

Program Message

During the month of February this country reflects on the tremendous contributions of so many great men and women who have done their parts in making this country what it is today. As alumni of the Meyerhoff Scholars Program you are today's and tomorrow's leaders in science, technology, and engineering related fields in this high-tech global world. What will be your legacy? What sort of impact would you like to make in your life and in the lives of those around you?

During this month it is essential to remember the shoulders on which you stand. The notable efforts of: Benjamin Banneker, Rebecca Cole, Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, George Washington Carver, Archibald Alexander, Lewis Howard Latimer, Madame C.J. Walker, Frederick Drew Gregory, and numerous others, have opened the doors and paved the way for future minority doctors, scientists, teachers, computer scientists and engineers. The contributions of these African Americans are remarkable considering their extraordinary social limitations.

We have entered a new decade in a new millennium, and unlike these historical trailblazers you exist in a thriving global society where your service and contributions are limitless. So as we look back and reflect on the contributors of our past, be aware of your own role as leaders and what your legacy will be.

How are you making a difference? Let me know about your trailblazing efforts.

Earnestine B. Baker

Officer's Corner

Meyerhoff Alumni Board President, Raymond Onley (M4), welcomes you to the first edition of the newsletter by sharing his thoughts on giving back:

I recently took a road trip to Boston for a meeting and had a long time to think about the past. So many of my best memories involve college and the Meyerhoff program. As with anything, there were both good times and bad, but as I really thought about that time in my life I thought about how many people took an interest in my future.

It all started with the call from Dr. Hrabowski telling my mother that I had gotten a scholarship - literally the answer to her prayers. Then I met so many positive young people that just so happened to look and act a lot like me, something I really didn't see much in my neighborhood. And once I actually got to school, Mrs. Baker and Lamont watching out for me and making sure I was on the "straight and narrow."

Given that so many people took such an interest in my future, I now feel it is my duty and responsibility to give back. Many times in my life I have heard, "To whom much is given, much is expected." Now that I am a little older, I start to truly understand what it means and that it is my turn to watch out for those coming after me.

On the next page you will see information about the Cohort Giving Challenge. As you look back on your experience at UMBC and in the Meyerhoff Program, give some serious thought as to how you can give back to the program. I hope that you will join me by giving back each year as a way of being thankful for what was given to us all.

Stay connected...

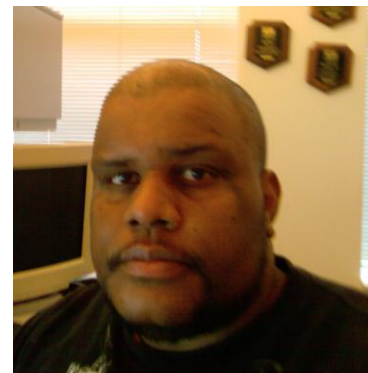
Facebook: Meyerhoff Scholarship Alumni
Linkedin: Meyerhoff Alumni, UMBC
Google Groups: Meyerhoff Alumni, UMBC
Website: www.umbc.edu/meyerhoff/alumni

Newsletter brought to you by the Communications Committee.

Editor – Stephanie Bates
Assistant Editor – Kamili Jackson
Staff - Tiffani Bright and Vondell Coleman

Questions, comments and corrections can be addressed to the staff at maabcomm@gmail.com.

NEXT ISSUE: May 2010



Meyerhoff Alumni Board President, Raymond Onley

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- M15 – Candace Mainor
- M16 – Shayla Shorter
- M17 – Latey Jones
- M18 – **Vacant – Representative Needed!**
- Graduate Fellow – Joe Washington

Committee News

The Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board has created several new committees. This newsletter is being brought to you by the Communications Committee. The committee is also responsible for maintaining the information on the alumni advisory board section of the alumni website as well as general alumni communications. Current members of the committee are Kamili Jackson, chair, Tiffani Bright, vice-chair, and members Stephanie Bates and Vondell Coleman. You can send your news to the communications committee (maabcomm@gmail.com) at any time.

The Cohort Giving Challenge



THE HISTORY: In 2006, around the time of the planning of the 20th Anniversary of the Meyerhoff Program, a group of Meyerhoff alumni conceived of the Cohort Giving Challenge as a way to raise funds for the program. These alumni hoped to remind fellow alums of the unique nature of the Meyerhoff Program and the pride of being a part of a cohort. The idea was to encourage each of us to establish a habit of yearly giving to the program. The ultimate goal is to have 100% of Meyerhoff alumni giving back to the program.

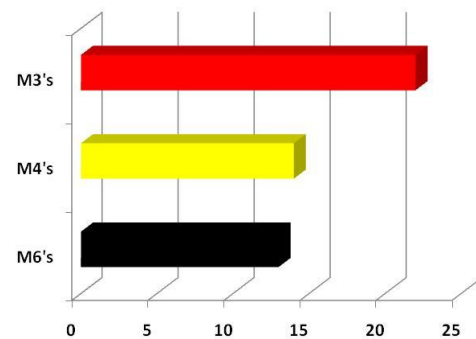
THE REWARD: Bragging rights and your cohorts name on the plaque in the Meyerhoff office is the reward. However, the real prize is the satisfaction of giving back to the program that has given us all so much.

THE RULES: The contest is won by cohort that has the largest percentage of members of giving that year, NOT the largest amount of money raised. For example, if every member of a cohort each contributes \$5 they will most likely win. The contest starts and ends with the UMBC fiscal year: **JULY 1 to JUNE 30**

THE RESULTS:

2007/2008 – M1's with 38% of the cohort giving
2008/2009 – M6's with 36% of the cohort giving

2009/2010 Challenge Results as of Feb. 15, 2010
(Percent of Cohort Giving)



WHICH COHORT WILL WIN THIS YEAR??

It's entirely up to you!!

DO IT TODAY!!! [click here to give](#)

**LET THIS BE THE YEAR YOU
START A YEARLY GIVING HABIT.**

Alumni On The Move

Meyerhoffs are going places and reaching new heights in their careers! Let's see what some of the Meyerhoffs have accomplished recently.

Lekelia "Kiki" Jenkins (M5) was recently selected as one of only twelve scholars worldwide to attend the "Workshop for the Next Generation of Science and Technology Policy Leaders." This workshop will be held in May at Arizona State University as part of the Conference on the Rightful Place of Science.

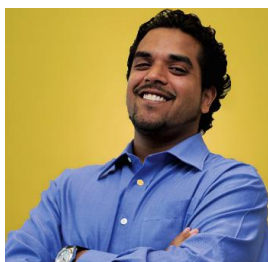
In January 2009, Kevin Beck (M10) successfully defended his dissertation at UC Irvine and earned his Ph.D. He is recently published in *Brain*: "[Quantitative analysis of cellular inflammation after traumatic spinal cord injury: evidence for a multiphasic inflammatory response in the acute to chronic environment.](#)"

In the summer of 2009, Maryann Salib (M15) was published as 2nd author on a paper in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry* entitled "Hyperglycemia regulates RUNX2 activation and cellular wound healing through the aldose reductase polyol pathway."

Regina Macatangay (M8) completed a Pediatrics residency at the University of Maryland Hospital for Children in June 2009. She is currently doing a chief resident year and in July 2010, will start a fellowship in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at Memorial Sloan-Kettering in New York City.

Nefertiti (Harmon) Durant (M4) was busy in 2009 with three papers related to childhood obesity. One of these is: "Relation of school environment and policy to adolescent physical activity" by Durant, N., Harris, S.K., Doyle, S., Person, S., Saelens, B.E., Kerr, J., Norman, G.J., Sallis, J.F. in the *Journal of School Health*.

Anik Singal (M13, pictured right) is now CEO of Lurn, Inc and was recently featured in [BusinessWeek](#) as a top entrepreneur under 25. Lurn, Inc provides a range of e-learning products and services.



Mela Johnson (M13) recently completed her Ph.D., which she defended on December 14, 2009, in Bioengineering at Georgia Institute of Technology.

We appreciate all the emails we received. We found everyone's news worthy of inclusion but we ran out of space! Your news could appear in subsequent issues!!

We Are Family

Not only are Meyerhoffs making strides in the workplace but also in their personal lives.

On February 14, 2009 Orlando Yarborough (M11) married Rashele (Cross) Yarborough. Rashele and Orlando are both students at Yale University.

Dr. Kellie McCants-Price (M2) and her husband Kemit Price welcomed a beautiful baby girl, Kenya, into their family on March 19, 2009.

Maya Matheny (M11), M.D./Ph.D. candidate at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, gave birth to son Ryan on October 25, 2009.

Torria Ellis (M4) married Alexander Dugar on November 14, 2009. Kamili Jackson (M4) was in attendance as a bridesmaid in addition to Grace Ann (Olayinka) Fasaye (M4). The happy couple resides in Atlanta, GA.

Felicia (Boone) Sanders (M4) is currently a General Manager for International Paper in Spartanburg, SC. She and her husband, Dr. Dale Sanders, reside in Greenville, SC where they are actively involved in the ministry at the Valley Brook Outreach Baptist Church. They were blessed in 2009 with the birth of their daughter, Karrington Sanders.

Stephanie Bates (M4) and Andre Lewis Jones (M5) are appearing in a nationwide commercial for the Susan G. Komen 3 Day for a Cure. Both will be participating again this year in the walk in Seattle, WA and always appreciate donations.

Candice Jones (M11) is getting married on April 17, 2010 to Mr. Carlson Cox in Ellicott City, MD.

The newest additions to Tyi McCray's (M13) house are two adopted bundles of joy: Zoe (a poodle) and Chopper (a Bichon -Frise). Tyi says that one dog is white and one is black to embrace the spirit diversity at UMBC. The three of them enjoy short walks in the park a few times day.

Nguyen Nguyen (M14) spends his free time from studying for his Ph.D. at JHU as the president of the Viet Nam Medical Assistance Program (VNMAP) www.vnmap.org. VNMAP focuses on providing medical care and medical education for the Vietnamese population in the US and Viet Nam.

FEATURED TRAILBLAZER: One Meyerhoff's Recent Experience in Haiti

Below is the majority of a letter sent by Dr. Letitia Thompson Dzirasa (M11), a pediatrician, about her recent experience in Haiti. She was among the earliest doctors to reach Haiti after the earthquake.



**Dr. Letitia "Tish"
Thompson Dzirasa (M11)**

My experience there was like none other. I saw and learned so much about the human spirit as well as medicine. I worked outside in two field tents on the UN ground which is right outside the airport. There were armed guards from every country pretty much everywhere. My responsibilities included helping to take care of all the medical needs of all children 16 years and younger. However at times we were so busy I was called on to take care of adults. I was telling someone that taking care of adults was actually probably the scariest part for me because it isn't something I ever do. We averaged about 30-40 pediatric inpatients on our census, not to mention walk ins that were never admitted. As a pediatrician there, I acted as a pharmacist (mixing medications and preparing drips), a nurse (placing IV's and hanging fluids/meds and dressing wounds) and a pediatrician (making medical management decisions) because of how little resources we had. We worked 18-20 hour days everyday and slept on the floor when we could. I've run a half marathon and my feet didn't hurt after that the way they hurt every day I was there. We ate peanut butter a lot and power bars or whatever we could find. This is what we called the "Haitian diet", little food and lots of dehydration. We had maybe 4 real meals our entire time there. Showering was also a luxury but I managed to make it to the outside shower stalls twice during my 6 days there. Although to be honest, in the heat, my shower was for not after about 2 hours.

The patients were the ones who were truly amazing. The conditions for patients were the worst I have ever seen and they suffered so much. They deserve all the credit for just surviving in a country that has been forgotten for so long. They spoke mostly Creole which created a huge language barrier but we did get help from some of the Haitian nurses and interpreters and I don't believe the language barrier hindered our care.

The patients were lined up in military style cots in these tents exposed to outside. They had to bathe outside in front of everyone and use the bathroom on a bedpan in their cot. They received help changing their bedpan from a friend or a friend of a neighbor and disposed of their waste behind the tents. They didn't receive regular meals, only what the family might bring in. Luckily, the tents were moving on the day of my departure so hopefully the sanitation is much improved now.

Most of our patients were those who had suffered what we call crush injuries and/or fractures. A crush injury is when an extremity is basically crushed in their case by a piece of rubble or debris. The muscle starts to release toxins into the blood stream that if they build up can be fatal to the body. Sometimes the crush injury can be minor and just requires close monitoring and lots of IV fluids, other times it can lead to amputation in order to save the person's life or even death secondary to sepsis if not amputated in time. We also saw a ton of presumed fractures as we had no x-rays to confirm this. We also saw a ton of burns. The amputations performed were under local anesthesia so you could hear the screams of the patients when their limb was being removed. Our sickest patients usually got transferred either to the Israeli medical camp or to the University of Miami Children's hospital.

Of all our patients, about 7 were orphans with minor to major injuries. There were also many children who only had an uncle or a sister left to take care of them. Some of these children had lost their entire family while others were orphans before the quake. In the cases in which there was a child without any adult, someone nearby would help to feed them even though they too had nothing. We took one of the orphan girls for a shower and you would have thought she won the lottery. These children were so grateful for the little they had.

Leaving Haiti for me was truly bittersweet. On the one hand I was and still am exhausted by the long days but on the other hand these patients will need so much help for so long. I wish I could continue to be a part of their care and know their outcomes. I ask that you continue to be in prayer for the people of Haiti as they will need help for a long time coming. I hope to return soon and continue to help.

See photos from Tish's trip, ask questions and learn more with this [Facebook link](#).

Upcoming Events:

In support of Haitian Relief the Service Committee will be selling t-shirts at the end of the month for the price of \$20 with half of the proceeds being donated to WorldVision. We encourage all of you to participate and to buy t-shirts for friends and families. Once we finalize the logistics of collecting the funds and shipping the t-shirts we will post the details on the Meyerhoff listserv, Facebook and the Google group. Stay tuned for details.