

in TOUCH

Official
Newsletter
of the
**C.D. MOTE, JR.
INCENTIVE
AWARDS
PROGRAM**

SPRING 2023

**BRINGING
A HOLISTIC
MENTAL HEALTH
FACILITY TO A
NEIGHBORHOOD
IN NEED**

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Bringing a Holistic Mental Health Facility to a Neighborhood in Need

BY SALA LEVIN



Drug deals, addiction, community violence and the cycle of poverty all lurk just outside the doors of Charm City Behavioral Health in north Baltimore's Harwood neighborhood. But inside, an IAP alum has created a safe space for residents to relax and focus on their mental health.

"One of the things I wanted to do was make sure every person who walked through the door could let their hair down and know we were here for them," said **Misbha Qureshi '06**, who transitioned into the center director position in April 2021, launching this program.

The facility, which is part of the regional network of Kolmac Outpatient Recovery Centers, offers behavioral health services for Medicare and Medicaid clients from early childhood through adulthood. Individual therapy, couples therapy, family therapy, group therapy and art therapy are among the services that the center offers.

"It's very integrated, very holistic," said Qureshi. If parents bring in a child for behavioral issues, she and her staff look to the entire family unit: How's the relationship between the parents? What were their childhoods like? Could the family benefit from lessons on co-parenting or communication?

It's an outlook that's familiar to Qureshi, who was born in Pakistan and

moved to the United States with her parents when she was 7. Life in Pakistan was "very family-oriented, very collective," she said. Uncles, aunts, grandparents and cousins were always around and involved.

Growing up in Elllicott City and later Baltimore, Qureshi felt the cultural pressures as the eldest daughter to focus her energy on family and domestic life. "I knew that the only way for me to empower myself and really advocate for me to get independence and freedom was through higher education," she said. IAP eased the financial burden associated with college, allowing Qureshi to live on campus and forego the cost of buying a car to commute.

During Qureshi's time at the University of Maryland, IAP staff helped by checking up on her and providing access to resources, she said. She studied criminology and criminal justice while also fulfilling pre-med requirements, but during her senior year she found herself enthralled by an elective in family science. She was motivated to take it on as a second major, adding classes in the summer and winter that allowed her to graduate just one semester behind schedule with two bachelor degrees.

After college, Qureshi earned her master's degree and Ph.D. in couples and family therapy from Drexel University in

2017, and began working in therapeutic settings. In 2020, she moved back to Baltimore to be closer to her family and joined the Kolmac team. Within months of her new position as a clinical supervisor in their substance abuse program, she proposed a children and family center at a vacant spot it owned in Baltimore.

Charm City Behavioral Health now has some 160 clients and about 10 staff members. One of Qureshi's main goals was for Harwood residents to have the kind of center usually found in more affluent neighborhoods. "Most people are used to having broken furniture, holes in the walls," she said. At Charm City, snacks and drinks are available in case clients don't have enough food at home. Qureshi's mission is to provide quality mental health services to underserved communities, specifically BIPOC communities. Her vision is to "heal one individual, one family, one community at a time."

More recently, Qureshi ventured out on her own and expanded her practice into a full-time job. Her private practice, UMEED Center for Healing Relationships, allows her to connect with clients from diverse cultures, specifically clients from her own background. She provides therapeutic services to South Asian Muslim clients, often conducting sessions in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi.

"As a person of color, as an immigrant, one of the things you learn (in the U.S.) very early on is you have to assimilate, you have to be white, you have to get rid of your accent, you have to eat certain foods, you have to wear certain clothes," she said. "It wasn't until adulthood when I started doing this work that I saw the power of ... solidifying my own identity and embracing myself."

With this new transition in focusing on her own center, Qureshi's goal is to instill hope to those who often feel defeated, neglected and hopeless during challenging times in life. ★



New Opportunities, New Connections for IAP Students



The university's Maryland Promise Program (MPP) has been realigned under the Incentive Awards Program, an administrative move from Letters and Sciences. MPP Manager Michelle Udell now reports to IAP Director Jacqueline Lee, but each program retains its unique identity and brand while bringing new benefits to students.

The Maryland Promise Program, a prominent initiative of the A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation's *Building Together* investment, provides supportive educational and financial opportunities to high-performing freshmen and transfer undergraduate students from across the state of Maryland and Washington, D.C. who exhibit strong academic and leadership potential. MPP counts 123 scholars, while IAP currently has 79.

The points of overlap between the programs—for example, the student populations served and community-oriented programming—make it practical for them to belong to a single administrative unit. An extended community of staff and peers can offer guidance and support and share common ground with MPP and IAP students. Students also have

access to each program's community spaces, further promoting bonding.

To kick off this new move, IAP and MPP hosted their first mixer in September. Students and staff participated in icebreakers and enjoyed ice cream from the Maryland Dairy.

"The connection between MPP and IAP strengthens [the] community aspect and provides broader access to other students who are like-minded or have similar life experiences," said MPP student **Sarah Mancho '23**. "With the thousands of students that attend UMD, it is comforting to know that I have a niche community."

IAP's **Devin Harris '25** added that having access to the MPP community has been beneficial socially and academically. "Not only am I able to receive tremendous support from MPP staff, I am also given a chance to make connections with the students from the program as well and experience the importance of networking." ★



Scholars Take On Cancer Research

Four IAP scholars landed internships last summer with the American Cancer Society's Diversity in Cancer Research Program and the Nathan Schnaper Intern Program, both at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore.

Carmela Sambells '24, Ayooluwakiitan Oluwafemi '24, Collin Bast '24 and **Rebecca Oluwasanmi '25** participated over a 10-week period, conducting translational cancer research and attending seminars and workshops on ethics, career development, health disparities and more. Prior to starting, students became acclimated to the campus and learned basic lab skills before joining their host labs. Here's what they had to say about the experience:



CARMELA SAMBELLS '24

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

"I am appreciative of the program's research and developmental opportunities, but also of its effort toward diversifying the scientific workforce and mitigating health disparities."

AYOOLUWAKIITAN OLUWAFEMI '24

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

"My biggest takeaway was how important and directly applicable the science that I learn in my classes are to translational research. I also learned that kindness and compassion can be key in building closer relationships with patients and colleagues."



COLLIN BAST '24

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

"I was surrounded by medicine every day. I had the opportunity to see medicine in the lab setting and in the clinical setting, and learn from some of the greatest minds in the field. I can say with utmost certainty that I want not just my career to encompass these experiences, but my day-to-day life as well."

REBECCA OLUWASANMI '25

PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCE

"This internship affirmed my interest in going to medical school because it was the first time I actually felt a deep connection with medicine."



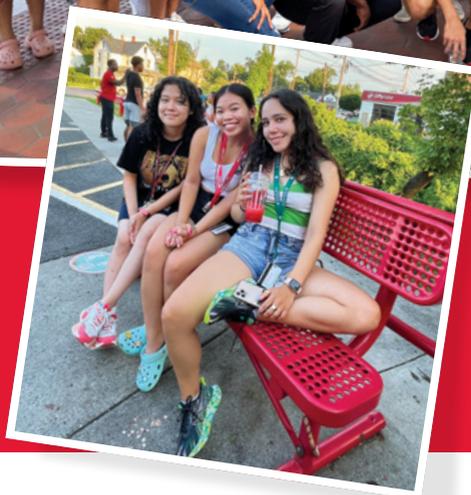
IAP Launches Summer Discovery

IAP welcomed 25 incoming scholars to its inaugural Summer Discovery program in a new effort to orient the program's students to life at Maryland.

Scholars enrolled in a three-credit general education course, participated in community-building activities and excursions, and attended workshops centered around time management, campus resources, career development, wellness and mentoring, among other topics. They also enjoyed early access to the campus, established relationships with staff and peers, became accustomed to college-level academics and expectations, and experienced all that the D.C. metro area has to offer.

"IAP's Summer Discovery program gave me the opportunity to learn about the resources on campus, all while forming strong faculty relationships. It also played a role in forming strong relationships with my peers through team-bonding activities," said

Ariana Tsegai '26. "This program gave me the confidence boost I needed going into my first year of college as a first-generation student."



Fall Welcome 2022

START WITH FIRST-YEAR IAP SCHOLARS, sprinkle in families and campus and community partners, then finish with the UMD Dance Team, the fight song and root beer floats, and you have a fun and spirited event to officially usher in the new cohort. Fall Welcome also introduced our freshmen to campus and IAP traditions and featured inspiring remarks from President Darryll J. Pines, longtime IAP supporter Barry Gossett, alumna **Nancy Canales '13** and current scholar **Timothy Dunnock '23**.





HEARTFELT THANKS

Thank you and farewell to Rahn Barnes, a devoted member of the selection committee since 2001, who stepped down this year. Director at Healthy Neighborhoods in Baltimore, Barnes served with distinction, lending his insight, advocacy and time to select 22 cohorts of IAP scholars. "It was my honor to play a role on the selection committee and share in the celebration of each new cohort," he said. "Over the years, the perseverance and character of the candidates made it impossible to not want to stay involved in the young people's growth and success within the IAP family. Thank you for letting me be a small part of that family."

RISING STAR

The Terrapin Club recognized **Afia Yeboah '15** as a member of its 30 Under 30 Class of 2023 during the Feb. 26 men's basketball game against Northwestern. The honorees were selected for making a major impact in their communities and careers, while supporting the university and embodying Maryland pride. Founder of Queen Fifi, Yeboah is a writer, orator and entrepreneur offering an array of professional services to the local and international community.



IAP Pop-Up at Maryland Day

ON APRIL 30, 2022, the Incentive Awards Program participated for the first time at Maryland Day, the university's annual daylong showcase of exploration and innovation. IAP students, staff and alums came together to share information about the program and the university with visitors.



Former UMD President C.D. Mote, Jr., for whom IAP is named, also stopped by the tent, filled with goodies such as a popcorn machine, an IAP trivia wheel and prizes.



BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR IAP'S TABLE AGAIN THIS YEAR AT MARYLAND DAY ON APRIL 29.





MYRON GOLDSTEIN '05 is engaged to be married to Christina Lofton in 2024. ↑

YAVONA (WILLIAMS) PIRALI '05 reported, "I am the resident principal of Academy for College and Career Exploration, and I'm in my second year of the New Leaders Principal Preparation Program. Also, I earned my master's certificate in administration and supervision from Loyola University."

KAREEM BRANCH '06 is the IT Lab Services Team lead for the Engineering and Technology Directorate at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. He also serves as the system administrator project lead for the Conjunctive Assessment Risk Analysis team, which equips NASA missions with analysis and mitigation guidance to predict and assess collision probability with on-orbit objects.

RANDAL (BREWER) WILLIAMS '09 is a stay-at-home mom to two sons after working for 10 years at Morgan State University as an IT professional.

KAREEM SHAKOOR '10 was already a program manager with McKinsey Academy, the learning practice of McKinsey & Company, when he reconnected with **KORI HILL '13**, who had

just started as a management consultant. Through a chance meeting at an IAP event, Hill met **KELLY SMITH '06**, client development manager, with whom she never crossed paths while a student at UMD!

AMARA SILLAH '10 is the director of alumni and impact for Teach for America Baltimore. He and his wife welcomed their first child, Lulu, in January.

ASHLEY (LAWRENCE) BROOKS '11 recently transitioned from classroom teacher to coordinator at the Judith P. Hoyer Center Early Learning Hub in Baltimore. She helps families get the resources and information needed to get young learners ready for their first years of school and improve their overall quality of life. She also provides professional development for early childhood educators through the Judy Center and the Baltimore City Teaching Residency in the evenings.

DEKEBRA (ARRINGTON) CROWE '11 is a new homeowner in Washington, D.C.

AARON JOHNSON '11 is an LAN (Local Area Network) administrator with Johns Hopkins Hospital. He and his wife have a son and a daughter.

ROBYNE RIVERS '11 is a staff psychologist and care manager at Towson University.

AMY HUME '12 is an accountant for Cross Street Partners, which specializes in adaptive reuse of historic properties, brownfield

remediation, sustainable design, and transit-oriented development in Baltimore and other states. In her spare time, she volunteers with Passport Animal Rescue, helping them save cats and getting them adopted to loving homes. She is also engaged to be married later this year.



RHONDA (ROACH) IDRIS '14 is the manager of curricular redesign for Washington, D.C. public schools. She and husband, **HAMZA '15**, welcomed their third child, Zakiyah, in September. ↑

VICTORIA GOLD '14 is a field reimbursement manager for AmerisourceBergen, a biopharmaceutical company.

SAMUEL YIRENKYI '14 and his wife are homeowners in Virginia and welcomed a second child in January.



↑ **JOSE GRANADOS '15** is past vice president of the UMD

Latinx Alumni Network, which received the Alumni Association's Alumni Affinity Network of the Year Award. He is the Next Generation Scholars program manager at Latin American Youth Center in Prince George's County, where he oversees the afterschool program at his alma mater, High Point High School.

After working for seven years in UMD's Office of Extended Studies, **LENAYA STEWART '15** has become a technical editor at the Department of Defense. She wrote, "I am still getting used to the transition, but I enjoy having the opportunity to directly use the skills I developed as a former English major."

JAMES WHIPPLE '15 reported, "I started a new job at the National Institute of Standards and Technology Center for Neutron Research. I work as an electronics engineer choosing and programming controllers and sensors for the nuclear reactor in Gaithersburg. I've had the opportunity to speak at a few conferences this year and plan to speak at another one in Kyoto for the International Conference on Nuclear Engineering."

ISAIAH BELL '16, occupational therapist, is the director of rehabilitation at Autumn Lake Healthcare, where he manages 30 therapists in a 220-bed rehabilitation facility. "It's a lot of work," he says, "but I do enjoy helping residents and therapists with becoming their best selves."



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CLASS NOTES CONTINUED

CANDACE (COOKE) SPENCER '16 got married in March 2020, and she and her husband, Henry, traveled to Greece last summer for a belated honeymoon. She is in her second year as a lead PK3 teacher at Garrison Elementary School in Washington, D.C., where she teaches "16 wonderful and wild little kiddos."

AMIRAH GRADY '17 works for a holistic health and community center in Dallas. She also works as a stage manager for a theater production company, teaches crochet and sells her original designs.

ZALANDRIA (SPANN) POWERS '18 and her husband, Warren II, welcomed their first child, Warren III, in August. They are building a financial brokerage employing 20 licensed agents. She reported, "I recently



received my Series 6 license and will soon [receive additional licenses] to become a certified investment adviser." ↑

YONAS WOLDEAB '18 earned a doctor of pharmacy degree from the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy last spring.

As CARE coordinator at the George Washington University, **CELIA BARRIENTES '19** provides a wide range of support, including academic and mental health, to students. After earning a master's degree from the university's clinical mental health counseling program,

she aims to become a counselor for couples and families.

AJIT SAMRA '19 was part of a screenwriters' incubator program, the Thousand Miles Project, coordinated by "Pachinko" showrunner Soo Hugh, to develop creators who want to tell stories about the Asian Pacific diaspora.

OLIVIA BANKOLE '20 earned a Master of Public Health degree from the George Washington University in December.

JOSHUA BROWN '21 is progressing through the branch management program at M&T Bank and will be assigned to his own branch by the summer.

SIERRA SEABREASE '21 is a software engineer at Amazon Web Services and lives in Virginia.

MAIYA SPELL '21 works as a laboratory assessor for the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

CHRISTOPHER ACHA '22 is pursuing a doctorate in chemical and biomolecular engineering at Johns Hopkins University.

AYOMIDE AWOBAJO '22 works as an associate product marketing manager for Google in San Francisco.

JAYME SAVOY '22 is an ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) teacher to third and fourth graders at Lakeland Elementary Middle School in Baltimore. She said, "It's been a crazy but beautiful journey so far and I love my kiddos. 'Adulting' has been hectic; however, it has been a time of growth and gratitude." ★