



Founders Week

Public Servant of the Year



Bronwyn Mayden, MSW

School of Social Work

If team building were an Olympic event, Bronwyn Mayden would earn the gold medal. Her 11 years as assistant dean at the School of Social Work (SSW) are unmatched for bringing divergent groups together.

Whether it's leading the school's Continuing Professional Education program, enhancing the remarkable successes of the Promise Heights initiative and B'More for Healthy Babies in West Baltimore, or facilitating interprofessional collaboration across the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), Mayden has flourished.

"Ms. Mayden possesses a powerful combination of commitment, passion, leadership, strategic thinking, organization, and intellect," says SSW colleague Michael E. Woolley, PhD, MSW, DCSW, in his nomination letter. "In short, she knows and feels

strongly about what needs to be done, and knows how to bring others together to get it done."

Using skills she learned working for Mayor/Governor William Donald Schaefer before coming to SSW, Mayden in 2007 helped establish the Promise Heights program, with the goal to improve child outcomes by implementing an integrated continuum of services in the West Baltimore communities of Upton/Druid Heights. Under Mayden's leadership, Promise Heights has expanded dramatically. She has secured funding — \$2 million from more than 20 different public and private funders — for a program that includes prenatal and childhood development, community schools, extended learning time, reconnections for out-of-school youth, youth violence prevention, and family support services.

SSW Dean Richard P. Barth, PhD, MSW, says "Bronwyn is a beacon of joyful collaboration and engagement to a sometimes weary community."

The challenges have been many. Absenteeism in schools. Substandard housing. Drugs and violence. In each case, Mayden worked hard to find solutions, using her candor, trustworthiness, and personal warmth to earn the respect and support of policymakers, stakeholders, community leaders, and community members. Along with frustration, she also found satisfaction and joy.

"This past June, Renaissance Academy High School graduated 82 percent of its 12th-grade class — one of the highest graduation rates in Baltimore City. That's all the thanks I need," she says proudly. "We *are* seeing progress. The five schools in Upton/Druid Heights enroll about 1,900 children. Our programs have touched

many of the students and their families. We worked with the UMB schools to develop a pipeline of interconnected services from the beginning of life until college and career."

A program to bolster beginnings, the B'More for Healthy Babies initiative is fighting infant mortality in Baltimore — and winning. Crib and SIDS deaths among babies in UMB's Promise Heights neighborhoods have dropped to zero, and full-term births have climbed to more than 90 percent.

Again, Mayden chose a team approach, leading B'More for Healthy Babies with Stacey Stephens, LCSW-C, in SSW and Wendy Lane, MD, MPH, in the School of Medicine. The teamwork didn't stop there, according to Lane. "Ms. Mayden has led efforts to attract community partners such as local schools and churches, and to obtain funding from multiple sources," Lane says.

Another example of team-building came in February 2016 when Mayden helped organize a forum to seek solutions to violence, citing "a public health emergency" after a Promise Heights survey showed that nearly four in 10 young people said they knew someone who had been killed before turning 20 years old.

"We have to band together to prevent the violence and all the trauma we're seeing," Mayden said in welcoming more than 120 people, many of them teens and young adults, to the forum at Bethel AME Church. The event was co-sponsored by the [BUILD Health Challenge](#), which awarded a \$75,000 grant after Mayden and Promise Heights partnered with the [R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center](#)'s Violence Prevention Program, Druid Heights Community Development Corp., Roberta's House (a family grief support center), Maryland Communities United, and the Baltimore City Health Department.

Mayden's collaboration isn't just with outside partners. Within UMB, she has engaged faculty and students from the schools of Dentistry, Law, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and, of course, Social Work in her Promise Heights efforts; hundreds of students have benefited from this program.

She also joined forces with the Department of Juvenile Services, Department of Human Resources, and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to expand SSW's Continuing Professional Education contracts. The school's CPE department has grown into the nation's second largest and Mayden is happy to say why.

"Wonderful faculty, the best students, fabulous staff, and a great dean," she says. "Add it all together and you get a Continuing Professional Education program that can meet the needs of social workers and other human service professionals."

Mayden's efforts have been acknowledged with the 2014-15 University System of Maryland Board of Regents Award for Excellence in Public Service, the 2014 Reginald F. Lewis Museum Community Award, and the 2012 UMB Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Diversity Award in recognition of Promise Heights.

Not surprisingly, this team-builder shares the glory for her latest honor, UMB's 2016 Public Servant of Year award.

"I was very surprised and honored," Mayden says. "We have so many talented faculty, staff, students, and administrators and to be selected for the Founders Week award is incredible. But I feel like this is *our* award because all of the UMB schools have supported our community work."

Not that her work is done. "We have to expand the work from one community to several others. We have to figure out how to end generational poverty — the unyielding cycle of poverty begetting poverty."

If anyone can do it, Bronwyn Mayden can.