Greetings from a very snowy campus! We have been very busy with the largest class of seniors ever. They have completed hundreds of college applications and they are working hard on their scholarship and financial aid applications. Acceptances are pouring in and the reality of leaving home is beginning to sink in!

We were very sad to say good-bye to our long-time Holyoke advisor, Anna Rigali, who moved on to a new position as a guidance counselor in Holyoke. Anna has been an outstanding advisor and colleague for the last seven years. Parents, students and staff will miss her a great deal.

We are thrilled to welcome Ana Almeida who hails from the Providence, Rhode Island area. A recent graduate of Brown University, Ana came on board during one of our busiest times. She is doing a great job getting to know our students and responding to all their college application needs. As a UB graduate, Ana brings great knowledge and sensitivity to our students. We are so happy to have her on our team!

We also welcomed 34 new freshman and their families at our recent orientation. We always get re-energized by new faces and the hopes and dreams our new students bring.

We hosted three wonderful community events that helped us build our scholarship fund and raise more awareness of our program. Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered and donated!

While we remain awestruck by this winter’s abundant snow, let us also remember that spring is coming!

Gisele Litalien

“...the endless repetition of an ordinary miracle.”
— Orhan Pamuk, 
Snow
Now that you have almost completely finished the college application process, is there anything you would like to share with the underclassmen that will help them when they are seniors?

Be on top of everything. Know when due dates are. When you're looking at a college, apply right then and there--don't wait for the deadline. I did that with one school, and even though I got in I wish I'd had more time to work on my application.

Have you been accepted to any colleges yet? If so which ones?

I have been accepted to nine schools so far! They are: Colby-Sawyer, Husson, Keuka, Hartwick, MCLA, Quinnipiac, Unity, University of New England and University of New Hampshire (Durham).

What are you looking forward to when you go to college?

I'm excited to be on my own and to meet lots of new people, but I'm also anxious about that--I think, "Oh my God, it's a new school!" It will be a lot bigger than this school so I'm excited about that too.

What is one thing you are going to bring to college from home?

A picture of my family. And of my friends. Can I say two things?
Now that you have almost completely finished the college application process, is there anything you would like to share with the underclassmen that will help them when they are seniors?

Do not procrastinate and study a lot!

Have you been accepted to any colleges yet? If so which ones?

I have been accepted to Worcester State, Framingham State, Franklin Pierce, Bridgewater, Salem State, Westfield state, and HCC!

What are you looking forward to when you go to college?

Meeting new friends, being in a new environment and being independent.

What is one thing you are definitely going to bring to college from home?

My brain and my phone.
Some Colleges UB Students Have been Accepted to!

- Wheaton College
- Umass Dartmouth
- Elms College
- Westfield State University
- Fitchburg State University
- Umass Amherst
- Colby-Sawyer College
- Husson University
- Keuka College
- Hartwick College
- MCLA
- Quinnipiac University
- Unity College
- University of New England
- University of New Hampshire (Durham)
- Worcester State
- Franklin Pierce
- Salem State
In December, Upward Bound had an extraordinary three weeks of events! On December 1st, Franklin County parents, students and community members came out for a Free Soup and Games night at Hope and Olive Restaurant in Greenfield. It was a wonderful way for people to enjoy a night out with friends and family and to let more people know about the great mission of Upward Bound.

On December 5th we hosted a Dinner and Movie Evening. This Polar Express themed event brought many families out to enjoy a movie and a delicious dinner cooked by the Upward Bound Holyoke families. In their bright colored pajamas, our students stopped the crowds with their rendition of “Striving for the Future.” Lots of young children enjoyed the popcorn, hot chocolate, and toy train.

On December 12th we participated for the first time in Valley Gives Day, an online giving event sponsored by the Community Foundation of Western Mass. Through lots of social media contact and email outreach we created a great online buzz amongst alumni, former staff, donors and others who are connecting to our program for the first time. We loved hearing about how life changing Upward Bound has been for both students and staff and we are excited to engage new supporters in our important mission.

We want to thank everyone who helped us raise over $6,000 through three exciting new fundraisers. The funds will allow us to provide college scholarships to our graduating seniors. Special thanks to our Commonwealth Corps members, Emily Laufer and Josh Platt for their terrific planning, coordination and dedicated service.
It was half way through the year and many of our students were itching to see their UB friends. On December 29th, a bright and sunny winter day, we hosted a winter reunion with over 50 students in attendance. Our scholars chose one of three fun activities to enjoy with their friends; skating, theater games or yoga. For many of our scholars, ice skating was a new and riveting experience! Glenn Minshall and Meg Donnelly, NMH faculty members, helped them get started by using props to stabilize them on the ice as they took to the rink for an exciting time. Several students tried yoga for the first time too. Students worked through a challenging beginner class and some were surprised by how intense yoga can be. Josh Platt, one of our Commonwealth Corps members, led a theatre activity that taught students about self awareness through individual and collective work. We enjoyed some pizza and friend time. We are looking forward to having everyone back on campus this summer!
Lena Eckhoff is doing something amazing in Oakland California. Lena attended the NMH Upward Bound Program from 1996 to 1998. Lena went on to attend Connecticut College in 1998, she obtained a BA in Sociology based Human Relations. Lena is also certificated by Connecticut College Program in Community Action (PICA). Eckhoff played for the Women's soccer team at Connecticut College and returned in 2003-2005 for the Assistant Women's Soccer coaching position. Lena helped to expand a small afterschool soccer program in Oakland, California. The We United Oakland Soccer Project serves high risk children. The Project is not just about soccer however, participants get team playing experience, transportation, healthy snacks/nutrition guidance, homework support, teacher/coach/school consultation, mentoring, parent support, anti-racism and compassion dialogues, TRIBES conflict resolution/restorative justice methods, and education advocacy, in Oakland schools. Lena tells us more about the program and how Upward Bound helped her to get there! How did Upward Bound helped you on your journey to founding a nonprofit organization to help at-risk youth?

“Northfield Mount Herman Upward Bound helped me immensely, as a participant and then a few years later as an intern for the program. As a participant I gained so many things. I experienced college preparatory academic rigor for the first time. I was guided through challenging new material and rigor by charismatic, inspiring, and passionate teachers. At Upward Bound I learned how to discuss racial and ethnic diversity among peers, not only overcoming fear, but reaching empowerment as well. Then, with all of the college application fees being waived and support with the application process, the deal was sealed; I was headed to Connecticut College with the best financial aid package, an invitation to try out for the soccer team, and ready to thrive academically. I achieved all of those goals, played soccer, ran track, and received academic honors each semester. I rejoined the UB community half way through college, when I interned as a service learning coordinator. The internship at UB satisfied a component of my certificate from the Connecticut College Program in Community Action. I continue to believe that service learning is one of the most enriching educational methods. Eight years after college, I moved to Oakland, California and began teaching special education for Oakland Unified School District in 2007. In 2010, I learned of a neighboring school that had an after school soccer program. I started volunteering with the program. Next, I started bringing students from my school to the program at the neighboring school. Long story short, the program has grown immensely since 2010, from a small program to a larger program that provides services to over 70 kids each year. We have obtained our 501c3 status as a public charity. Our mission is to provide a safe place after school for at-risk youth ages 5-14, between the critical hours of 3:30-7:30pm. We also provide our participants with the opportunity to play in the local Jack London Soccer League on girls and boys teams”.

I continue to believe that service learning is one of the most enriching educational methods.
Hi, my name is Ana Almeida, the new UB Academic Advisor at Holyoke High School, and I am excited to begin working with you this academic year. I was born in the Cape Verde Islands off the west coast of Africa, and moved to the United States when I was twelve years old. I earned my Bachelor of Arts Degree at Brown University in 2012 with a focus on Portuguese and Brazilian Studies, and Political Science. Since college, I have been passionate about helping students have access to the right resources in order to be accepted and to succeed in college. I have six years of experience working with high school students – four years as a college application mentor while I was still in school, and two years as a counselor at the Upward Bound Program based in Rhode Island. Moreover, as an Upward Bound graduate myself, I fully understand the obstacles our students must face in order to graduate high school and go to college, and I am certain that together we will overcome them.

**What do you enjoy about your new role with UB?** Everyone has been very welcoming, and I’m very thankful for that. At this point I’ve met all of my advisees and they are a very talented group. I’m enjoying getting to know each and everyone of them week by week. I can’t wait to dive in to all the projects we’ll be working on this year.

**What do you hope to accomplish with your students this year?** This year, I hope to continue working with the seniors and make sure they are all set to matriculate in college by the end of their senior year. I also hope that the underclassmen will achieve the highest marks in their courses and continue exploring their extracurricular interests. I believe that learning is two-way street. Thus, I’ll be learning from them as they will be learning from me.

**What did you do before working with UB?** Before coming to NMH UB I worked as a part-time counselor at the Upward Bound Program at Rhode Island College and I also worked as the Head Career Coach for middle school students at the Providence After School Alliance (PASA).

**What is your favorite type of music?** I like so many different genres, but my favorites have to be R&B and Pop. I’m into Cape Verdean music as well.

**What is your favorite movie?** I love all the movies that involve dancing—*Take the Lead, Step Up, Dance with Me, The Forbidden Dance* for example. In fact, the first movie I ever saw in a cinema was *Save the Last Dance*. However, my all time favorite is *Dirty Dancing*.

**If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?** There are so many places – but just to narrow it down, I would want to go to an exotic Island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. I would love go to Bora Bora. I’m an island girl, and I am definitely all about 365 days of summer. If I could go live anywhere, I would go to Brazil. I’ve been there once and I totally felt that I belonged.

*So glad you’re here Ana! Summer will be here soon. We promise!*
New faces!
Meet some of our new UB Scholars!

Valentina Moriarty

What was it about UB that inspired you to apply?
It was an opportunity to get help with college. I knew it would help me get into college but also that it would help me once I was in college. My teacher was the one who told me about the program and encouraged me to apply.

What do you do for fun?
I play soccer, and I like to go to the mall.

If you were to apply to college right now, what would you major in?
I know I want to work with kids. Maybe not as a teacher, I’m not sure.

Antonio Santos

What was it about UB that inspired you to apply?
Javier told me about it. He told me that it helps you get into college and helps you with school and college applications.

What do you do for fun?
I play instruments including the saxophone and I’m in the band. I perform a lot of different types of music.

Do you have brothers or sisters? Yes–I have two little sisters and step siblings.

If you were to apply to college right now, what would you major in?
Biology, because it’s one of my favorite subjects, I’m going to take AP BIO and Chemistry next year.

Laz Santiago

What was it about UB that inspired you to apply?
It will help me get into college. A lot of my family encouraged me—and some of my family members have been in the program.

What do you do for fun?
Play video games, play sports and joke around with my family.

Do you have any brothers and sisters? Yes, I have four: Tati, Antonio, Cia and Darius

If you were to apply to college right now, what would you major in?
Computer engineering. Artificial Intelligence, more specifically.
During February vacation, many of our UB scholars were up bright and early, braving frigid weather to visit colleges! We visited Worcester State University, College of the Holly Cross, Fitchburg State University, Framingham State University, Smith College, Mount Holyoke College and UMASS Dartmouth.
Several of our students have the opportunity to apply to be full year boarding students at Northfield Mount Hermon School and seven UB scholars are currently attending NMH. Our scholars work extremely hard in this challenging and stimulating academic environment. Attending NMH gives students incredible opportunities to learn with students from around the world, to travel abroad and to participate in a wide range of arts, sports and clubs. Angel Ortiz is a junior from Holyoke and we asked him to share a little bit about his experience at NMH.

What is the best thing about attending NMH?

The food. No, I'm just kidding. There are so many different opportunities--new activities, sports, extracurricular activities. In middle school we usually just had one choice for everything. You also get the chance to get exposed to so many different cultures and people from different backgrounds.

What is the biggest challenge about attending NMH?

There is a lot more work, and classes are different than at public school in a lot of ways. Time management is so important. When I was a freshman I used to leave things until the last minute but now I know I have to start things early, leave them for a while, and come back to them.

What do you want to study in college?

Math or science--if science, then probably biology.

How many siblings do you have?

5 younger siblings, including Gio who also goes to NMH.

What advice would you give to an Upward Bound student who was starting out at NMH in the Fall?

Use your time wisely. And take advantage of all the opportunities they have here. Get involved in the school as much as you can.
UB students enjoyed a day of learning and fun at NMH as they participated in our annual Career Day event on Feb. 16th. After new and returning students got to know each other a bit through some games, students were introduced to nine professionals from a range of fascinating fields. Students then chose three sessions in which the professionals shared what they did in their careers, what they liked and didn’t like in their jobs, the college preparation they needed, the range of options within their careers and advice for preparing for those careers. Students were surprised by some of the creative ways that professionals pieced together their lives to be able to do what they loved. Presenters included Julian Jiminian, UB 2010, mechanical engineer, Alex Fischer, bookkeeper and community organizer, Mel Motel, founder/director of Just Schools Project, Rohan Providence, computer systems administrator, Amy Gordon, writer and teacher, Judith Phillips, judge, Chris Rohmann, theater critic and director, Tom Kokonowski, attorney and James Lamoureux, engineer. Scholars enjoyed dinner at Alumni Hall where they continued to ask great questions of our presenters. They participated in fun activities including yoga, painting, dance, writing, board games and a walk under the stars. In spite of the frigid weather, everyone enjoyed the warmth of being with UB friends and of being inspired by new ideas and possibilities for the future. A big thank you to UB staff, Commonwealth Corps members, AmeriCorps volunteers and presenters who gave their time to make our event a great success!
UB 50th Anniversary Symposium

UB Director, Gisele Litalien and Academic Advisor, Breyana Roman attended the New England UB 50th Anniversary Symposium along with eight alumni at Boston University. This inspiring event included a series of panels that reviewed the history of Upward Bound during the civil rights movement, the changes in the program over the last 50 years, and the issues that continue to face our nation in terms of educational equity.

Alumni and staff had a chance to meet some of the founders of Upward Bound and the Council for Opportunity for Education founder, Dr. Arnold Mitchum. Alumni panels talked about fascinating careers in STEM fields. Our alumni got very excited to see how they are part of a very long and large national movement. Our graduates made us very proud, asking great questions of the panelists, introducing themselves to the speakers, and networking with each other and alumni from other programs.

We all left feeling hopeful and energized about engaging in the continued work of expanding educational opportunity for all.
THE UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM at NMH is a federally funded (Department of Education) initiative designed to provide low-income students with the skills and motivation needed to succeed in college. The students are usually the first in their family to go to college. UB scholars receive tutoring, advising, enrichment, a rigorous, six-week summer program and intensive assistance with the college and financial aid application process.

Additional funding comes from the Community Foundation of Western Mass and the Webster Foundation.

To make a tax deductible contribution go to:

http://www.nmhschool.org/academics-upward-bound/alumni-and-friends

Striving for the future, each and every day!