

# The UB Scholar's Digest

Volume 3, Issue 1

February 2009

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## Greetings from NMH Upward Bound!

*February 2009*

*Greetings UB alumni, families and friends,*

*Warm winter wishes to all of you ! We continue to work diligently to open doors for young people with college dreams. This year over 200 alumni, former staff and friends of Upward Bound joined us to celebrate our 40th anniversary. It was so heart-warming to welcome many of you back to campus and to hear your stories. As I go into my tenth year with UB, I continue to be inspired by our students and alumni. Your persistence and successes keep me motivated to continue doing this great work in spite of the increasing challenges we are all facing.*

*Our current newsletter will focus on updates from alumni and former staff. We had an excellent response to our call for news and we hope others of you will send us your updates. I know you will enjoy reading about all the wonderful things your UB friends and former students are doing. Keep an eye out for our next issue which will feature news about current students and staff. We always welcome your questions, requests for help and whatever support you are able to offer back to the program.*

*Lots of UB love,*

*From left to right*

*Sharon Gralnick, Assistant Director*

*Gayle Sullivan, FC Academic Advisor*

*Drew Hammill, AmeriCorps Member*

*Gisele Litalien, Director*

*Ana Gonzalez, HO Academic Advisor*

*Patricia Corrigan, Office Manager*



# Alumni News and Greetings

**Kenny Rivera · Holyoke, 2008**  
*Freshman, MCLA*

I am majoring in fine and performing arts with a concentration in theater. I currently work for The Mosaic Newsletter as a writer/editor here at MCLA which is part of the Learning Services Department. I am also a member of Dance Company which is a group/club organization that uses dance as an outlet for stress for many of us. The club does two major performances each year; one for each semester. I'm saving up money right now to take a trip to Japan for next Christmas Break with a couple of friends. I am enjoying my time here, making lots of friends, doing all my work, and man it is hard work. I would like to tell all the current members to not take Upward Bound lightly, if it weren't for this program I would not have been as prepared coming to this school as I was.

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[mcklietz@yahoo.com](mailto:mcklietz@yahoo.com)

**Krystal Vargas · Holyoke, 2008**  
*Freshman, STCC*

Hey all, I'm currently a full time criminal justice major at STCC. I go to class everyday, most of them are a lecture, but my grades are good. I have four Bs and one C that I'm trying to bring up. I started working at Burger King a month ago; I work the closing shift, so I'm often tired and have little time for myself. But, I'm looking at the bigger picture and it's worth it. Hope all is well with you all.

Lots of love, Krystal

**Marilyn Lorenzo · Greenfield, 2008**  
*Freshman, Utica College*

Everything is going great! My first semester is three days away from ending. I believe I did well. I know I have between a B+ and A in all my classes. I'm also in the honors program here at Utica. I'm undeclared right now so I'm just taking the required courses.

**Corey Rodriguez · Springfield, 2008**  
*Freshman, Westfield State College*

I'm currently studying computer science at Westfield State College, things are going pretty good.

**Yonalvy Acosta · Holyoke, 2008**  
*Freshman, Elms College*

Elms College is incredible because even though it is a small college there are a lot of things to do. I finally found what I want to do which is to major in social work and accounting. I discovered that nursing did not fit my personality and goals, so I decided to search and see what fits my personality.



**Yogesh Malik · Greenfield, 2008**  
*Freshman, Bentley College*

Yogi is attending Bentley College in Boston and studying international business. He has received a Pfeffer

Scholarship from the Community Foundation of Massachusetts and he will be honored at a special luncheon in January. The scholarship is renewable and designed to help students like Yogi be able to continue beyond their first years in college. Congratulations Yogi!

**Amy Bernardo · Holyoke, 2007**  
*Sophomore, Mitchell College*

I am currently an intern for Radgowski Correctional Facility in Uncasville, CT. I am interning as a Correctional Counselor and I love it! I am considering this as a career. Upward Bound helped me tremendously with my writing. It prepared me for all the papers I have done and I plan to do. It also prepared me with the social skills everyone needs in the work force.

## Alumni News and Greetings (continued)

### **Alex Morse, Holyoke, 2007**

*Sophomore, Brown University  
TC Summer 2008*

This spring I was chosen to be a Point Scholar! I went to San Francisco for four days for a dinner and interviews. There were about 40 finalists in San Francisco. It is an incredible organization. Not only is it a scholarship, it's also has annual conferences, events throughout the year, and a life-long network of mentors, etc. We were all flown to Chicago this summer for our first leadership conference!

### **Keysta Berry, Springfield, 2007**

*Sophomore, Westfield State College*

I am currently in my second year at Westfield State College as a Biology major and I am also minoring in Spanish and multi-cultural ethnic studies. I am part of the Urban Education gospel choir, currently in an on-campus production "A Black Comedy", and current co-editor-in-chief of PRISM (a magazine we're trying to bring back on campus). This winter I will be going to Ghana, Africa for J-Term. If you want to contact me or have any questions, e-mail me at [keysta-b@hotmail.com](mailto:keysta-b@hotmail.com) or [kbery5437@wsc.ma.edu](mailto:kbery5437@wsc.ma.edu).

### **Joseph Reed, Turners Falls, 2007**

I am letting you all know that I am doing well. I have been working for F.L. Roberts for a year now and I have just been promoted to Assistant Manager of the Company's Whately Store. Hope all is well and have a great holiday season.

### **Adriana Lara, Greenfield, 2007**

*Sophomore, Franklin & Marshall College  
UB Office Manager Summer 2008*

I have been working as an intern for our Ware institute for civic engagement. In this position I have been making connections in the community and recruiting people to volunteer at various places. It has been tough to find enough reliable volunteers but I have managed. I also have been part of panels talking to prospective students



about life at F&M. The last group I got were UB scholars from Lincoln University and the Virgin Islands. I found out that the students in the Lincoln University UB have to wake up at 5 a.m. over the summer and run for I think it was 3 miles. I thought this was very interesting in that our two groups are so different yet part of the same organization. You should tell our scholars about this and that they should appreciate the few more hours of sleep they get.

### **Mike Tombs, Turners Falls, 2006**

*Junior, Beloit*

I am studying Health and Society, which is an interdisciplinary major that focuses on National Security and Infectious Diseases, and minoring in Legal Studies, focusing on International Law. Two summers ago I was fortunate enough to be a TC for you all, and I miss you all very much and wish you the very best. This last summer I studied Modern Standard Arabic in an intensive language studies program based on my home campus, Beloit College, in preparation for this academic year. I studied abroad in Estonia and Morocco this semester, studying cross cultural psychology. In Estonia many people speak English and communication was not an issue, though in Morocco very few people understand English and without last summers language program I would have had a very difficult time. For the program I live with host families, and get to experience their cultures and daily lives, so I can understand what it means to be an Estonian and a Moroccan.

My Arabic is getting pretty good, and I am having the time of my life. Next semester I will also be studying abroad in Ifrane, Morocco, located in the High Atlas Mountains. I will continue studying Arabic language, as well as Middle Eastern politics and law, Middle Eastern and North African economic development, and international law. Plans for this summer are still unknown, though I am trying to secure an internship with the United States State

## Alumni News and Greetings (continued)

Department. I was fortunate enough to be awarded a Gilman Scholarship through Department for studying abroad, combined with contributions from my family I have been able to travel outside of my host countries as well. I visited London, Paris, Normandy, Amsterdam, the Holland coast, and Bruges and Brussels in Belgium. For my semester break I was also able to visit Germany and traveled along the Rhine Valley. In short, I have been having the experience of my life. I miss all of you and hope everyone is doing well. Keep applying for scholarships and maintain your focus! Go space Cobras!

### **Katelyn Otto, Turners Falls, 2006**

*Junior, Elms College*



Katelyn plans to pursue a master's in social work and a law degree after she graduates. Katelyn was selected as one of only four recipients of the Massachusetts Educational Opportunity Association Scholarships. This \$750 scholarship is awarded to students who have strong leadership, academics, community service, and who have overcome obstacles. She was honored at the Awards Banquet in Lowell Mass on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Congratulations Katelyn!

### **Melissa Bernardo, Holyoke, 2005**

*Senior, Rollins*

I am currently working on my senior Honors thesis at Rollins College here in Winter Park, FL and will be graduating in May with an Honors degree in psychology and a minor in international business. I'm very excited! Since May 2008, I have been interning as a behavioral therapist (applied behavior analysis a.k.a. ABA therapy) for children with developmental disabilities. I am also still working as a server at The Cheesecake Factory in addition to school and the internship position, so I am always BUSY, BUSY! I am applying to a graduate school (Florida Institute of Technology) for fall of 2009 in the Applied Behavior Analysis Master's program that is offered at the Orlando campus, as I am very

interested in behavioral psychology and love the work I currently do with children with disabilities. I am learning so much about how ABA techniques can benefit a wide range of individuals, and that this field is very important for changing the lives of many. I am hoping that through my graduate courses and continued work in the field, I will obtain BCABA (Board Certified Associate Behavior Analyst) certification, as well as, eventually, BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst) certification. My ultimate goal is to one day open my own behavioral therapy center for a wide range of individuals who can benefit from behavioral services. I think that my focus will probably remain on children, but because I know people of all ages can benefit from ABA practices, I hope to be able to service those in need, regardless of age. I've really fallen in love with the work I do, and I give many thanks to Dr. Maria Ruiz, with whom I have been working closely for the past few years. I thank her for exposing me to the world of behavioral psychology and for providing ample opportunities to learn and grow on my journey toward discovering a previously untapped passion for this career path. My experiences at Rollins have been priceless, and I would not change any of the past 3 1/2 years for anything! I have learned so much and have made so many connections with such great people that I do not regret moving to Florida for one moment. Although I do miss family and old friends greatly sometimes, studying at Rollins has been the opportunity of a lifetime. I have UB to thank for providing me with the opportunities and tools to find such a wonderful school, and I am forever in the program's debt for helping me down the path toward such an awesome college career! As I complete the application process for graduate school, I will be sure to keep you updated on the results. I hope all is well up north, and I wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season! With lots of love, Melissa Bernardo.

## Alumni News and Greetings (continued)

### Joshua Garcia, Holyoke, 2004

*Westfield State College, 2008*

I'm doing really well. 2008 ended up being a great year!!! I just recently graduated from Westfield State College with a Bachelors Degree in Psychology. I am now currently working for the Holyoke Housing Authority as a Lead Life Skills Coordinator. I work with families that live in State Public Housing in a program called the Family Self Sufficiency program. I assist participants in developing educational and employment plans and in obtaining resources and services needed to meet the goal of becoming self sufficient and less dependent on public housing. The job is going really well, I have many benefits and the pay is great. My advice to UB students is to not feel like college is not for him/her or to not feel like there is nothing out there that fits them. Of all people I should know because my plan was to go military because college wasn't for me. I say this because I was never as smart as a lot of other students and my GPA was never all that great. I must also add that my SAT scores weren't the best so I thought to myself "Why go to college?" However I ended up going, I still managed to get my degree within four years and get a great job I'm happy with. SO THERE'S NO EXCUSE!



(smiling)...I'm really glad I can share this with the UB students as a UB alumnus because I know a lot you that are stressing right now and feel like it's difficult. I was one of you . I know some are really confident, know what direction he/she wants to go, has great SAT scores and grades. That stressed me out even more because I felt I had to be like them to go to college and succeed. However, even though I didn't do as well, I still managed to succeed as they did. That is just to show that you may never know what you may get out of life for it is full of surprises. So don't give up

and time flies (smiling) Please keep in touch and I hope to visit soon.

### Caitlan Bevan, Holyoke, 2004

*Bowdoin College, 2008*

After I graduated in May, I decided I wanted to continue living in Maine. I took a job working for a publishing company, called Walch Education, as a Sales Administrator- located in Portland, Maine. Walch Education publishes supplemental Middle and High School materials for diverse learners and our products are marketed and sold internationally. My job specifically deals with managing the account of all our clients that are re-sellers. I also attend trade shows for some of our larger clients and work with sales reps interested in selling our products at a district level. Outside of marketing, I have been able to get my hands in the Editorial department, brainstorming new title ideas for the 2009 publishing plan. After more experience working, I hope to have a better idea of what I would like to get my Masters in.

### Brian Lawson, Holyoke, 2004

*Saint Anselm College, 2008.*

Brian is currently a reporter for PolitickerNH.com which bills itself as "inside politics for political insiders." Brian also recently published an essay titled, "Ukraine: A transitional democracy."

### Kristie Gagne, Turners, 2004

*UMass Amherst, 2008*

I graduated from UMass in May with a BS in Chemical Engineering and I'm at the University of South Carolina in my first year of my PhD.

### Jiomarys Arce, Springfield, 2003

I went to Springfield College for psychology. I then decided to go to New York City and studied fashion design and merchandising at Katharine Gibbs. I worked in the fashion industry but it was too fast paced and overwhelmingly stressful for too

## Alumni News and Greetings (continued)

little pay so I moved to CT and am getting married. I work for Cain Management and I am a payroll specialist. I'm happy to embark on a new journey in my life. Also, I have my own distribution business with my fiancée and looking to free ourselves soon and make our dreams come true. Love you guys!!! Jiomy

### **Rachel Fish, Mohawk, 2003**

*UMass-Dartmouth, 2007*

I graduated in 2007 from UMass-Dartmouth. I then went to work for Social Security Administration in July of 2007. I am still working with them in the Hyannis, MA field office. I am a Social Insurance Specialist. I take disability claims and retirement claims. Life is good!

### **Marlene Navarro, Holyoke 2002**

*St. Michael's College, 2006*

I landed a job after college as an ESL Biology teacher at Dean Technical High school in Holyoke, MA. After teaching for six months, I left to live in CT. I recently moved back to MA and got a job as an ELL Social Studies teacher at Killey Middle School in Springfield, MA.

### **Jacob Lauzier, Holyoke, 2002**

*UMass Amherst, 2006*

Currently, I am a software engineer at a software company in Easthampton, MA called Atalasoftware. There, I am the lead developer of a software product called VizitSP. My girlfriend, Andrea (since 8th grade) and I live in a house in Holyoke where we have a dog and two cats. In my spare time, I develop websites and am working on a few iPhone applications that I hope to release in the near future. If anyone is interested in hearing more about what I do or just want to get in touch, I blog at <http://www.atalasoftware.com/blogs/jake/> and at <http://www.jacoblauzier.com>

### **Stephanie Smith, Turners Falls, 2002**

*Westfield State, 2006*

I graduated from Westfield State College

in '05 with a B.A. in psychology. I'm currently working at a private all girls' school and getting my masters in communication disorders at UMass. I am hoping to work with children with cleft palate or possibly stroke survivors. My boyfriend and I just got a puppy and along with work and school, she keeps me *very* busy! I would love to hear from my peers from UB! The email I use most often is [smiolin@gmail.com](mailto:smiolin@gmail.com) and it's probably the best way to reach me. I hope everyone is doing well!

### **Chris Welenc (Weaver) Greenfield, 2001**

The past couple of years have been the beginnings of the new chapter in my life. On August 11, 2007 I got married to Sean Welenc who truly is my soul-mate and best friend. Since then, we have gotten pregnant with our first child, who is going to be named Tyler David and his due date is January 26, 2009. I love being married and am looking forward to having a family. I work with an absolutely wonderful group of professionals at the Amherst Dental Group. The staff there are committed to being a notch above the rest when it comes to being courteous not just to patients but within the heart of our group. I've never worked with so many wonderful people. My job as a patient care coordinator keeps me busy, and it is encouraging to know that I am a valued employee. I love what I do for work. Still, I have my goals in life and in the back of my mind I would love to have a degree of some sort, however it is not the most important thing for me and I am happy with where I am in life and what I'm doing. It's healthy to always have goals to aspire for, and, Upward Bound has taught me that there is always a way to push through to your dreams. I still think of the people that worked with me at Upward Bound and the many different and inspiring students that I schooled with. Upward Bound is an experience that has changed my life for the better. I thank you.

## Former Staff News and Greetings

### **Samantha Pack, Middlebury College**

*TC Summer 2008*

Hi UB! I miss you guys!! I hope everyone is doing well, working hard (of course!), and having fun getting ready for the holidays. I'm still a senior at Middlebury, getting ready for the January winter term. It's freezing in Vermont, but I love it here; my classes and friends make up for the cold weather. I'm going to start writing my senior thesis in the spring, a Creative Writing project that will include paintings and poems. I can't believe that it's almost 2009, and that some of you will be graduating soon! To the seniors applying to college, good luck on your applications - you should be so proud of yourselves. I miss everyone tremendously and would love to keep in touch! Love, Sam

### **Meagan Malone, Millsaps College**

*TC, Summer 2007*

I'm finishing up my senior year at Millsaps College as a French and Philosophy double major. This past semester was particularly triumphant as I finally completed a year-and-a-half-long process by defending my honors thesis, *Determining White Responsibility for White Privilege*. (It was originally inspired by the white privilege workshop at a UB diversity conference two summers ago.) For now, I'm preparing for a senior piano recital and starting the application process for jobs next year. Hopefully, this time next year, I'll be teaching French to high school students!

### **Ami Jackson**

*Springfield Academic Advisor 05-07*

Hello all of UB, I am still working for CPCS, which is essentially the public defenders office. I am specifically assigned to the juvenile office. The public defenders office assists indigent persons who receive their right to counsel. I have been able to work with a lot of great youth. Through my work as an investigator I have been able to assist many family's and see that they receive services they deserve and help the courts understand that not all teenagers are bad, sometimes they just need the right help.

Just like at Upward Bound some students thought to be poor students are found to be great students once they received the help they need. I have been able to work a variety of cases from civil to criminal and I am having a great time. On a personal note Mr. Charley and I are expecting a new addition to our family the first week of June. I am always thinking of UB. I miss you all, Ami

### **Leonda Whitaker Boateng**

*Summer Faculty, 2006*



It is so great to hear from you! You know, I think of UB often and my memories always bring a smile to my face. I have kept in touch with Jay and always ask for up-

dates on my former students. It is great to know that they have moved on to bigger and better things. The summer of 2006 will always go down as one of the best of my life due to my experiences with UB! I always remember my experience climbing Mt. Monadnock and have shared my journal excerpt about that hot day in July with countless numbers of students. My only regret is that I have not had the opportunity to return to see my old students. As for my news...well, a lot has happened in 2 years! As you may remember, I went to teach in Ghana for a school year at Ghana International School. That turned out to be an awesome, life altering experience. In June 2006, I got married to a wonderful Ghanaian man prior to returning to the US. In January 2008, my husband Solomon and I welcomed our daughter, Meadow, into this world. I am currently working as a 9th grade English teacher at a high school in Killeen, Texas. Right now, my students and I are reading a book called "Mississippi Trial, 1955" by Chris Crowe. It is a novel based on the true story of the murder of Emmett Till, an African-American teenager who was brutally murdered for speaking to a White woman in Mississippi in 1955. His murder is said to

## Former Staff News and Greetings

have help spark the Civil Rights Movement. Sincerely, Leonda

### **Omowunmi Isaacs-Sodeye**

*Summer Faculty, 2005*

I am doing great. We moved to Arizona in June. My husband just finished his PhD and got a job with Intel in Arizona, so we moved. I am taking time off from work and just had baby # 2 on November 7. His name is Judah.

### **Han Hsiang HSIA,**

*TC, Summer 2004*

I have completed my master program in luxury goods and services in Europe and now I am back in Taiwan. As a male citizen of Taiwan, I have to serve in the military, and I am doing the social service instead. As part of the social service, I am teaching English at a remote elementary school in Hualien, Taiwan. I have been exercising on my own free time. I have gained some weight at the beginning of the services, but I have been working hard to get back to shape again through biking and swimming. I have been trying to update myself with the international events by reading Economist, Business Week, Financial Times, and I think that the economy will get worse in the next year. The financial system would need time to restore its image and confidence in people's minds. The people would need to learn to withstand the difficult time with smart investments and careful planning of retirement. The economy will slow down worldwide for a while, and it is part of the irresistible downside of the capitalism. I have been pondering if I should go abroad again next June after I have completed my military service and if so, what I should do and where I should go. With my background in luxury goods and services, I should go to Europe as it is where all the renowned brands are based. At the same time, I found myself with a growing interest in international relations. I wonder if I could find a way to work for an international trade organization or something of that nature. I am trying hard to find my anchor in my life. I am finding my way to connect

with the global world. Warmest regards from Hualien, Taiwan and I wish you all the best. Respectfully, Han Hsiang HSIAO

### **Pat Shippee, former Office Manager**

*Franklin County Academic Advisor*

I'm currently still at Hinsdale Elementary School working with kids Pre K - 5th grade (was 6th but they moved into a new middle school). I am running groups - social skills building, emotion management, and organization and planning (for kids diagnosed with ADHD and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder), changing families, anger management - things like that. I am also in the classrooms working with students on cooperative learning and group work, my work with kids on the autism spectrum has increased quite a bit. I also support our program for kids identified as emotionally handicapped and need behavioral support. I am one of the SAU trainers for crisis intervention and non-violent physical crisis intervention. I'm looking forward to the holiday break and taking it easy for a few days. Hope all is well with everyone. Keep in touch!

### **Leida Cartagena, Holyoke, UB 1997**

*Mount Holyoke College 1999*

*MSW Boston College, 2002*

*TC, Faculty and AmeriCorps Member*

I am working as the program director for AmeriCorps VISTA; School Based Mentoring Program; and Communities Empowering Youth at New England Farm Workers Council. The agency is working on succession planning and this gives me the opportunity to learn, be mentored and hopefully move up!!!! We'll see how it goes. I started my position on October 14<sup>th</sup>

### **Sacha Garcia-Mailloux, Holyoke, 1992**

*Bates College, 1996*

*TC, Dorm Head and Faculty*

I'm fortunate to be spending the 2008-2009 school year with my beautiful son, Lukas. He will turn 6 months old on December 13 and is close to crawling already!! Wishing you a Happy Holidays from our family to yours. Sacha



Sacha Garcia-Mailloux's baby Lukas turns 6 months old!



UPWARD BOUND  
*Northfield Mount Hermon School*



*2008 NMH Upward Bound Summer Academy*

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*The mission of the Upward Bound Program at  
Northfield Mount Hermon School is to generate in  
low-income and first generation college students,  
the skills and motivation to be successful*