Greetings!

Welcome to the first yearly report for the Brown Challenge fundraising initiative. This annual publication is one way we are keeping the community informed about important updates concerning OrchKids and to report on the fundraising successes and challenges of the special grant given by the Brown family in support of the OrchKids program at the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

Overview of the Brown Challenge--- In early 2016, the Brown Family, Eddie & Sylvia Brown, announced that the OrchKids program—a program focused on musical instruction in Baltimore City Public Schools—was the recipient of a generous 5-year, $500,000 challenge grant from their foundation, the Eddie C. and C. Sylvia Brown Family Foundation. The terms of the grant stipulate that the BSO and OrchKids must raise $100,000 annually through December 2020 from Baltimore’s African-American community; with the goal to raise $1,000,000 in total at the conclusion of the pledge period. All of these dollars are going directly to support OrchKids—a transformative program that is bringing music to children and creating social change in Baltimore City’s most underserved communities.

We are very excited to announce that we met our $100,000 goal for year one early, and are well into raising funds for year two. Thanks to all our founding donors, we raised a total of $156,100 in contributions during the first year with gifts ranging from $50 to $100,000. This would not have been possible without your generous support—thank you!

Another top item on our agenda for year two is the creation of a formal committee to support our efforts. I am thrilled that Ms. Ava Lias-Booker, a noted attorney and BSO Board member, has agreed to help lead this committee with me and we look forward to working together to build a strong base of support and connecting with each of you in 2017. We both wish you and your loved ones a peaceful, happy and healthy new year!

Sincerely,

Stuart Simms
Brown Challenge Committee Chair
Message from Sylvia Brown

On behalf of the entire Brown family, I want to thank you for participating in the Brown Challenge and for supporting Baltimore’s growing Orchkids program!

Eddie and I believe strongly in lifting communities. As African-Americans living in one of the nation’s major metropolitan cities and a predominately African-American city, we feel that it’s important to set the bar high and to demonstrate that everyone has a voice and plays a role in moving our community forward. Recent events have shown that access isn’t equal but we are proud that we have many talented and dedicated Baltimoreans working hard to change that through the implementation of innovative programs right here in our city.

Eddie and I feel strongly that OrchKids is one of these programs. OrchKids which works with children in Baltimore City’s most underserved neighborhoods is a shining example of all we can do when we pull our resources together to create change. Seeing what the program has been able to achieve and the difference that it has made in the lives of so many Baltimore City school children has deeply moved us.

Our hope is that our gift inspires others throughout Baltimore to invest in this vital community resource that is putting more of our children on the pathway to success. Thank you for joining this effort.

Best Wishes,
Sylvia Brown

Gratitude from Marin

Thank you so much for investing in our students and helping us meet this ambitious goal of $100,000 in cash and commitments in year one of the Brown Family Challenge.

When I moved to Baltimore 10 years ago, I fell in love with the city. Because of that love, I wanted to bring the power of music to our students. Your support is helping OrchKids inspire students in underserved communities throughout Baltimore and share all of the possibilities that are available to them. For this, I am truly grateful.

We were so honored last year when Eddie and Sylvia generously agreed to establish this matching gift. Their commitment to our community and youth is an inspiration. Now that we’ve met the year one goal, it is clear we have the community support that will ensure the program’s growth and expansion, allowing OrchKids to serve thousands of additional students in our city.

Thank you so much for your leadership. You’ve paved the way for us to begin work on our year two success! I hope you will encourage your friends to join us as we continue this journey together.

Best Regards,
Marin Alsop
Thank You!

Brown Challenge Founding Donors

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Baltimore City Foundation:
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  and Dr. Patricia L. Schmoke, M.D.
Mr. and Mrs. Stuart O. Simms
Ms. Rita B. Whiting

For more information about OrchKids
Please visit our (NEW!) website at ORCHKIDS.ORG

If you have any questions about the program, or would like to help support the Brown Challenge, please contact Raquel Whiting Gilmer, Executive Director for OrchKids, at (410) 783-8073 or at rgilmer@bsomusic.org

Brown Challenge Events
Last December, OrchKids from the Booker T. Washington Brass Band performed during a reception for Brown Capital Management employees and their families, hosted by Committee co-chairs Stuart Simms and Ava Lias-Booker.