UMB CURE Scholars Program
**SHAKEER’S STORY**

Shakeer “Shaq” Franklin, a member of the first cohort of scholars from Franklin Square Middle School, admittedly was being “a very bad me” before joining the UMB CURE Scholars Program.

Once disruptive and inattentive, he now embraces science and strives for straight A’s. Shakeer was named the 2017 CURE Scholar of the Year. Raised amid gunshots in West Baltimore, Shaq now sees a brighter future. The UMB CURE Scholars Program has given him a sense of purpose, making him “proud to be one of the people that is doing something positive in Baltimore by doing well in school and being part of the special UMB CURE Scholars Program.” Thanks to the motivation and inspiration his time as a CURE Scholar has given him, Shaq now aspires to a career as a civil rights attorney while keeping an open mind about opportunities in the biomedical and cancer research fields.

“I will be one of the people who makes life in West Baltimore better.”

**AR’MYA’S STORY**

Ar’Mya Dennis, a member of the first cohort of scholars from Franklin Square Middle School, was once quiet and shy, mostly keeping to herself when at school. After a year in the UMB CURE Scholars Program, her confidence soared. Her teachers noticed her developing relationships with other students and speaking up in class. Ar’Mya says she isn’t afraid to stand up and talk in front of people anymore. Before joining the UMB CURE Scholars Program, Ar’Mya wanted to become a hairdresser. Now, due to the adult mentors she has in the medical field and the rich exposure the program has given her to health care careers, she has made it her mission to go to college and now dreams of becoming a pediatrician.

“I’m glad the CURE Program came to us. It gives me more opportunity to become what I want to become.”

**JOSIAH’S STORY**

Josiah Bryant, a member of the first cohort of scholars from Green Street Academy, has always been an inquisitive young man with an interest in science. Now he is thriving under the leadership and guidance of his five UMB CURE Scholars mentors. Thanks to them, he knows he always has someone in his corner.

Six months ago, our group of five mentors were complete strangers. We came from totally different backgrounds and schools. Now we are a team, supporting and championing Josiah’s success. It has definitely been meaningful for both sides, for the mentors and the scholars.

“— HEATHER EZELLE, PhD
Specialist, Academic Services;
lead mentor for Josiah
UMB AND WEST BALTIMORE

As one of Baltimore’s vital anchor institutions, the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) works with neighborhood partners to improve community health, encourage economic vitality, and support education and youth development in West Baltimore. The UMB CURE Scholars Program is the first in the nation to engage middle schoolers in the National Cancer Institute’s (NCI) Continuing Umbrella of Research Experiences (CURE) Program. Well aware of the serious educational and health disparities facing our West Baltimore neighbors, UMB has chosen to provide a unique investment in the future of our West Baltimore community. The 2018-2019 school year marks the fourth cohort of incoming sixth-grade UMB CURE Scholars.

The high school graduation rate in West Baltimore is 66.7 percent, compared to 78.4 percent for the city as a whole and 87.6 percent for the state of Maryland. At the same time, the average life expectancy for residents of West Baltimore is 10 years shorter than the average statewide. Additionally, median household income lags both city and state, and the rates of cancer mortality are higher for African-American residents than white residents, according to the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

“Communities of color suffer disproportionately from cancer. An important part of correcting that is to engage the community and find the answers and make the future better. And that’s what this program is about.”

— KEVIN J. CULLEN, MD
Director, University of Maryland Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum Comprehensive Cancer Center
UMB CURE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Launched in fall 2015, the UMB CURE Scholars Program is a comprehensive science pipeline initiative that excites students about science and exposes them to careers in health care, cancer research, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

Modeled and originally funded by a National Cancer Institute initiative designed to increase workforce diversity in the health sciences, the UMB CURE Scholars Program is different from the national CURE program in one important way: UMB CURE Scholars engages students early in their academic careers — beginning in sixth grade — and remains with them through middle, high school, and college to create a truly comprehensive pipeline experience. Through this unique model, UMB aims to help support our West Baltimore neighbors as they grow and become the next generation of cancer researchers, doctors, and health scientists.

Scholars come to the CURE program from three middle schools in the underserved neighborhoods of West Baltimore: Franklin Square Middle School, Green Street Academy, and Southwest Baltimore Charter School. West Baltimore is historically home to some of Baltimore’s poorest communities, including the Poppleton and Hollins Market neighborhoods, whose median household income in 2016 was just under $20,000 a year, with 65.3 percent of children living below the poverty line.

The UMB CURE Scholars Program is year-round, rigorous, and intense. Scholars participate in hands-on, after-school sessions on Tuesday and Thursdays, an all-day Saturday session throughout the school year, and a comprehensive summer enrichment program. These sessions are designed to stimulate curiosity, build life skills and scientific knowledge, and help develop comfort working in laboratory and medical settings while navigating a graduate campus. The CURE Scholars enjoy a 5:1 mentor-to-scholar ratio, allowing for significant one-on-one time to conduct experiments that foster curiosity and enhance science skills while building strong relationships with UMB faculty, staff, and students.

The UMB CURE Scholars Program does not select only the highest performers in participating schools; scholars are selected into the program based on their commitment to a long-term engagement. This method helps to broaden the pool of college-ready students pursuing health care careers. Scholars choose among three curricular tracks: robotics, anatomy, and engineering, undertaken with the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory.

Through multiple scientific opportunities, UMB CURE Scholars gain knowledge, presentation experience, self-confidence, and the motivation necessary to succeed, as well as expanding their social networks to include multiple positive adult mentors including health science professionals.

The first cohort of UMB CURE Scholars, who began the program in October 2015, completed eighth grade in May 2018. In the fall of 2018, 75 percent began high school at one of three UMB CURE partner schools, which were selected for their outstanding STEM programs: P-TECH at Dunbar High School, Western High School, and Green Street Academy. The remaining scholars are attending other accomplished institutions across the city. All high school scholars will receive mentoring sessions, SAT/ACT prep courses, paid summer internship opportunities, educational field trips, and college and career readiness programs.

“Before CURE, many of my classmates wanted to become NFL players, NBA players, or hairstylists, but now some of us want to become doctors, engineers, anesthesiologists, or plastic surgeons. CURE has helped us improve our math scores, our study habits, and has shown us what it means to be a health care professional. CURE has helped me to get closer to my goal of becoming a cardiologist.”

— SHEREEN FARQUHARSON
Cohort 2 scholar, Green Street Academy
FACTS AND STATISTICS

- In fall 2018, the UMB CURE Scholars pipeline included 106 scholars in grades 6 through 9.
- The UMB CURE Scholars Program boasts an annual student retention rate of over 92 percent since its inception.
- During the 2017-2018 program, each CURE Scholar received 328 hours of out-of-school time programming.
- The average cost per hour of CURE Scholars intervention is approximately $23.45 per scholar and decreasing each year.
- The weekly after-school attendance rate is over 85 percent and the Saturday attendance rate is 78 percent.
- 80 percent of scholars have improved their standardized math scores.
- There is an 86 percent retention rate among the hundreds of UMB students, faculty, staff, and friends who serve as mentors.
- In 2017, the scholars won national recognition, presenting posters on cancer health disparities at the American Association for Cancer Research in Washington, D.C., and at the NCI headquarters in Bethesda, Md.
- Modeled after UMB CURE’s success with middle school students, the National Institutes of Health created a nationwide early intervention pipeline initiative called Youth Enjoy Science (YES).

PROGRAM GOALS

- Consistently engage the students of West Baltimore from sixth through 12th grade in long-term, stimulating programs designed to develop STEM skills in out-of-school time.
- Expose the scholars to the possibilities of STEM careers; allow them to benefit from a pipeline of career development, mentorship, and training programs that will help pave the way and improve the odds of long-term success.
- Inspire UMB CURE Scholars and their families to set high expectations for performance and success in the program and within their communities.
- Enhance the scholars’ social networks and professional aspirations by helping them build lasting relationships with passionate, accomplished student mentors and faculty leaders in STEM fields.
- Raise awareness about the importance of early detection of cancer by educating the scholars and encouraging them to discuss with their families.

BENEFITS FOR UMB CURE SCHOLARS AND FAMILIES

- Increased STEM knowledge and exposure to high-level curricula and professionals.
- Enhanced academic success from ongoing mentorship, access to advanced medical technology, top-tier tutoring, and peer engagement.
- Ability for parents and caregivers to take advantage of workforce training, certifications, and crisis support as well as workshops on topics like homeownership, internet safety for children, healthy eating, and parenting skills.
- Support from a full-time social worker providing trauma-informed care to individuals and families as needed.
- Guidance and support in securing funding for college and graduate school.
- Preparation for potential STEM careers and pathways to achievement.
- At least five positive, committed adult mentors in the scholar’s life each year.
PHILANTHROPY

Ensuring that the future of our health care and cancer research workforces more accurately mirror our community’s population is no easy task. However, as UMB President Jay A. Perman, MD, says, “There is no limit to talent among kids from West Baltimore; the limit they face is opportunity.”

The UMB CURE Scholars Program provides that opportunity to local students by creating a long-term, early-intervention pipeline to motivate and shape these future scientists, cancer researchers, and health care workers. The program’s success to date results from significant public and private philanthropic support, along with outstanding business and community partnerships. These meaningful collaborations significantly enhance UMB’s capacity to provide programs and services to the young people who urgently seek them. The end result will improve many lives in West Baltimore, and replace the cycle of poverty with one of success and achievement for many of its families.

The University’s vision for our UMB CURE Scholars is to spark a hunger in a new generation of local, minority children to pursue careers in the health care, cancer and biomedical research, and technology fields. UMB enthusiastically offers the powerful expertise and passion of our faculty, students, staff, and friends, and has created a successful model composed of meaningful relationships with our neighbors and the broader community. We now need to move to a higher level of engagement with the help and charitable investment of philanthropic partners. Together, we can transform the lives of children and families, and improve health and wellness in one of Baltimore’s most vulnerable communities while building the next generation of cancer researchers and scientists.

We humbly and enthusiastically invite you to join the growing number of UMB CURE Scholars benefactors.

For more information and to learn how you can help, please contact
John Palinski
410-706-0183
jpalinski@umaryland.edu

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