



United Way  
of Central Maryland

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## United Way of Central Maryland's Annual Young Professionals Conference To Feature Chris Wilson as Keynote Speaker

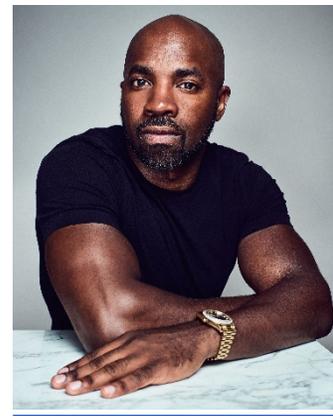
*Former inmate and best-selling author to speak to local emerging leaders*

**Baltimore, MD (April 3, 2019)** – The eighth annual United Way Young Professionals Conference, presented by the organization's Emerging Leaders United group that donates and volunteers for positive social change, will take place on May 17 at the Four Seasons Baltimore. The conference keynote speaker is Chris Wilson, who turned his life around while sentenced to life imprisonment for murder. Following his release, Wilson founded Barclay Investment Corporation, which specializes in residential and commercial contracting work and creates sustainable jobs for disadvantaged populations, Wilson is also the author of *Master Plan*, his best-selling memoir.

At this year's conference, themed *Building Leaders, Igniting Change*, Wilson will share his harrowing, heartbreaking and ultimately triumphant tale of personal transformation.

"Our Young Professionals Conference is a powerful personal and professional development opportunity for those who attend," said Franklyn Baker, president and CEO, United Way of Central Maryland. "Like United Way's donors, partners and volunteers, Chris Wilson is a true changemaker in our community. Like so many of the people we serve, Chris turned his life around. We are excited to bring him and his message of struggle and purpose to this year's conference participants."

Wilson grew up in extremely difficult circumstances in Washington, D.C.—not unlike the neighborhoods United Way of Central Maryland serves in Baltimore and its surrounding counties. His story of overcoming a life sentence is one of sheer determination and commitment to self-improvement and helping others. Wilson will share his unique perspectives on incarceration, race, social justice and overcoming adversity. His *Master Plan* is a motivational road map, and his business ventures are proof that committing to helping others can be a path to success.



*Chris Wilson, owner and founder of Barclay Investment Corporation and best-selling author, will key-note the upcoming Emerging Leaders United Conference on May 17.*

“I knew that there was more to my story than life in prison,” says Wilson. “I want to teach young people that you may be labeled a certain way or put into a particular category, but that doesn’t mean that you can’t break out of it. With some creativity and determination, you have the capability to live your life’s purpose and make real change for yourself and your community.”

This year, United Way is planning an impressive lineup of speakers, and timely workshops and panels on leadership and professional development, networking, volunteerism and advocacy. The conference will also offer ways for attendees to help drive meaningful social change, empowering them to lead in their career, in the community and in life. The event includes a full breakfast and lunch. A happy hour will be held in the Four Seasons Hotel immediately following the conference.

To learn more about this year’s Emerging Leaders Conference and to register, go to <https://elu2019.eventbrite.com>.

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**United Way of Central Maryland** makes our communities stronger. We work directly with families and individuals to keep them in their homes and out of shelters, with kids who are falling behind in school, and with people who need easier access to healthy food and jobs that pay the bills. We achieve all this with the help of our partners: volunteers, donors, other nonprofits and area businesses who share our passion to make lives and neighborhoods stable and healthier.