It was a teacher who discovered Jasmine Mays’ ’14 singing talent at Valley View Elementary School. One of Kendra Browne’s ’15 middle school teachers steered her away from dance and toward vocal performance after hearing her sing. And Carlos Howard ’14 joined multiple choral ensembles at Northwestern High School in Prince George’s County after a teacher noticed his singing ability. These vocalists are part of a cadre of performing artists who have added another dimension to the Incentive Awards Program over the last year. This influx of artistic talent includes actors Malcolm Lewis ’14 and Christopher Lane ’15, who are due to perform in plays this spring—the latter in a leading role. Here’s what they have to say about their passion for the performing arts and their professional goals:

Christopher, you attended the prestigious Baltimore School for the Arts (BSA). Why did you decide to attend a large public research university?

Christopher: Having attended BSA, I felt as if I’d already been in a conservatory and that I wanted a different educational experience for college. While it was an experience I wouldn’t trade, there were some things that BSA could never offer, given its nature. I wanted a more diverse curriculum in college and wanted a traditional college experience that would include sports, clubs and other things like that.

Malcolm and Christopher, you are both psychology majors. Do you see any parallels between the academic and artistic disciplines?

Malcolm: Both require that one tries to get inside a person’s head for the purpose of understanding. You need to get a sense of where your character or client is coming from and what they’re thinking. In acting, I don’t aim for a perfect depiction of the character but rather, I strive for relatability. I put some part of myself in every character. To be a successful psychologist, I imagine I’ll have to step outside of myself a bit and try to identify with my clients.
Christopher: Psychology and acting complement one another—one informs the other. Both disciplines teach you to observe and try on different emotions. You have to be perceptive and intuitive to succeed in both.

Why pursue acting?
Christopher: Acting is the opportunity for me to be free. Outside of acting, I am calm and relaxed but in my classes, I come alive. I get excited. I love this profession and consider myself an actor, not just playing a role, when I’m on stage.

Kendra: We really had the best of both worlds. We had a solid college prep curriculum and a fantastic opportunity to grow as vocalists. It was great to have such access to such talent.

Malcolm: I have two key roles in the Kreativity Troupe showcase in May. I also auditioned for the “Introduction to Musical Theatre” workshop with Professor Scot Rice, which I would take in the Fall 2012 semester. This class will give me insight into the business of musical theatre and prepare me for auditions.

What are your professional goals?
Carlos: I am double majoring in music education and music because I’d like to become a choral conductor at a college or university. I prefer teaching large groups rather than soloists. After Maryland, I plan to attend graduate school for a master’s degree in choral conducting.

Christopher: I want to become a famous actor but I’m majoring in psychology as a backup in case I don’t achieve success in acting. I know people that are willing to take a risk and live as an actor—poor—but I’m not as willing. I want to have a comfortable lifestyle and eat something besides beans and rice!

Jasmine: My goal is to be a performer, but my challenge is to select the kind of genre I want to focus on. There are so many directions my career can take. At some point, I also want to work in the business side of the industry. Perhaps I’ll own my own studio, become a solo voice teacher or manage programs at an opera house.

Kendra: I’m double majoring in music and hearing and speech sciences. My plan is to become a vocal therapist for vocalists who have experienced trauma that affects their ability to perform. Vocalists’ needs are different and very specific, so I want to provide support that meets those needs. I will bring more insight to the profession because of my musical background. I’m still open to being a performer, but I know it’s not easy to be discovered.

Malcolm: I will always act—I can’t see stopping. I love being on stage! I get such a rush that I could never get from merely attending a performance. Besides, I never want to get so wrapped up in my own thinking that I fail to understand how people feel and experience the world.

Jasmine: I envision being an advocate for the arts. I’m most interested in bridging the divide between musical genres. I would love to help people understand what is great about each type of music, and why it is important to learn from them all while studying music. I’d also like to set an example for musicians; they do not have to choose one side. It is possible to explore all the elements of the art that one loves.

Christopher: I would consider teaching acting but only after I’ve explored all my other options!

What do you want people to understand about a performing arts major?
Carlos: It’s hard! The rigor and the pace at which we have to learn information, instruments, diction and languages are tougher than people think. Not to mention that it’s physically challenging to stand for several hours at a time singing during rehearsal. It’s nothing like being in the chorus in high school.

Malcolm: There’s a lot more to it than people think. It takes a lot of preparation and an emotional investment since you have to put yourself into a role to tell a story. It’s not just a craft. It’s work.

If plans for a professional career fall through, how do you plan to incorporate the arts into your life?
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Just days before the start of the Fall 2011 semester, IAP freshmen attended the first IAP Summer Sendoff at the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore. Jointly coordinated by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and the Division of University Relations, Summer Sendoff is a series of welcome receptions for newly admitted freshmen that are organized by geographic region. Longtime IAP donors Arnold I. ’69 and Alison L. Richman ’69 sponsored the new event because of their strong affinity to the program and its students. Mrs. Richman is a veteran member of the Baltimore City selection committee.

At the event, students and staff met donors, volunteers and family members and connected with IAP alumni. Freshmen appreciated the opportunity to get advice and an early start on their work experiences and goals.

“I thought that planning for my future was something I could wait to do, but after attending the Summer Sendoff, I realized that my future starts now,” said Kendra Browne ’15.

One of the highlights of the evening was when Michelle Cooper, mother of IAP scholar Thomas Tripline-Hammond ’15, stood before the group and shared that she and her husband, Daymond, were inspired to go back to college because of Thomas’ encouragement. Mrs. Cooper earned an associate’s degree in August and is pursuing a bachelor’s degree at the University of Baltimore. Mr. Cooper is enrolled at Baltimore City Community College.

“I took away a wonderful feeling about the many opportunities these students have,” Mrs. Richman said, “and I am so happy to see the IAP program flourish.”

Clockwise from top right: Christine Olivares, Mercy Ike and Jade Johnson; Alla Yobah, Lenaya Stewart, Taylor Thomas and Kendra Brownie; José Granados, Thomas Tripline-Hammond and Tochi Ukwu; Arnold I. ’69 and Alison L. Richman ’69.

Minding Their Manners

IAP freshmen and seniors attended the Maryland Alumni Association’s Etiquette Dinner in November. The meal of salad, wild rice, roasted vegetables, chicken and chocolate cake was served in French style; diners made selections from a large platter, and servers then plated those items. Students received a refresher on table manners and learned about the use of flatware and the meaning of its placement on a dish. Alexandra Kovach of Alexandra & Company was the guest speaker and etiquette coach for the event.

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FOCUS ON DONORS

STEVE AND MIRIAM DUBIN

Thanks to a generous gift from Steve and Miriam Dubin, Juan Peralta ’13 can breathe a little easier. The couple created the Dubin Family Scholarship for an undergraduate in the A. James Clark School of Engineering who has persisted despite obstacles.

Awarding it to Peralta, a talented mechanical engineering student, provided a new opportunity for a student to enter the University of Maryland and participate in the Incentive Awards Program.

The scholarship will cover the cost of his tuition, fees, room and board, plus other educational expenses until he graduates. Then, it will be awarded to a new incoming freshman. Peralta is enjoying the rigorous engineering curriculum, thrives in campus activities and plans to study abroad, something that would have been difficult without the aid of the Dubin scholarship.

“The news was most unexpected but welcome, indeed,” he said. “Their gift is enabling me to complete my education and live out my personal and professional dreams, and I am so appreciative of it. I cannot thank them enough.”

PRANAV SAHA

Pranav Saha ’02, M.B.A. ’09 has pledged his financial support to the Incentive Awards Program for the next five years. Saha earned a double degree in computer science and general business as an undergraduate, then returned for a master of business administration degree. An expert in information security and cryptography, he works as a lead associate for Booz Allen Hamilton in Baltimore.

The young donor said his desire to give back comes from a combination of values acquired from his parents, an appreciation for the opportunities afforded by his UMD education and his affection for the city of Baltimore. “I am a believer in the public education system at the primary, secondary and university levels,” he said. “I believe that having a quality, accessible school system is crucial to the success of our local communities as well as the nation as a whole. I attended public schools at all levels, and believe the students the system produces can compete or out-compete anyone in the workforce.”

Saha also supports public schools through the Baltimore chapter of Mustaches for Kids (M4K), which he founded in 2009. Participants, dubbed “growers,” commit to growing mustaches during November and solicit financial pledges from friends, family, coworkers and community members. Proceeds go to DonorsChoose.org, a nonprofit that allows donors to directly fund projects and supply requests that individual teachers have submitted.

Saha’s chapter set a nationwide record for most money raised in its first year, and in just four years, M4K Baltimore has raised more than $100,000 for local classrooms. To learn more about M4K Baltimore, visit m4kbaltimore.org.

Miriam Dubin and Juan Peralta ’13

LENAYA STEWART ’15

Freshmen Jump-Start Year with Summer Sendoff

By Lenaya Stewart ’15

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On Track for Success

For Ahmed Idris ’15, the simple act of helping his family turned into a serious interest in competitive running and gave him Olympic dreams. Idris became aware of his fleet feet four years ago when his parents realized he could run errands much faster than his siblings. “My mom knew she could count on me to bring back groceries quickly even though the store was a mile away,” Idris explained.

Idris, who joined the track team at Baltimore’s Northwestern High School, quickly became one to watch, and last August competed in competitive running and gave him Olympic dreams. For mental toughness, he listened to music, meditated and prayed.

Running remains an integral part of his routine for reasons beyond general fitness. Distance running has given him the tenacity to persevere through hardships, and he relates hurdles to approaching problems head on. “Handing off the baton in relays, however, is the most meaningful to him. “It represents giving back and passing on an experience to someone else,” Idris said. “Coincidentally, that’s what the Incentive Awards Program is all about.”

NEW FELLOWS

Scholars, servant-leaders, role models. To this list of responsibilities, we add the title of Fellow to Jose Arivalo, Nancy Canales, Hanza Idris, Kori Hill, Davian Morgan, Tamicka Smithson and Sasha Ste-Marie, clockwise from top left, who joined the select group of students last fall. Incentive Awards Fellows are exemplary students who display positive attitudes and demonstrate strong character, while encouraging others to follow their lead. Most importantly, they are academic leaders who seek ways to augment their classroom experience with experiential learning and international travel and pursue the meaningful ways to impact the campus through extracurricular involvement. They are expected to support the IAP leadership by serving on the student advisory board, participating in the annual selection process and coordinating social activities for the entire student group.

OPPORTUNITY

THAT CHANGES LIVES

Ahmed Idris ’15

CLASS NOTES

Class of 2005
Myron Goldston earned his M.B.A. from Strayer University in December.
Ira Bassey Ibiogbo was admitted to the Maryland State Bar Association in June. Within days, she and husband Yemi moved to New York City, where he will complete his residency in radiology at New York University. She is an assistant adjunct professor at University of Maryland University College, where she teaches cybersecurity classes. Additionally, she is an immigration legal officer at the International Rescue Committee and has started her own law firm, focusing exclusively on immigration and naturalization law. Check out her website at www.ibiogbolex.com.
Tiana Wynn and Kelly Smith ’06 joined IAP staff and students as they visited Baltimore City high schools to make presentations to prospective high school students.

Class of 2007
Latoya Felder expects to graduate with her master’s degree from the University of Maryland School of Social Work in May. She is a claims service representative for Progressive Casualty Insurance Co. She is also active in the annual Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and the Maryland Mentoring Partnership, and is a mentor and motivational speaker with Imagine Me Mentoring Partnership, and is a mentor and motivational speaker with Imagine Me.

Class of 2008
Darian Scott Carter completed the Baltimore Marathon for a third time in October after only a few weeks of training. Afterwards, he headed to campus and played trombone with the alumni marching band at Capital One Field at Byrd Stadium. Scott Carter is the instructor for an internship program at National Institutes of Health and an adjunct professor of criminology and homeland security at Anne Arundel Community College.

Class of 2009
Randal Brewer is an admission counselor in the Office of Undergraduate Admission & Recruitment at Morgan State University. She reports to Charlene Cooper, former IAP associate director.

Class of 2010
Deborah Brown is a management and program analyst in the Office of International Affairs at U.S. Customs and Border Protection. “Through my work, I help provide necessary capacity building training and assistance to foreign border control agencies to strengthen global supply chain and travel security,” she writes. “When I am not on travel, I assist in the research and analysis of training and course materials to support International Affairs programs in border security.”

When Kareem Shakoor is not teaching government and history at Matt Hall Bronx High School (through Teach for America), he is pursuing a master’s degree in organizational psychology at Hunter College in Manhattan.

Amara Sillah is teaching American government and economics to 11th and 12th graders at Memphis Academy of Science and Engineering in Tennessee.

Antonio Tyson is a project coordinator for a behavioral economics research project at the Center for Addictions, Personality, and Emotion Research at the University of Maryland.

Class of 2011
Dakshra Avrington is a human resources assistant at the Federal Trade Commission in Washington, D.C. She is concurrently pursuing a master’s degree in project management at University of Maryland University College.

Sharina Akinson is the project manager of the Black Families Research Group in the Department of Family Science at the University of Maryland. Last summer she presented at the 43rd annual Convention of the Association of Black Psychologists.

Brittany Atkinson is a graphic designer for CPS Gumpert in Hunt Valley, Md. She writes, “I landed an interview the day after graduation and was hired two weeks later. I design everything from business cards to banners, fliers and even wedding stationary and am managing several dozen clients at the moment. I love that I can be creative on a daily basis. I am truly loving this job!”

Ashley Lawrence is working on a master of public health degree with a concentration in social and behavioral health sciences at Morgan State University. She is a graduate assistant in the Community Engaged Research Center in the School of Community Health and Policy.

Darian Scott Carter ’08
SAVE THE DATE

12TH ANNUAL SPRING RECEPTION
TUESDAY MAY 1
4–6 P.M.
Gossett Football Team House

Amy Hume ’12 (center) and her family at the 2008 Spring Reception.