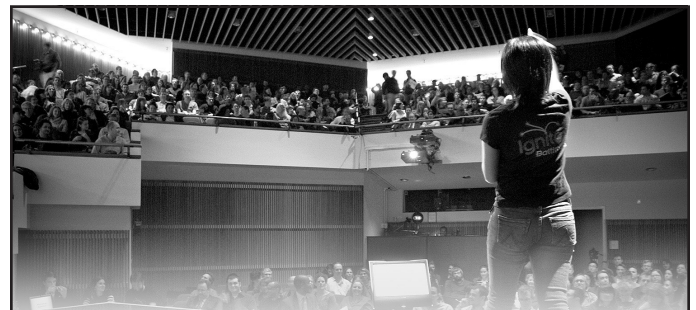
Alan	Paul	Thomas	Charles
Hugh	Stephanie	Karen	Kirk
Jason	Katie	Ann	Wayne
Jill	Beth	Richard	Jayne
Kathleen	Mav	Jason	Monique
Emil	Trevor	Paul	
Mary B.	Argentine		
Maya	Mike	... and my apologies if I	
Otto	Kathryn	missed anyone. – Joanna	

SECOND SUNDAY FAMILY MEET-UPS!

Sunday, June 10, July 8, August 12, 12:30 p.m.

Join other families with young children immediately following platform on the second Sunday of each month to have fun, build community, and let off steam. The activities will be selected with 2-6 year olds in mind, but all are welcome! If

you have questions, email Maya at may-agk@gmail.com or Beth at emlugin-bill@gmail.com.



IGNITE BALTIMORE #20

Thursday, June 28, 6:00 p.m.

MICA Brown Center, 1301 W. Mount Royal Ave.

At every Ignite Baltimore, 16 artists, technologists, thinkers and personalities get 5 minutes and 20 slides to spark new conversations and collaborations across cultures and disciplines. Join friends from the Baltimore Coalition of Reason for this exciting event! Networking social hour starts at 6:00 pm, and talks start at 7:00 pm. Purchase tickets and see videos of previous talks at <http://ignitebaltimore.com/>

Fans of Ignite may have noticed that it has been over a year since Ignite Baltimore #19. BES stepped into the breach and relaunched the series! Kudos to Katie O'Brien, Jason Persichetti, and Khandra Sears (Frederick Douglass Humanist Society of Baltimore), who formed the new organizing committee and past Ignite leader Melissa Macchiavelli who is co-leading organization of this event. Special thanks to past Ignite organizer Mike Subelsky for advice and support during the transition to BES leadership.

Ethical Education: Our Children are Our Future

(continued from page 1)

organization, recently, of the Children's Sunday Assembly, composed of youngsters from a variety of racial and religious backgrounds." It quoted Ken Milford, BES President at the time, wanted an integrated educational experience that taught children about "a way of life in which faith in man is paramount and ethical conduct is regarded as the highest form of worship."

74 years before the founding of BES, the Ethical Culture movement came into existence thanks to Felix Adler, a teacher himself. He enjoyed teaching Sunday School at Temple Emanuel in New York where his father was rabbi. He grew to emphasize teaching ethics to children in a way that prepared them to be active and responsible citizens. The year after he founded the New York Society for Ethical Culture, Adler started the first free kindergarten in America, which opened for the particular benefit of working class families.

The educational approach of Ethical Culture rejected stern and rigid methods used for much of the 19th century. Adler rejected the concept of "original sin" which sometimes led to cruel and harsh treatment of young people. Adler promoted a more progressive educational philosophy drawn from Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) and Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852). Pestalozzi assumed the worth and goodness of

every child, and Froebel emphasized exploration and play to draw out the innate goodness of children.

Progressive approaches to education are needed now more than ever. Due to insufficient funding, especially here in Pennsylvania, many schools continue to under serve our children. Things are about where they were in 1964 when John Holt, in *How Children Fail*, wrote that children fail not *despite* our system, but *because* of it - because our students are "afraid, bored, and confused." Holt continued: "They are afraid, above all

else, of failing, of disappointing or displeasing the many anxious adults around them, whose limitless hopes and expectations for them hang over their heads like a cloud. They are bored because the things they are given and told to do in school are so trivial, so dull, and make such limited and narrow demands on the wide spectrum of their intelligence, capabilities, and talents."

Thanks to our philosophy, tradition, and great staff, our BES children are engaged and having fun in our Sunday School. Most importantly, they are developing ethical habits of the heart and a conscience attuned to the needs of others. We added a toddler room in 2012, initiated a new pre-K Sunday School in 2015, and now - due to our growth - are moving to the Village Learning Place (VLP) in Charles Village.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Poetry Group

Sunday, June 3, July 1, and August 5, 9:30 a.m.

Mindfulness Meditation

Sunday, June 10, July 8, and August 12, 9:30 a.m.

Board Meeting

Sunday, June 10, July 8, and August 12, 12:30 p.m.

Second Sunday Family Meet-Up

Sunday, June 10, July 8, and August 12, 12:30 p.m.

Ethical Action Meeting

Sunday, June 17, July 15, and August 19, 12:45 p.m.

Newcomers Meeting

Sunday, June 24, July 29, and August 26, 12:30 p.m.

The VLP serves as a "gathering place for a diverse community" that promotes "a learning-oriented culture that is friendly, welcoming, and supportive of the success and well-being of every person." The VLP core principles of *commitment*, *compassion*, *honesty*, and *patience* match well with the values of Ethical Culture.

We may find that many from the VLP community will be interested in our Sunday ethical education children's classes. If so, be prepared for another growth spurt for our Sunday School. We may need to generate more resources dedicated for this historic commitment to progressive, multi-racial Sunday education for children. There are few better ways to serve our mission than nurturing a new generation of ethical leaders!



BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY
2521 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, MD 21218

NEWSLETTER

Please do not delay!

TIME VALUE

ETHICAL ACTION MEETING

Sunday, June 17, July 15, August 19, 12:45 p.m.

Come help plan the Ethical Action strategy for the Baltimore Ethical Society!

NEWCOMERS MEETING

Sunday, June 24, July 29, August 26, 12:30 p.m.

New to the Society and interested in learning more? Come to the Newcomers Meeting, held following the last Sunday Platform of every month, and find out more about Ethical Culture and our Society – its history, its philosophy, and its organization. Meetings last about one hour and are recommended for anyone who's curious about membership. Please attend at least one Platform before going to a Newcomers Meeting. Contact Wayne Laufert or Janey Solwold for more information.

MINDFULNESS

meditation

Sunday, June 10, July 8, August 12, 9:30 a.m.

Mindfulness is a tool we can use in our daily lives to act in a more ethical way. We practice mindfulness meditation so that it comes naturally in stressful times. Join us as we sit (on chairs) and breathe (just the way it comes naturally) and listen to the words of Thich Nhat Hanh, one of the world's best-known teachers of mindfulness.

bmorethical

Visit bmorethical.org and look for us on Facebook, Twitter, and MeetUp.com @bmorethical

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