

THE COLLEGEBOUND CONNECTOR

NEWSLETTER

CASSIE MOTZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings from the CollegeBound Team. I am thrilled to share that this fall we have returned to in-person advising in 21 Baltimore City public high schools and our headquarters team has moved into our new space at Miller's Court in the Remington neighborhood of Baltimore City. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, CollegeBound is expanding our reach. We have full-time advisors in four additional high schools this year, including Baltimore City's new virtual high school. Our College Completion Program continues to grow, reaching 268 current college scholars across 24 college campuses. Of the first cohort of students in the program (all Baltimore City Schools' graduates), 82% have graduated from college within 4 years or are on track to graduate.

With COVID-19 safety protocols at the forefront of planning, the team has creatively coordinated in-person events, including meet-and-greets for College Completion Program participants across multiple college campuses and college bus tours for high school students. The program team adeptly coordinated 15 college fairs in Baltimore City high school gyms and cafeterias in November. Events designed to support students and families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and college applications have been a top priority for our CollegeBound advisors; please check out our social media sites for photos of recent CollegeBound happenings.

Looking ahead, we are excited to see connections made through CareerBound, CollegeBound's virtual career and internship series that links college scholars and alumni with paid summer job and internship opportunities offered by Baltimore-area businesses and organizations. The College Completion Program's Winter Workshop for our college scholars will take place in early January to allow scholars to reconnect, recharge, and renew their focus for the upcoming semester. If you're interested in volunteering with us, current opportunities are listed on page 2 of this newsletter. On behalf of the CollegeBound team, thank you for your continued support of Baltimore City public school students and graduates, now and always.

The 2021-2022 CollegeBound team
at our all-staff event in August 2021

CONTINUED COLLEGE SUCCESS THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

CollegeBound advisor Mr. LaNore
with scholars on a recent college visit to
Hood College

From the moment that students received notification to collect their belongings and leave campus in March 2020, life has been full of adaptations for CollegeBound's college scholars. Online courses were challenging to navigate, technology needs arose, and unexpected expenses developed. One of the ways CollegeBound has offset the challenges created by the pandemic is the CollegeBound Emergency Fund, which has approved 100 requests totaling \$37,292 to assist scholars with unforeseen expenses. Another was the creation of the CollegeBound Finishers' Fund, made possible by donations received on Giving Tuesday 2020. The Finishers' Fund was developed with the goal of supporting upperclassmen who experience a loss in scholarships or grants. The Finishers' Fund also supports "near completers," students who are not currently enrolled, but need a year or fewer of credits to earn a college degree. Of the \$19,511 raised for the Finishers' Fund through the 2020 Giving Tuesday Campaign, the College Success Team has awarded \$16,800 to 8 students with an average award of \$2,100.

As noted above, 82% of the first College Completion Program cohort (started Fall '17), all Baltimore City Schools' graduates, graduated from college within 4 years or are on track to graduate. "There's no way around it; the past year-and-a-half has stretched us beyond our limits and yet we are still here, smiling, and more dedicated to the mission of helping City Schools' students to and through college than ever," Director of College Success Jennifer Covahey stated. "Many of our scholars continue to face hurdles beyond the usual challenges that come with being first-generation college-goers. My team and I see our role as being, first and foremost, available to scholars and nimble enough to tackle any issues sensitively and effectively."

SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT: MICHAEL AMES

Baltimore Polytechnic Institute '17 Frostburg State University '22



Michael Ames is a current College Completion Program scholar and Frostburg State University senior pursuing a degree in materials engineering with a minor in mathematics. Michael has excelled in his studies and embraced the extracurricular opportunities at Frostburg, including the National Society of Black Engineers, of which he serves as chapter president. Through the 2020 CareerBound virtual series, he was connected to a paid summer internship at Geo-Technology Associates, Inc. Michael shared that "the internship [at GTA] gave me the experience and knowledge I needed to further my career as a college student and professional." We are excited to witness Michael's professional journey unfold when he graduates this spring.

For more information about the 2021-22 CareerBound virtual series, please visit <https://www.collegeboundfoundation.org/2021-22-career-and-internship-series>.

THE RETURN OF IN-PERSON ADVISING IN HIGH SCHOOLS

While many students returned to schools last spring, CollegeBound - as an outside contractor - continued to support students virtually throughout the entire academic year. This past August, CollegeBound's College Access Program Specialists (CAPS) were able to return to their high schools to provide in-person advising support.

Nationally, 62% of 2021 high school graduates stayed the course of their original college plans after high school, compared to 74% of 2020 high school graduates, according to a survey conducted by the EdWeek Research Center. The challenge is to reverse the trend for the Class of 2022.



FAFSA event at Forest Park High School

CAPS, in collaboration with school counselors, have found success in helping seniors return to a sense of what is normal, while navigating the complexities of the college and financial aid processes. CAPS are finding the right balance of encouraging students to complete college applications despite limited opportunities to attend college tours or meet college representatives face-to-face. Through the end of October, CAPS have enabled over 1,400 seniors to meet college representatives from 57 colleges face-to-face. Over the course of two weeks in November, 15 high schools hosted college fairs with an average of 17 colleges, universities, scholarship providers and other postsecondary representatives in attendance. Over 1,300 seniors are receiving bi-weekly text messages to nudge them along the college access process via the Signal Vine platform. "The biggest thing we can do at this point is let students know all their options and answer all their questions," said Melisa Hypolite, Associate Program Director for High Schools. Follow CollegeBound for updates on college visits, FAFSA, and more!

COLLEGEBOUND ADVISOR (CAPS) SPOTLIGHT: ADRIANA ROSAS



A first-generation college graduate, Adriana grew up in Baltimore and earned a degree in World History from the University of Maryland, College Park. Adriana joined the scholarship department at CollegeBound in 2018 after serving in a number of social justice-oriented roles, including AmeriCorps. With a desire to work on a deeper level with youth, Adriana became a CAPS in 2019 at Forest Park Senior High School. This school year, Adriana coordinated her second national "Why Apply Day" college application kick-off, led the highest-attended FAFSA Night in recent Forest Park history, and is constantly exploring new initiatives to get her students excited about college. "I work as a CAPS because I believe all children deserve the highest quality college access services that can be offered to them. We need more first-generation and people of color in professional careers. I do what I do to best help my students and keep them informed. On a bad day I know I can always count on my students to brighten my day or make me smile." In addition to supporting students through the college and financial aid processes, Adriana serves a vital role on CollegeBound's staff-led Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. Thank you for all you do for CollegeBound and Baltimore City Schools' students, Adriana!

COMMUNITY-BASED EVENTS!

FAFSA COMPLETION AT THE Y

Join CollegeBound at the Y in Druid Hill (1609 Druid Hill Avenue) on Saturday, December 11th from 10 am to 2 pm. Advisors will be on site to walk you through the financial aid application.

Please RSVP:

<https://bit.ly/FAFSAHelpEastside>

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

READ SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

First-time readers will attend a two-hour training session in February. Volunteers readers review applications online in March and April. Requires 10-15 self-paced hours. Please sign up as a reader at collegeboundfoundation.org/volunteering.

MENTOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Mentors play a vital role in the College Completion Program by offering professional guidance to juniors and seniors. A one-year minimum commitment to maintain contact with and meet one-on-one with mentees during college breaks is requested. To sign up, visit collegeboundfoundation.org/volunteering.

2022 SAVE THE DATE!

SCHOLARS' LUNCHEON
THURSDAY, JULY 14th

SUPPORT COLLEGEBOUND!

2021 LAWYERS' CAMPAIGN

Contribute to the Baltimore legal community's efforts to raise \$150,000 by December 31st. To learn more, please visit: <https://secure.gqiv.com/event/lawyers4collegebound>.

WAYS TO GIVE

Please consider CollegeBound in your 2021 year-end giving plan. We gratefully accept checks, online donations and stock gifts. For more information, please reach out to Lauren Comber at 410-783-2905 x215.

CollegeBound participates in the following workplace campaigns:

Maryland Charity Campaign
521598921

United Way of Central Maryland
5666

Combined Federal Campaign
65583