



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Intergenerational Innovation: West Baltimore students address senior isolation and air quality for Global Youth Service Day

Baltimore, MD (April 21, 2026) - This week, as part of Global Youth Service Day (April 24-26), students enrolled in after-school programming at St. Francis Neighborhood Center (SFNC) in Reservoir Hill will engage in a STEM-based community service initiative aimed at improving indoor air quality for older adults who tend to spend more time isolated at home. Through the project, youth will provide community members with air-filtering plants along with personalized care instructions to promote cleaner, safer indoor environments. The youth-led effort is made possible by a 2026 [Hershey Heartwarming Young Hero Grant](#).

SFNC already works to address senior isolation – a known social determinant of health – through its weekly [Senior Social](#) program on Tuesday mornings, offering coffee, breakfast, activities, and community connection. However, many older adults in the neighborhood still spend much of their time at home, where indoor air pollution can sometimes be even more concentrated than outdoor levels.

Roughly 100 K-12th grade students from SFNC's free, flagship program, the [Power Project](#), will participate in the youth-led initiative. Established in 2009, the Power Project provides daily healthy snacks and hot meals, individualized tutoring and homework help, hands-on enrichment in STEM and the arts, and wrap-around support for families whose children are enrolled. SFNC also offers the [Igniter Internship](#) program, where high school students receive mentorship, build career readiness skills, and serve as role models for younger participants.

This initiative is being spearheaded by Troy M., a 12th grade Igniter Intern, who first enrolled at SFNC as an elementary schooler and has since found a passion for education through his internship as an assistant instructor. Over the course of the week, students will research air-purifying plants to create take-home care instructions and work in tandem with Senior Social participants to decorate pots. The project will culminate in a planting event on Thursday afternoon, with support from the Baltimore City Sheriff's Office, before plants are distributed to local seniors and community members next week.

The project reflects SFNC's broader commitment to cultivating community across generations, meeting neighbors where they are, and empowering young people to lead with purpose.

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St. Francis Neighborhood Center (SFNC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community-based organization founded in 1963 to serve the Reservoir Hill and Penn North neighborhoods of Baltimore City.



Our mission is to dismantle inequity by cultivating community connections through tailored education and social interventions for West Baltimore. For over 60 years, we have continuously evolved to develop programs in response to present needs. Learn more at stfranciscenter.org.

Members of the press are warmly invited to attend the planting event on Thursday, April 23, from 3:30-5:00 PM. Photos, videos, and interviews are available upon request.

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