

**UNIVERSITY OF  
MARYLAND  
INCENTIVE  
AWARDS  
PROGRAM**

**INTOUCH** THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE  
INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM\*

\*The University of Maryland Incentive Awards Program comprises the Suzanne G. and Murray A. Valenstein Baltimore Incentive Awards Program and the Prince George's County Incentive Awards Program.



# The Power of Friendship



In the book, "The Pact: Three Young Men Make a Promise and Fulfill a Dream," Sampson Davis, Rameck Hunt and George Jenkins describe their journey from the streets of Newark, N.J., to prestigious careers in the medical field. Meeting in high school, they quickly learned of their shared ambition to become doctors and made a pact to overcome incredible odds and take hold of opportunity. Their lives were not without setbacks and mistakes, but by working hard, avoiding negative influences and supporting one another, they achieved their goals.

Similarly, **Kareem Shakoore '10, Antonio Tyson '10 and Amara Sillah '10**—all interested in psychology—have made a promise to support one another as they pursue their varied, but related, professional goals. By sharing resources and information, they have created a self-contained support group that fosters a culture of excellence and success. Here's what they say:



**How would you describe your relationship with one another?**

**Kareem:** We talk and hang out all the time. We go to each other for advice, especially for classes, and we have a great networking relationship. We also have a friendly competition going on for bragging rights, but it never stops us from helping one another. We push each other to try our hardest. We have an understanding that we will nudge each other if we see somebody slacking off. Each of us can tell when the other is really working to his own potential.

them. We explain concepts and theories that may be unclear and save money by sharing books from time to time.

**Being a college student can be challenging. What keeps you on track?**

**Antonio:** I am the first in my family to attend college, so there is quite a bit of pressure to succeed. Even when things don't look promising for me, I do my best to stay motivated. I refuse to be a statistic like some of the young men in my community. I want to make my family proud and create a better life for them and for my future family.



**Give us an example of how your small network has been beneficial so far?**

**Antonio:** Kareem referred me to Dr. Carl Lejuez, director of the Center for Addictions, Personality, and Emotion Research (CAPER) on campus. Dr. Lejuez and I meet regularly for professional development but he also allows me to conduct clinical screenings on smoking patients. I qualify each client and manage their files, but soon I will start work on a child study where I will explore the relationship between risk taking and parenting style. I love that I get to do meaningful work and work with real people.

**Kareem:** My family, especially my mom, is supportive and they expect me to stay in school and perform well. For them, school isn't optional. I also receive support from advisers and mentors on campus. Lastly, I'm self-motivated because I know I have to be formally educated to achieve my goals. To me, unless a young person has a really good business idea, plays sports or has connections, he or she needs to go to school!

**Amara:** I have the support of my whole family. Everyone is proud of me and that encourages me. Also, as the first in my family to attend college, I know that I have the ability to break the cycle of poverty that has plagued my family.

Top to bottom: Kareem Shakoore, Antonio Tyson, Amara Sillah

**Amara:** Antonio and Kareem have helped me with classes and I have done the same for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



## CULTIVATING A SPIRIT OF GIVING



Lamara Johnson '12, Robyne Rivers '11 and Jessica Blizzard '11 prepare food at D.C. Central Kitchen.

Seeds, potatoes and crayons. These ordinary items, in the hands of Incentive Awards students, contributed to the well-being of various individuals in the Baltimore-Washington corridor. At the Green School of Baltimore, an elementary school designed to build environmental awareness, students teamed up with Civic Works to plant trees on its grounds. In Washington, D.C., students peeled and cut potatoes and did other food preparation at the D.C. Central Kitchen and bagged groceries from the pantry of Food & Friends, which provides food for terminally ill residents. They provided similar services at So Others May Eat (S.O.M.E.), also in Washington. And scholars visited Children's National Medical Center, spending an afternoon doing arts and crafts, sharing jokes and playing board games with young patients to lift their spirits.

Even when the service project did not call for dirty hands and hair nets, students transformed communities through conversation at KIPP Ujima Village Academy in Baltimore and the Cheltenham Youth Facility in Prince George's County. At both places, they facilitated small group discussions with the young people about the importance of education and the effect it could have on their lives, families and neighborhoods.

Through these and other service efforts, scholars found meaning in tasks great and small. Perhaps more importantly, they realized the satisfaction and impact of being civically engaged. As Aaron Johnson '11 put it, "It's a way to help others expand their horizons and a way to revive and empower those around you."



## The World as a Classroom

For most people, the opportunity to travel the world is just a dream. Not so for Incentive Awards students, who can take advantage of one study abroad program during their tenure at Maryland. Inspired by their predecessors, **Julia Nelson '10** and **Dekebra Arrington '11** decided to explore the wonders of London, England and Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa, respectively. Each of them speaks of their travels as life-changing opportunities that opened their eyes to the universality of the human experience.

Top: Julia Nelson '10; bottom: Dekebra Arrington '11



Check out our new look in July at [www.umincentiveawards.umd.edu](http://www.umincentiveawards.umd.edu) and let us know what you think!

## SPOTLIGHT ON

# Stuart Bowers '80

Member, Baltimore selection committee



"I found out about the Incentive Awards Program through a University of Maryland Baltimore Alumni Club event several years ago. Craig Thompson '90 and I were both intrigued when we learned about the program and got our class from the LEADERShip (a program of the Greater Baltimore Committee) focused on helping. Since 2003, I have been on the selection committee and I really enjoy meeting the candidates, hearing them talk about their hopes and plans, and being able to help select the participants. The most difficult part has

been trying to pick just one candidate from a pool of students at a school. Our interview team is often faced with several very good candidates, and must select just one of them for the program.

"It is always amazing to meet a student who has maturity and goals far beyond their years, and how they have been able to succeed in spite of incredible odds. Many of us take for granted having a family there to support you, but many of these students have had to become parents for their siblings and motivate themselves. I always like to hear about a student who has found a role model when one didn't exist in their household, and recognized the need to model themselves after someone who has the experience and knowledge to help them.

"To quote President Mote, 'This program changes lives.' It has been wonderful to be a part of it.



"FRIENDSHIP," CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

### When you're not in class, what do you do with your spare time?

**Amara:** I have been a research assistant in a social psychology lab for a year now. I am also involved in a suicide-awareness peer-education program through which I give presentations on the causes and preventable measures of suicide. I am a supervisor at the north campus dining hall, and I am working as an intern for Target over the summer. These experiences have taught me that I can manage my time very well and have given me more confidence in myself and what I can do after I graduate.

**Kareem:** I am the vice president of the Black Honors Caucus, a teaching assistant for several classes, a member of the Psychology Honors Society, a member of the student

advisory board for the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, and a supervisor at Ritchie Coliseum, among many other things.

### What are your career goals?

**Antonio:** After college, I would like to earn a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and eventually open up my own clinic to treat addictive behaviors.

**Kareem:** I'd like to earn a doctorate in industrial psychology, become a professor and conduct research. Maybe I'll also start a consulting business.

**Amara:** Up until now, I thought I wanted to be a counseling psychologist, but now I'm not so sure. I do know that whatever I choose to do will be commensurate with the hard work I've put in!

## Senior Farewell

After several years of all-nighters, papers, study groups and pizza, we bid farewell to six of our seniors who have made an indelible impression on the campus and in our program. We will miss them but we know they are well-prepared for whatever the future holds.



**Carolyn Crews**  
English Language and Literature



**Shiron Lindsay**  
Mechanical Engineering



**Korede Oladapo**  
Family Science



**Brian Robinson Bowers**  
Communication



**Earl Schaffer**  
English Language and Literature



**Dominic Smith**  
Criminology and Criminal Justice

**Congratulations and best wishes to all of our seniors!**





# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

University of Maryland Incentive Awards Program  
1103 Cole Student Activities Building  
College Park, MD 20742

[www.umincentiveawards.umd.edu](http://www.umincentiveawards.umd.edu)

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
College Park, MD  
PERMIT NO. 10

## WELCOME TO THE CLASS OF 2013



Back row: VaRysa Williams (Oxon Hill), Shamia Stewart (Baltimore Polytechnic), Tiara Whitfield (Mergenthaler)

Middle row: Dulce Hernandez (High Point), Kori Hill (Baltimore City College), Verneisha Cooper (Suitland), Rafael Lovo Panameno (Parkdale), Jose Arevalo (High Point), James Bowman (Fairmont Heights)

Bottom row: Tamicka Smithson (Paul L. Dunbar), Maret Davis (Northwestern, Prince George's County), Sade Diggs (Western), Katherine Coleman (Northwestern, Prince George's County), Ashley Hall (Baltimore School for the Arts), Alexis Davis (Potomac), Gloria White (Central)

### Alumni Notes

#### Class of 2008

**Bridget Blount** is a social recreation facilitator for Chesapeake Connections, which provides intensive, wraparound services to the city's most severe and persistently mentally ill. She is also applying for Ph.D. programs in psychology.

**Darian Scott-Carter** is a college access program specialist for the CollegeBound Foundation.

**Olivia Coates** is a contractor for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Anna Kalmykov** is a research and development associate at Paragon Bioservices Inc.

#### Class of 2007

**Deon Jackson** is a sixth-grade science teacher at Friendship Academy of Engineering and Technology in Baltimore and pursuing a master of arts degree in teaching at Johns Hopkins University.

**Tameka Brooks** is a job coach for Project Search, an innovative program that provides career development for adults and students with disabilities.

#### Class of 2006

**Christopher Brown** was promoted to a senior admissions counselor position in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at the University of Maryland.

**Yavona Willams Pirali** is an International Baccalaureate biology and health teacher at Baltimore City College High School. She holds a master's degree in secondary science education from Towson University. She and her husband, Angelo, recently purchased their first home in the Ednor Gardens-Lakeside community of Baltimore.

**Misbha Qureshi** graduated in June from Drexel University with a master's degree in marriage and family therapy.

#### Class of 2005

**Ima Bassey** graduated from the William & Mary College of Law in

May and is preparing for the bar exam. She is engaged to Yemi Ibiadapo, who graduated from the University of Virginia School of Medicine on the same day.

**Myron Goldstein** is an admissions services expediter at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

**Tiana Wynn** recently accepted a new position at S.B. & Co., where she will be a senior associate. She will move into her first home in Catonsville when construction is completed in August.