Greetings! Our seniors are getting so much good news! It is still early but we are very confident that all of our seniors will have excellent college options to choose from in May. Our program is strong and we are finding that our retention rate has been increasing to the point where we can hardly recruit this year for lack of openings. That’s a sign that our students are engaged and committed to sticking with the program and their college goals. While it is good news, it is disappointing for the many students who would like to join our program. We were excited to get news that the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts has awarded us a grant that will allow us to serve some of the students from Central High and Holyoke High who lost their UB programs in the recent grant competition. Many of them worked very hard for several years and were relieved to find that they could continue to get UB services that will ensure that they will get to college. We have also worked very closely with DialSelf, a local youth serving agency, on their upcoming grant to develop a partnership that will hopefully give us a Corps of 12 summer AmeriCorps members in addition to a school year member. We can never have too many hands in our intensive summer program. We know working with our students will be a life changing opportunity for AmeriCorps members. We continue to look for ways to bring more resources to our students and whenever possible to serve additional students. Enjoy reading about all the interesting events our students have gone to recently, some college acceptances and several wonderful alumni updates. Special thanks to our former AmeriCorps member, Laura Traceski, for putting our newsletter together.
Social Justice Community Speaker Events

Van Jones, a former member of the White House Council on Environment Quality during President Obama’s first term in office, spoke at UMass Amherst in the fall on environmental and economic topics in his book, “Rebuilding the Dream.” Jones advocates for human rights and a clean energy economy. Among the audience were UB scholars from Franklin County, Holyoke, and Springfield. UB Scholars from Greenfield and Turners Falls high school also had the opportunity to attend another speaker, Dan Kwong, “It’s Great 2B American,” which explores the psychological disturbances Kwong experienced as an Asian American traveling through Asia. The performance explored themes of American privilege and misuse of American military force in developing Asian countries. Through exposure to performances and speakers such as these, our students learn critical thinking and analytical skills that will prepare them for the intellectual rigor they will experience in their college classes.

UB Scholars . . . “Connecting for Change”
Continued from Front Page . . .

Toure, and musicians Laura Brown-Lavoie, Ben Gamache, and Emilia Dahlin. Dahlin co-founded The Transcendence Project, which uses music as medium for building community locally and globally. The artists used their talents to foster similar missions and to deepen awareness and appreciation for nature. The artwork also inspired some of our Scholars. “As we learn something new, it is like a seed beginning to sprout,” reflected Springfield Renaissance School junior Leila Melendez after the conference. “The more it grows, the more knowledge we gain. The leaves that sprout from that one little seed are the accomplishments that allow us to keep moving forward in life and grow as a person.”

“The whole conference was moving,” said Khamauri Maitland of Holyoke High School, “but the music theme is what caught my eyes . . . it was about personal experiences, laughter, advice and compiling all of it into poetry or music.”

UB Scholars left the conference with a stronger connection to the earth, moved by the performances, and they took away new ideas on how to make social change.

Social Justice Speakers at UMass Amherst

Above left: Van Jones; Above right: Dan Kwong

Winter 2013

THE UB SCHOLAR’S DIGEST
**College and Career Exploration**

**UB CSI’s at Bay Path College**

On January 29th, several of our UB scholars from Springfield and Holyoke participated in a women’s-only career day at Bay Path College, “Forensics Night: From the Crime Scene to the Courtroom.” “I really enjoyed it. I learned a lot, and [it] made me want to get into forensics even more then before,” said Briana Brennan, a junior from Holyoke High School. NMH UB Scholars joined other young women from the surrounding area to participate in lectures and workshops offered by an FBI agent, cyber crime specialist, crime scene responder, clinical psychologist, and DNA specialist. The workshop leaders used the first death penalty case in Connecticut as an example of how such a crime would be investigated by each professional.

**Arts**

**LIVE! Ladysmith Black Mambazo**

On Jan. 30th, four lucky UB scholars had the privilege of seeing Ladysmith Black Mambazo perform live at Umass Amherst Fine Arts Center. Ladysmith Black Mambazo is an internationally renowned South African a cappella singing group who uniquely combines native South African and gospel music. They sang for peace between peoples during apartheid in South Africa. They made an album with Paul Simon in 1985, and later performed with Stevie Wonder, Dolly Parton, Josh Groban and other famous musicians. “It was a truly entertaining and peaceful event,” said sophomore Anthony Gonzalez of Holyoke High. “Also, they have a very inspiring message of world peace.” Thanks to the Angel Ticket Program of Umass Amherst Fine Arts Center that provides Upward Bound and other nonprofit organizations with free tickets to culturally engaging events that participants otherwise may not have access to. Our students really enjoyed the event!
On November 3rd, NMH Upward Bound celebrated 45 years of excellence in educational opportunity services. Over 150 people gathered at the Waterfront Tavern in Holyoke to share food, stories, music, and a deep community commitment to increasing access to higher education. Our new head of school, Peter Fay-roian, spoke about his enthusiasm for the UB mission. He shared his own roots teaching for a UB program at Cranbrook School as well as the history of the program from its early days. State Representative Denise Andrews spoke and was recognized for her commitment to increasing educational opportunity in our region. Six alumni were honored for their outstanding successes and service to the program; Amy Partelow Stahlberg, Holyoke, 2002, Joshua Garcia, Holyoke 2004, Keeshaw White, Springfield, 1997, Tavares Brewington, Turner’s Falls, 1996, Alex Morse, Holyoke, 2007 and Danielle Brown, Turners Falls, 2001. All of these alumni and many more who came that evening demonstrated great commitment to their college goals, persistence in the face of many obstacles and a passion for excellence in their fields. Alumni from classes as far back as the mid 90’s came to catch up with old friends and to reconnect to a program that changed the course of their lives. School personnel, former staff, college and community partners joined us in celebrating the successes of the program. UB parents, alumni volunteers and staff worked very hard getting the word out, setting up, cooking, decorating, soliciting silent auction donations and running the auction. It was the most successful fundraiser our parents have ever completed. Special thanks to everyone who made our 45th a great success. We are looking forward to another very special celebration when we reach our 50th in 2017!
Senior Spotlight: Highlighting outstanding UB Scholars

Vinicius Barreiros

Hometown: Springfield, MA
Applying to: Westfield State University, UMass Dartmouth, Fitchburg State University, Bridgewater State University, UMass Amherst, Framingham State University, Roger Williams University, Springfield Technical College, Ithaca College

What would you like to major in? Sports Management, and/or Business Management, . . . Some people say I should go into Law, so maybe Pre-Law.

What is your favorite part of the college process? I liked visiting colleges and trying to see if I can picture myself at each place.

What have you found most challenging about applying to colleges? Just trying to keep up with the deadlines for college application documents has been very challenging.

What about Upward Bound has been most helpful for you? UB has helped me keep my applications and materials organized, and they help me stay on top of my school work.

Do you have any advice for next years’ seniors? Apply for scholarships as much as you can and don’t procrastinate on this.

What do you look forward to most about the winter? I don’t really like the winter, but I do love snow days.

Springfield Renaissance School

College Acceptances so far? Univ. of New Hampshire

What would you like to major in at college? Environmental Engineering

What is your favorite part of the college process? I really like going and seeing all the different colleges. It’s cool to see what each of the colleges has to offer and compare them.

What have you found most challenging about applying to colleges? The challenges haven’t really been in applying. The hardest part has been really deciding what I want to do, trying to decide what I want to major in.

What about Upward Bound has been most helpful for you? They walk me through step by step in what to look for in a college and what to do or what we will need to apply. Before Upward Bound I didn’t really know much of anything about college.

Do you have any advice for next years’ Seniors? Make sure you stay on top of all your work. You may think its okay to put off something for a little bit, but it’ll just pile up. Practice your UB Senior Presentation a lot.

What do you look forward to most about the winter? I want to snowboard!

Turners Falls High School

Alex Interlande

Hometown: Turners Falls, MA
Applying to: Fitchburg State University, Framingham State University, UMass Lowell, UMass Amherst, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, University of Vermont, University of New Hampshire, Assumption College, Hampshire College

What would you like to major in at college? Environmental Engineering

What is your favorite part of the college process? I really like going and seeing all the different colleges. It’s cool to see what each of the colleges has to offer and compare them.

What have you found most challenging about applying to colleges? The challenges haven’t really been in applying. The hardest part has been really deciding what I want to do, trying to decide what I want to major in.

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Do you have any advice for next years’ Seniors? Make sure you stay on top of all your work. You may think its okay to put off something for a little bit, but it’ll just pile up. Practice your UB Senior Presentation a lot.

What do you look forward to most about the winter? I want to snowboard!

Horatio Alger Scholarhip Recipient!

UB Senior Jocelyn Adorno from Greenfield, MA is a proud recipient of the 2013 Horatio Alger Scholarship. The Horatio Alger Association emphasizes the ability for students to accomplish their version of the American Dream despite adversities. Scholarship recipients must demonstrate integrity and relentless perseverance. Adorno is one of only ten recipients selected from the entire state. Congratulations Jocelyn!
Kiara Fernandez

Hometown: Holyoke, MA
Applying to:
Westfield State University,
Worcester State University,
UMASS Dartmouth,
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts,
Framingham State University,
Elms College,
Clark University

College Acceptances so far?
Elms College

What would you like to major in at college?
Chemistry

What is your favorite part of the college process?
Visiting different colleges to see the campuses and all the programs and activities they do for the students.

What have you found most challenging about applying to colleges?
The interviews are a little challenging for me because I’m so shy, but over all it hasn’t been very difficult.

What about Upward Bound has been most helpful for you?
UB guides me through the college process, helps me be responsible with my work and time. It also helps me grow academically and socially.

Do you have any advice for next year’s seniors?
I would say that since senior year goes by very quickly, they should be very hard working and take advantage of all the scholarships offered to them.

College acceptances so far... More to Come!

Jocelyn Adorno: Salem State Univ.
Elani Balis: Providence College, Wheaton College, Colby-Sawyer College
Ashley Brown: UMASS Dartmouth, American International College, University of Hartford
Meredith Brown: Worcester State Univ
Katherine Casado: American International College, Fairfield University, UMASS Lowell, Simmons College
Tyree Dennis: Nichols College, American International College, Becker College,
Jhonatan Escobar: Western New England University, University of New Hampshire
Kiara Fernandez: Elms College, MCLA
Alex Interlande: University of New Hampshire
Chad Lawson: Nichols College, Fitchburg State University, UMASS Dartmouth, Lasell College
Aliona Olaru: UMASS Amherst, Providence College, Wheaton College, University of New Hampshire
Rahul Malik: DePauw University, Beloit College, UMASS Amherst, Wheaton College
Christopher Pou: Bridgewater State University
Alexis Rodriguez: Elms College, University of New Haven
Chelsey Mattis: School of Visual Arts, New England Institute of Art
Sade Smith: UMASS Dartmouth
Mabel Tejada: University of New Haven, Southern New Hampshire University, Roger Williams University, American International College, Bay Path College, College of Saint Rose
Franshesca Torres: Bay Path College, Utica College, Western New England University, Westfield State University

UB Senior makes 1st Selection Round for Elks National Foundation Scholarship

UB Senior Elani Balis applied for a Most Valued Student Scholarship from the Elks National Foundation in the Fall, so she was pleasantly surprised when she received a letter in the mail a few weeks ago from the selection committee stating that she made it into the second consideration round. Only 500 Most Valued Student Scholarships are awarded nation-wide each year to college-bound high school seniors demonstrating financial need, leadership, and scholarship. “I want to go to college because my parents didn’t have the opportunity to go to college,” says Balis, “and I want them to be able to live their dream through me.” The winning recipients will not be selected until early March. Congratulations Elani, and good luck!
Alumni Spotlight: “The Iron Lady”

Keesha White, a proud NMH UB Alum, recently returned from West Africa where she set up a health and mental health clinic for the refugees from Cote D'Ivoire currently living at the PTP Refugee Camp in Grand Gedeh County, Liberia. White retells the experience she had working with these refugees, and her response to being referred to by them as “The Iron Lady.”

"Liberians called PTP camp, "The place behind God's back," because it was so far away. The camp is way beneath poverty, where no electricity grids are laid and no indoor plumbing installed, where people eat what they grow in front of their tents and bathe with water they carry on their heads from the well, pump, or river in the jungle thick bush. In the camp where monthly rations of corn meal and vegetable oil, rice and a small bag of sugar. Where everyone suffered the humiliation of losing their entire known lives at the hand of rebel soldiers. Even these resilient human beings had the unbelievable ability to see strength in someone else. I wanted to hold every one of them and say, "You ran for your lives when the rebels sprayed your homes with gunfire and burned down your homes in the middle of night with no warning. You survived the trauma of repeated violations, torture, isolation, loss, separation and displacement. For sure you are the ones made of iron. You survived and you live and love and laugh and trust everyday. Surely you are superhuman!"

Honestly, I have never heard laughter like the laughter of the PTP Camp, dancing and singing with drums and palm leaves. . . . I have never felt joy like the joy at a camp soccer game, where children run with no shoes and score goals and are carried off of the field on the shoulders of teammates into rows and rows of tents in heartfelt celebration sharing the news of the win. The people of PTP camp made lives out of ashes and tears, they made memories out of palm leaves and shredded rice bags, these people made life full, rich and abundant in a place forgotten by most of the world.

Amongst these great people, I was known as the Iron Lady because, as they put it, "you are tough as iron nails." Me, I still blink in utter disbelief. "The Iron Lady" Imagine that. The residents of PTP Refugee Camp in Grand Gedeh County, Liberia West Africa looked at me and saw strength, determination and power. Their ability to see beyond their circumstances and see the love and sincerity in a visitor trying to make a difference, speaks to the depth of their profound humanity. I am forever grateful to have met them, served them and loved them and I am forever honored by the namesake I inherited in Liberia from the generous refugees from Cote D'Ivoire.

Women cheering at the Dream Exhibition while sitting at one corner of the canteen in PTP Camp
Alumni Spotlight: Highlighting Outstanding UB

Yusuf Hamdan
Springfield School of Science and Technology, UMass Amherst, UMass Boston, Teach Next Year

I am currently working on my Masters of Education through the Teach Next Year Program and Boston Teacher Residency Partnership housed at UMass Boston. I teach U.S. History II to 10th graders and World History II to 11th/12th graders at Tech Boston Academy in the Codman Square neighborhood of Dorchester in Boston. I also co-teach a Special Needs US History II class and an English-language-learner section of World History II. I do all of this while taking graduate courses in the evening so that by the end of the year I will have a year of full-time teaching experience under my belt and a Masters degree in Education, certification in Special Needs, and certification in ELL.

To be fair, I dropped out/failed out of college my freshman year and worked 55 hours a week in restaurants for another year. I then enrolled at Springfield Technical Community College and worked my way through and graduated from their Commonwealth Honors Program. I then transferred to Umass Amherst where I graduated last year Cum Laude with a History degree. I applied to graduate school for a masters in education and was accepted to: Teachers College at Columbia University, Emory University, and Teach Next Year at Umass Boston. I received the most funding and a guaranteed job in Boston Public Schools from the Teach Next Year program so that is why I am where I am now!

Class Notes from UB Alumni

Sam Lawson, Holyoke High, 2012: Bennington College Geology major

So my first semester in college went very well. I adjusted nicely, and I definitely choose the right school for me! I am becoming immersed in environmental studies, and I am studying Chinese. I am involved in the Bennington Sustainable Food Project, Interfaith Group, and I work at the athletic department. Now I am living in Boston and interning at the Boston Mayor’s Office of New Urban Mechanics. My job is to help implement community design projects created by grad students from the Design School and Kennedy Government School at Harvard University. I got this internship because an internship is required all four years at Bennington, and this was a job I applied for through the school. Often schools have connections such as this that students can take advantage of.

Thalia DeLaRosa, Holyoke High, 2012 UMass Dartmouth

Thalia had a challenging transition during her first semester. Being far from home and figuring out her financial aid were difficult. However, she worked hard, figured it out and achieved a 3.5 GPA for her first semester! Because of her high GPA she was awarded a scholarship from the College Now program for $3,000 and won’t have to worry about paying anything next semester!
Path has had an enormous impact on my life because no matter where I go, I see people that want to help me. The professors are always willing to help me inside and outside of the classroom. As a result, I was able to make dean’s list last semester. Outside of academics, I found a nutritionist on campus that was able to help me lose thirty pounds, dropping six pants size since high school.

Not only do I go to school, but I work three part-time jobs, one of which is at Upward Bound as a Tutor. Tutoring at Upward Bound gives me a feeling of pride because I am able to help a program that has done so much for me in High School. I am able to relate to students because we come from similar backgrounds, we are the first in our families to go to college. I know without the help of Upward Bound, I would not be where I am right now.
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.

Upward Bound Staff
Gisele Litalien, Director
Sharon Gralnick, Assistant Dir., Franklin County Academic Advisor
Breyana Roman, Springfield Academic Advisor
Anna Rigali, Holyoke Academic Advisor

Striving for the future, each and every day!

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