

THE COR STORY



REDEMPTION

My childhood followed an all-too-well-worn path for black males in Baltimore and beyond. The efforts of positive role models and tearful entreaties of my mother to direct my actions and build my character were no match for the lure of negative temptations calling me to the street. The prospect of arrest and juvenile detention was not a deterrent. Some of the old heads who sold drugs tried to convince me not to follow this path. Although I listened, I did not follow their guidance.

I spent my teenage years in and out of correctional facilities. Even starting college did not stop me and I was arrested in 2001 at the age of 20 to face a five year sentence. The judge sentenced me instead to community service. I started Brother-Il-Brother and never looked back. My life since then is testimony to the transformative power of community service to empower each of us to eschew the negative and fuel a relentless pursuit to make the world a better place.

METAMORPHOSIS

I officially started Brother-Il-Brother as a student community service organization at Morgan State University in February 2002. Together with like-minded students, we created a group-mentoring project to bring teenage Baltimore boys to Morgan's campus. Rather than assigning each individual boy a single mentor, we wanted to surround them with a steady nurturing group of young men to serve as role models. We engaged the youth in physical activities like running and boxing, educational activities, character-building discussions.



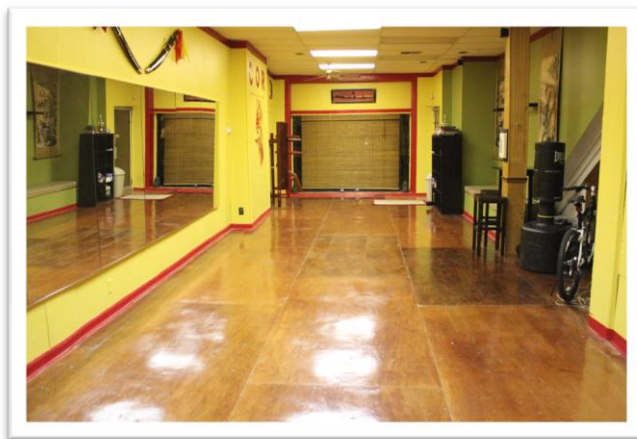
These structured activities occurred in an environment where playful joking and words of encouragement and affirmation were everywhere. More than anything, we wanted to create an environment so powerful and all-encompassing that the draw of the street would be easy to drown out. Over those first years, we applied multiple times for grant funding from multiple sources to sustain Brother-II-Brother, and once received \$30,000 of grant support. All other years our costs were covered by small donations from the mentors and participating students. Over the next three years until I graduated, we hosted Brother-II-Brother two times weekly for 3 hours each session.



As we continued with Brother-II-Brother, we increasingly recognized that the street had one weapon - money - against which we had no answer. This reality, combined with the lack of tangible outside support for Brother-II-Brother, led us to disband the group in 2006.

In 2007, we started COR. We held outdoor training sessions on Saturdays at Lake Montebello. Rain or shine, each week we ran, did calisthenics, boxed, drummed, and built character in a nurturing environment. We dreamed of having our own center, a warm, bright, and clean place to welcome our children for physical, mental and spiritual fitness.

And on June 12, 2011 we opened The COR Center for Martial Arts and Service Leadership at 2119 North Charles Street. It is symbolic for us that it is in the geographic heart of the city and can therefore welcome children from all of Baltimore. The COR Center reflects all that we have learned from years of trial and error, from the wisdom gleaned from our mistakes, and the confidence gained from witnessing firsthand how we have rebounded from our many challenges. But more than anything, we are secure in the integrity of our values and beliefs. For during all of our challenges over the last decade, we did not for an instant lose faith.



Over the last decade we have served hundreds of Baltimore children drawing almost exclusively on the work of volunteers and small individual donations.

The COR Center operates two programs. The first, COR Kids, is an afterschool martial arts program that is a visible outgrowth of the work of the last decade. The COR in COR Kids stands for “Committed, Organized, and Responsible” and that is our aim. The second program, B'MORE Clean, reflects the second meaning of COR: Community Organized Response. In B'MORE Clean, we bring together an organized group of community members, college students, and representatives of area businesses and organizations to conduct monthly clean-ups Baltimore streets and parks.



BAPTISM BY FIRE

In the afternoon of October 3, 2011, the roof of The COR Center for Martial Arts and Service Leadership caught fire and burned the building. The COR Kids afterschool program moved locations but otherwise was uninterrupted. Both Paul's Place and Margaret Brent Elementary School have graciously offered to serve as temporary afterschool locations. On Tuesday October 4, we moved the few items that were not destroyed into storage.

REBIRTH

We are directing all of our efforts to re-opening the Center by December 1, 2011. We have determined the resources

required to open a new center and are reaching out to the community to help us raise \$10,000. At the center of this effort is the “Ten for Ten” Campaign. We are recruiting 100 people to serve as the COR Community. COR Community members have pledged to solicit donations of ten dollars from ten people, each raising \$100.

This unexpected yet destructive event and the timing of our response is the essence of COR. COR, a Community Organized Response, entails the ability to immediately deploy a targeted, effective, and efficient response to any and all community needs.

Join the COR Community - for kids, for Baltimore.

How can you help

1. Pass this story along to 10 people

2. Donate \$10

www.cortigers.com/COR_10for10.html

3. Ask 10 people to donate \$10 in 10 days.

Checks or money orders can be made out to Keys Development Inc (501c3)
2607 Beryl Ave Baltimore MD 21205
410.262.2996