



July 7, 2015

RE: Dr. Toni/Vision Expert  
Author/Speaker  
AADP Board Certified Health Coach  
CEO/Founder the Attractive Thinker, LLC

To Whom It May Concern:

As the Re-entry Specialist with Bon Secours Community Works, (BSCW) I am pleased to write this letter of support and appreciation for the fantastic job you offered, as keynote speaker at our annual **"Fatherhood Appreciation Day"** here at BSCW . We annually celebrate Fathers in the Southwest Baltimore Community in our efforts to bring our communities to wholeness. You so graciously accepted our invite and delivered a penetrating message of hope, vision, and empowerment.

The Bon Secours mission is to bring compassion to healthcare, even beyond the hospital (BSCW) and to be **"Good Help to Those in Need"**. As a system of caregivers, we commit ourselves to help bring people and communities to health and wholeness as a part of the healing ministry of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church.

Baltimore City receives approximately 59% of all state prison releases—close to 9,000 individuals a year. Of those, 3,000 return to six neighborhoods. In fact, Southwest Baltimore is at the top of the list of Maryland communities with a prisoner re-entry population. [A Portrait of Prisoner Re-Entry in Maryland. Urban Institute. Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2003.]

While approximately the same percentage of Southwest Baltimore and Baltimore City residents complete high school – 71.7% versus 78.4% – this rate is substantially lower than Maryland overall at 86.5% as of 2010. In addition, high school completion rates in Southwest Baltimore dropped nearly four percent from 2009 to 2010. A substantial gap exists for adults with some college – 32.1% versus 45.1%, respectively for Southwest Baltimore and Baltimore City. **As a result, Southwest Baltimore residents'** ability to obtain employment is negatively impacted when a high school diploma/GED or college education is required. Lower levels of education also contribute to residents remaining in entry level jobs and missing out on career advancement opportunities.

In terms of health, every year, the equivalent of 24 jumbo jets carrying passengers with chronic diseases crashes in West Baltimore. Highly-treatable, preventable chronic illnesses kill and disable more West Baltimore residents than in any other community in the City or State. In fact, West Baltimore citizens have the highest disease burden and worst indicators of social determinants of health than any other community in Maryland. The area establishes the lower extremes for health disparities in the City and **the State across all major chronic illnesses. The “social determinants of health” are the circumstances in** which people are born; grow up, live, work, and age, as well as the systems put in place to deal with illness. These circumstances are, in turn, shaped by a wider set of forces: economics, social policies, and politics.

Taken together, these factors sparked and continued to drive Bon Secours organizational structure, which is designed to address community issues and generate positive outcomes for individuals, families, the West Baltimore community, and Baltimore City.

**Therefore, Dr. Toni’s willingness to support our efforts here at BSCW is greatly appreciated. Our best wishes to you as you continue to impact deprived communities here in Baltimore City.**

Regards,

Anees Abdul-Rahim, MHS  
Re-entry Specialist  
26 North Fulton Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21223  
410-362-3656  
[Anees\\_Rahim@bshsi.org](mailto:Anees_Rahim@bshsi.org)