

# Newsletter

MEYERHOFF PARENTS ASSOCIATION

## BALANCING FUN AND FOCUS



The 2024 Summer Stress Buster provided students with a much-needed break from the rigorous routines of academic life, offering them the chance to *relax*, *recharge*, and *reconnect* with friends before diving back into their studies. Whether they were bending low for a game of limbo, decorating flip-flops for the upcoming semester, or enjoying a snack after a round of balloon toss, everyone found this break refreshing. It could only happen with the help of dedicated parent volunteers, your generous donations, and assistance from the Meyerhoff Program Office staff and MPA members. We thank everyone who worked so hard to make this event a success!



FEBRUARY 2025



## Newsletter Highlights

**Balancing Fun and Focus**

**2024 Summer Bridge  
Stress Buster**

**2024 Meyerhoff Fall Town  
Hall and Scholars  
Research Exhibition**

**2024 Research Exhibition**

**Thank You Research  
Exhibition Presenters**

**Congratulations to Our  
Newly Elected MPA Board**

**MPA Supports Scholars**

**Spotlight on Scholars'  
International Achievements**

**2024 International  
Zebrafish Conference  
(IZFC)**

**2024 Meyerhoff  
Fall Retreat**

**2024 Fall Stress Buster**

**Thank You for Your  
Support**

**Save the Date**

**Your Support Makes a  
Difference**



**MEYERHOFF  
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## 2024 SUMMER BRIDGE STRESS BUSTER

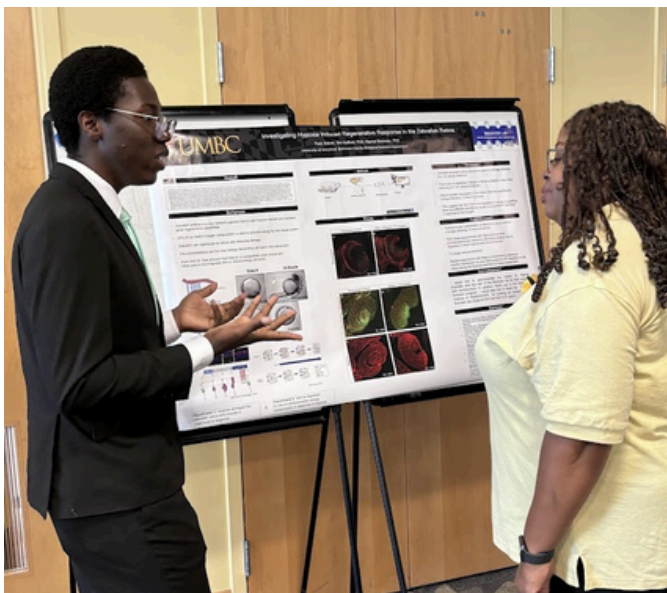
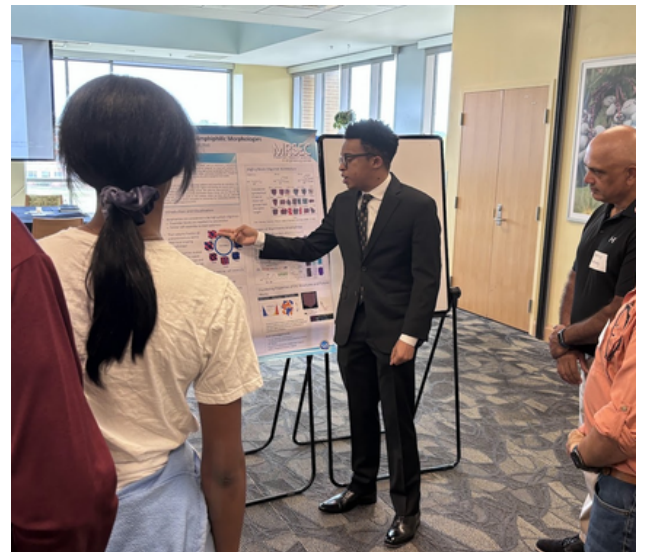
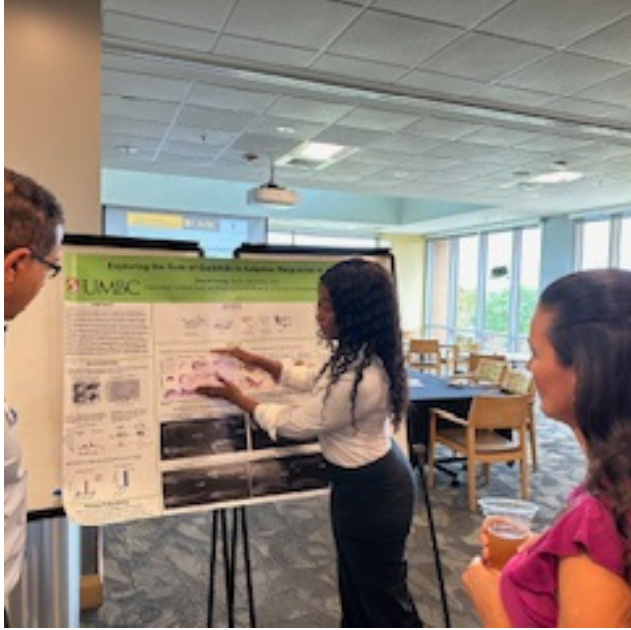


# 2024 MPA FALL TOWN HALL & MEYERHOFF SCHOLARS RESEARCH EXHIBITION

On September 21, the MPA hosted the 2024 Fall Town Hall Meeting and Meyerhoff Scholars Research Exhibition in the University Skylight Room. This event is designed to enhance engagement with fellow parents, guardians, MPA Board members, Meyerhoff Program Staff, and guests. This year's program featured a review of MPA activities, the election of the 2024-2025 MPA Board Officers, annual updates from the program office, the Meyerhoff Council President, and research presentations. We are so grateful for the many volunteers who made the event a success.



2024 RESEARCH EXHIBITION



## RESEARCH EXHIBITION PRESENTERS

The Annual Town Hall and Research Exhibition was a success largely to the dedication of our Scholars. We sincerely thank the presenters who contributed to the poster presentations. Those individuals include:

**Ryan Mott (M35)** - “Data Analysis of Amphiphilic Morphologies”

**Asantewaa Nyanteh (M35)** - “Microheater Arrays to Modulate Stiffness for Dynamically Tunable Friction”

**Briana Young (M33)** - “Exploring the Role of Gadd45b in Adaptive Responses to Anoxia”

**Ben Bazarsuren (M35)** - Designing Structural Members Using Bio-Inspired Design Primitives”

**Felix Rene Siewe (M33)** - “Investigating Hypoxia Induced Regenerative Response in the Zebrafish Retina”

**Gelila Isayas (M34)** - “Impact of Copper Exposure on Appl Gene-Induced Degeneration: Insights from Drosophila Melanogaster”

**Katherine Carver (M34)** - Image Exploration with Jdaviz, The James Webb Space Telescope Data Analysis and Visualization Tool”



Presenters left to right: Ryan Mott (M35), Asantewaa Nyanteh (M35), Brian Young (M33), Ben Bazarsuren (M35), Felix Siewe (M33), Gelila Isayas (M34)



# CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWLY ELECTED MPA BOARD!

We are thrilled to welcome the incoming MPA Board members and celebrate their election to lead our organization this year. Your dedication, vision, and commitment to the success of our Scholars and community are truly inspiring. We are confident that, under your guidance, the MPA will reach new heights. Thank you for stepping into these vital leadership roles—we look forward to an incredible year ahead!

## 2024-2025 MPA Board Officers

**President:** Jill Bispels (M33)

**Vice President:** Margarita Bohorquez (M35)

**Assistant Vice President:** Anthea Seymour (M35)

**Corresponding Secretary:** Yani Peyton (M34)

**Treasurer:** Tiffany Byrd (M34)

**Assistant Treasurer:** Arvind Mistry (M35)

**Editor:** Rochelle Matthews-Somerville (M33, M36)

## 2024-2025 Cohort Representatives

**M36:** Brandi Carter, Jeffrey Johnson, Candace Phillip, Lisa Ruth

**M35:** Melanie Battle, Alessandra Aloisi

**M34:** Valerie Shelton


## 2024-2025 Alumni Representatives

Darlene Brooks (**M29**), Regina Bracey (**M25**), Kenneth Dixon (**M27**), Karen Furman (**M25**), Darlene Pernell-Bunkley (**M31**), Deborah Nazon (**M25**), Sherene Maitland (**M33**), Audrey Surratt (**M8**), Alisa A Wallace (**M29**), Edie Windsor (**M13**)



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# MPA SUPPORTS SCHOLARS



The Meyerhoff Parent Association (MPA) supports the Meyerhoff Scholars Program by fostering unity among scholars past and present. If you'd like to volunteer for upcoming MPA activities or general program support, please email [umbcmpa@gmail.com](mailto:umbcmpa@gmail.com). Your involvement is valued and appreciated!



# NEWS YOU CAN USE

## SPOTLIGHT ON MEYERHOFF SCHOLARS' INTERNATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to **Gabriel Otubu**, '25, M33, Biochemistry, **Briana Young**, '25, M33, Biological Sciences, and **Ajeetha Arudchandran**, '25, M33, Bioinformatics for their outstanding representation at the *International Zebrafish Conference* in Kyoto, Japan! As the only undergraduate participants and among the few underrepresented minorities attendees, they made a significant impact on this global stage.

The conference provided an excellent opportunity to network with researchers from around the world, with attendees from Uganda to Singapore. "It was truly life-changing," shared Gabriel Otubu. Scholars gained invaluable feedback on their projects and learned advanced experimental techniques from leading experts in zebrafish research, paving the way for future advancements in their work.

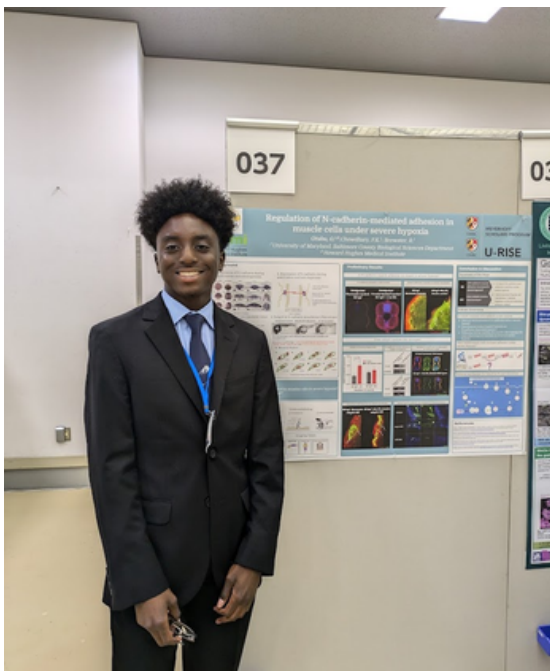
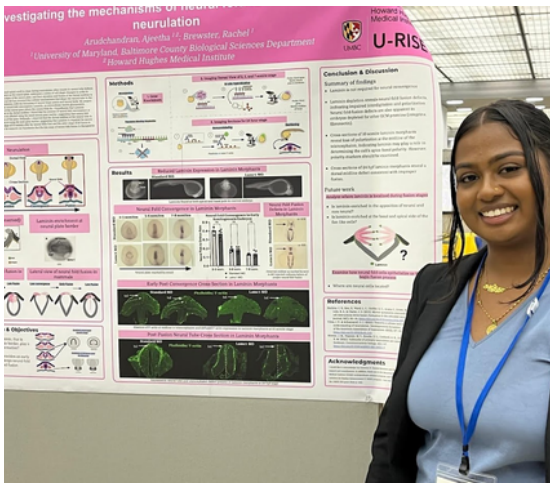
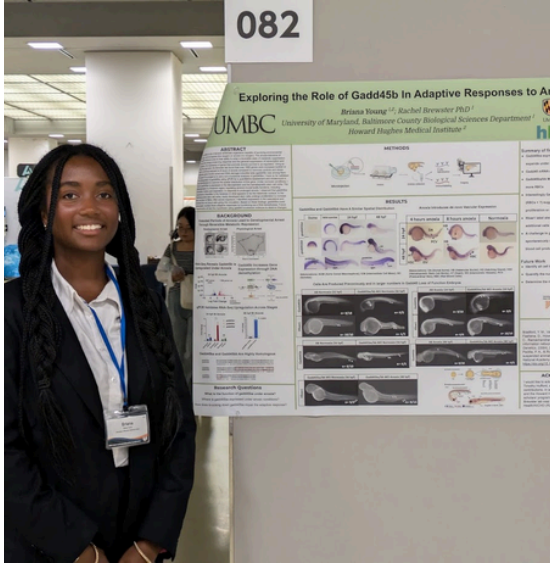


Gabriel Otubu, Briana Young and Ajeetha Arudchandran at the 18th International Zebrafish Conference in Japan

Beyond the conference, the Scholars explored the stunning cities of Kyoto, Osaka and Nara, immersing themselves in Japan's rich history and vibrant culture. The experience was both professionally and personally transformative, underscoring the power of global collaboration and culture exchange.

*"He who learns but does not think, is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger." Confucius*





## 2024 INTERNATIONAL ZEBRAFISH CONFERENCE (IZFC)

The 18th International Zebrafish Conference (IZFC) brought together scientists from around the globe to share groundbreaking research, build new collaborations, and strengthen existing partnerships. As the premier event for the zebrafish research community, it continues to set the standard for innovation and discovery.

Topics covered a wide range of cutting-edge research areas such as early development, neurobiology, organ biology, physiology, metabolism, and regeneration.

We are thrilled to celebrate the incredible contributions of three of our Scholar participants:

- **Briana Young** (M33) presented a poster on *“Exploring the Role of Gadd45b in Adaptive Responses to Anoxia.”*
- **Ajeetha Arudchandran** (M33) shared her research on *“Investigating the Mechanism of Neural Fold Formation During Neurulation.”*
- **Gabriel Otubu** (M33) showcased his research on the *“Regulation of N-cadherin-mediated Adhesion in Muscle Cells Under Severe Hypoxia.”*

Please join us in congratulating these outstanding scholars for their dedication and achievements!



**2024 MEYERHOFF  
FALL RETREAT**

On Saturday, September 7th, the Meyerhoff Fall Retreat began with a warm Welcome Back Family Meeting that reinforced Scholars' commitment to excellence. The day continued at Centennial Park with team-building activities, lively competitions, cohort challenges, and a hearty meal. Meyerhoff/U-RISE Scholars, Program Staff, alumni, board members, faculty, and special guests joined in soaking up the camaraderie and non-stop fun under the open sky all day long! This event was planned by the Meyerhoff Student Council.



# 2024 MEYERHOFF FALL RETREAT





# 2024 MEYERHOFF FALL RETREAT



# 2024 FALL RETREAT

A huge thank you to everyone who supported to make this day possible.

*Thank you*



*Individually,  
we achieve  
excellence...*

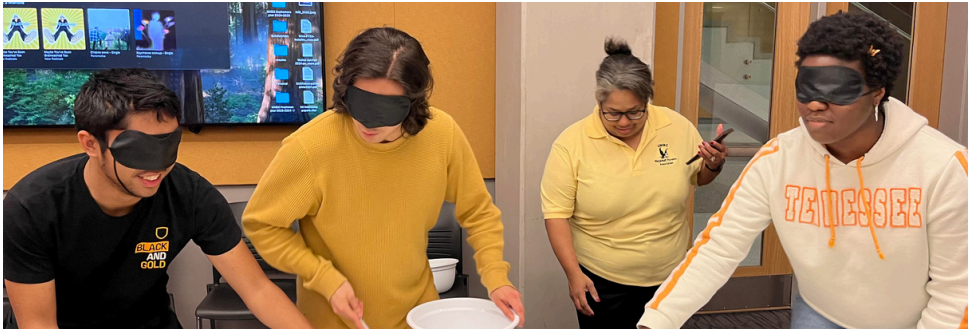


*but collectively, we redefine  
greatness!*

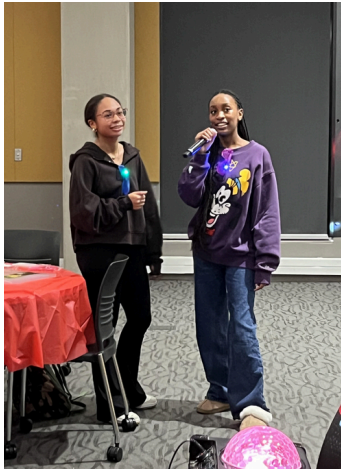


2024 Meyerhoff Scholars at Centennial Park

# 2024 FALL STRESS BUSTER



On December 10th, ILSB was the place to be! Scholars took a well-deserved break to sing, play games, and enjoy festive treats. They showed off their skills in blindfolded marshmallow challenges, got creative with holiday coloring, and indulged in a delicious nacho bar loaded with tasty toppings. To top it all off, they sipped on cozy cups of hot chocolate and warm apple cider. It was an evening of laughter and joy.

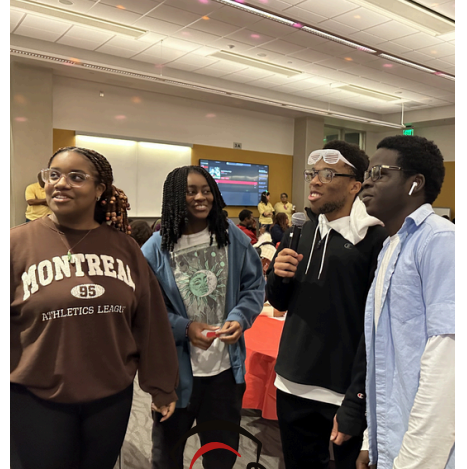


# 2024 FALL STRESS BUSTER



Wait! Did we mention that the highlight of this Stress Buster was the Scholars' *Karaoke performances* of contemporary, holiday, classic, and Broadway tunes? Scholars took the stage with courage and enthusiasm, filling the room with loud laughter, cheers, and applause as they cheered on each other. Whether they were belting out their favorite tunes or singing off-key, the camaraderie was unmatched—everyone was a star, and the support for one another made the night truly unforgettable!





# 2024 FALL STRESS BUSTER KARAOKE





# Thank You

FOR YOUR SUPPORT. . .

The MPA thanks everyone who helped plan and support this year's Stress Busters. The events were made possible through generous funding and in-kind donations from current and alumni parents and guardians. In partnership with the Meyerhoff Program Office, the MPA is proud to ensure the success of these cherished annual events. We aim to support the Meyerhoff Scholars Program by fostering a strong sense of community among Scholars and their families. To continue offering meaningful programs like this, we invite you to consider making an annual, one-time, or recurring [gift](#). We believe that nourishing the body and spirit is as essential as nourishing the mind.

All contributions will be managed by the UMBC Foundation, Inc., for the benefit of UMBC.



## CALL for VOLUNTEERS

If you are interested in volunteering to support any of the upcoming MPA activities, please contact the MPA at [umbcmpa@gmail.com](mailto:umbcmpa@gmail.com). Your support is important and always welcome!



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# SAVE THE DATE

*Spring*

## STRESS BUSTER

**Did you know?** Every Fall and Spring, the MPA hosts a **Stress Buster** event for the Scholars the week before finals!

This Spring, the **Stress Buster** is set for:  
**Tuesday, May 13, 2025.**

This special event is about fun, food, games, and relaxation, giving our hardworking Scholars the chance to decompress and recharge before tackling their finals.

**VOLUNTEERS & DONATIONS  
ALWAYS NEEDED**

If interested, complete the [MPA Contact form](#) or email us at [umbcmpa@gmail.com](mailto:umbcmpa@gmail.com) with the subject line **STRESS BUSTER** to join the fun.



***Calling Freshman Parents***  
*Introducing the new MPA Ambassador Initiative!*  
*Seasoned MPA leaders will connect with parents and guardians of Freshman (M36) Scholars to share experiences, answer questions, and highlight opportunities. Freshman parents- please complete the [MPA Contact form](#) to join this exciting effort.*

# YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

## MEYERHOFF SCHOLARS PROGRAM

UMBC's Meyerhoff Scholars Program, which was established in 1989, has supported more than 1,750 scholars in the STEM fields. With the numbers growing and the goal of increasing diversity amongst future leaders, the success of the program is built upon the support of family and friends who understand the value of the program.



### Make an Annual Gift

You may make an annual gift to the UMBC Foundation to benefit the MPA via check, postal mail or [online](#).



Show your MPA Pride  
[order a polo shirt!](#)

### Volunteer Your Time

If you are interested in volunteering to support any of the upcoming MPA-sponsored activities or the Meyerhoff Program in any way, please send an email to out to [umbcmpa@gmail.com](mailto:umbcmpa@gmail.com) with the title *VOLUNTEER*.



All funds raised will be administered by the UMBC Foundation, Inc., for the benefit of UMBC.