

THE ABRAMSON SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

Scholar Alumni

2008 Scholars

Jem Ace (Wilson High) is in her third year at the University of Maryland – College Park, where she is an Elementary Education major. Her minor is in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL). Jem is deeply involved in her University community and in serving others in a variety of ways. She is in her second semester of being a Resident Assistant, which she loves. She is also a Peer Career Educator at the University's Career Center. There she works with students helping them find the right resources for job research, internships, volunteer work, etc. She also critiques the resumes and cover letters of undergraduates, gives presentations, and assists in outreach events. She writes: "I am a volunteer in the mentoring program called America Reads America Counts. We go into local PG County schools and mentor 1st, 2nd, and 4th graders in basic reading and math. I've been in the program since my freshman year, which has provided me the opportunity of experiencing what could potentially be my future career. Then one more thing I am involved in is the community service-learning Alternative Breaks programs. Alternative Breaks focuses on one social issue. Last spring, I went to West Virginia to learn more about rural education and poverty. It was a life changing experience and one I will always remember. I enjoyed my experience so much that I applied to be a Trip Leader and am currently the Trip Leader for the NYC trip this spring on the social issue of Immigration. These trips are completely student run, so I am pretty overwhelmed, but excited to be completely creating a trip from scratch. I have planned for my team and I to observe in a majority based immigration high school and to volunteer with a NYC local committee advocating for the Dream Act."

Shalitha Brown (Friendship Collegiate) is at the Illinois Institute of Technology. She writes that she is currently studying Biomedical Engineering with a minor in Entrepreneurship. So far, she has most enjoyed Psychology and Humanities classes. Shalitha is teaching herself the guitar. She is part of a school wide campaign to promote STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) majors to schools and organizations across the country through the READ project. She has also been participating in competitions and conferences for entrepreneurship through a scholarship she obtained from the Kern Foundation, also known as KIEA (Kern Innovation Entrepreneurship Academy) at her school.

Karyn Bigelow (Wilson High), who is a junior at Michigan State University, is double majoring in Social Relations and Policy and Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy. She just completed the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program, which gives undergraduates research experience to prepare them for graduate study on a PhD level. Her research was on how sentencing guidelines affect judicial discretion in drug offense cases. She presented her research at a conference and a symposium. She was elected for the third consecutive year to be a senator in the James Madison College Student Senate. She is now chair of the Social Relations and Policy caucus, which puts her at the head of her major. Next fall, Karyn intends to apply for graduate and law school for admission in the fall of 2012. She hopes to become a family lawyer specializing in international custody cases.

2007 Scholars

Brittany Coote (Banneker High) is a senior at the University of Maryland – College Park. She is majoring in Public and Community Health and minoring in French Studies. Her favorite courses so far have been Anatomy, African Art History and Philosophy of the Environment. As a freshman, Brittany tutored 7th graders in

literature and helped rebuild homes damaged by Hurricane Katrina. After her sophomore year, she volunteered with a research study at Howard University exploring the relationship between PTSD and nocturnal blood pressure in young African-Americans. She is currently working for that same study. In addition, she is involved with an on-campus ministry group and was on the 2011 Class Council from her freshman through her junior year. Brittany writes that she has always been involved in a research or extra-curricular activity outside of her academics and that one of her biggest challenges during college has been balancing her various work and volunteer activities with her academics.

Michael Yeldell (Dunbar High) is in his senior year at the University of Pittsburgh. He is majoring in economics. He joined the Omega Psi Phi fraternity in the spring of 2010 and is currently actively looking and interviewing for a job after graduation in the spring of 2011.

2006 Scholars

Selamawit Addissie (Cardozo High) is a senior at the University of Maryland, where her major is General Biology with a focus on Pre-med. Her senior fall, she was a teaching assistant to a Microbiology lab, which was “a ton of fun!” As a commuter, she finds that she barely has time to study during the day, so she gets her studying and work done at home and goes to the college library on weekends to review her work from the week. Selamawit has been part of the tutoring/mentoring program America Reads America Counts for almost three years and is currently a Team Leader. She is also an Undergraduate Research Assistant at the Maryland Neurocognitive Development Lab, a developmental psychology lab. Selam intends to apply to medical school this summer, so she is taking the Kaplan MCAT course. In December, she wrote: “This semester was very hectic and crazy, but in a good way! I learned a lot from my experience and I am very thankful for all of the opportunities that were given to me! I have an amazing mentor from the Abramson Foundation and her name is Denver. She has given me a lot of advice and she is always there for me and I am thankful for her! This program has given me a lot of support and my goal is that one day I’ll be a mentor and give back to the community and to people in need.”

Olutosin Akinyode (Roosevelt High) recently graduated from Amherst College and is working as a Project Assistant at a law firm in DC. He is involved in a teen-age mentoring program in Silver Spring. Olutosin aspires to work for the Peace Corps and then attend graduate school to get a double degree in International Development and Law.

Justine Cortez (Wilson High) graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in May, 2010 with a B.A. in Social Work and a minor in Latin American Studies. She is currently working on her Masters in Social Work at Columbia University. Justine loves New York and particularly her internship with the Dominicans Women’s Development Center (DWDC). The DWDC was given a grant of over \$1 million to implement a new early childhood education center. Her role is to be a family support worker. Although she finds the work hard at times, she feels she is learning a lot and working with some great leaders in the Washington Heights area. For the past three years Justine has been involved in a service learning project that takes delegations down to El Salvador. She writes that this is “something that is really close to my heart given that my family is from El Salvador. Last March I led a group of 14 university of Pittsburgh students on the trip and we all had an amazing time. Part of the trip includes connecting with a rural school in a town called Caluco, where we work on various projects including construction and the distribution of clothes, shoes and school supplies... I just

finished printing our first newsletter... This project has become my baby...and I am currently recruiting for the next trip in June. I am enjoying the work and am very excited to graduate from Columbia in May!"

Pamela (Massaquoi) Pratt (Roosevelt High) graduated from Hood College in May 2010 with a B.A. in Political Science. She is currently in the Peace Corps serving in Senegal where she is working in the Small Enterprise Development program. She has made a two year commitment to the Peace Corps and plans to attend graduate school afterwards.

Robyn Tinney (SEED) has just finished her undergraduate course work at Temple University and will receive a degree in Elementary/Special Education. She is also currently working as a teacher in an early learning center. While in college, Robyn was part of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, served as the community service director for an organization, and participated in an Americorps program.

Chantayle Watkins (Ballou High) graduated from Trinity University in May 2010. She is working as a home health aide and looking for a job in which she can use her college degree. She plans on going to graduate school in the near future.

Long Yang (Bell Multicultural) is just finishing his course work at George Mason University, where he has majored in Computer Engineering. He has worked part time while attending college in order to save money for graduate school. He writes that his advice to a new college student would be to make a lot of friends, choose a major you like, try to find internships and enjoy college life. He ends his note with a thank you to the Abramson Scholarship Foundation.

James Yarborough (Roosevelt High) graduated from Babson College in May 2010. He is currently working for KPMG in the DC office. He plans to study for the LSAT and apply to law school. Also, he is interested in becoming a mentor for the Abramson Scholarship Foundation.

2005 Scholars

Akosua Dosu (School Without Walls) graduated from Spelman College in the spring of 2009 with a BA degree in Political Science and Environmental Science. She now works at the National Council for Science and the Environment as the Manager for the National EnvironMentors Program. Her program has 11 chapters throughout the country and it works to pair underrepresented high school youth with environmental professionals, faculty or university students in one on one mentoring relationships. The mentoring teams work over the course of a year on an experimental environmental project that "helps students develop science, experimental, writing and environmental skills." Her job entails coordinating and managing communications between the national EnvironMentors program and its chapters and providing support to the chapters. Akosua is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and is joining the DC Spelman College Alumnae Association. In the next year, she hopes to pursue a master's degree in environmental policy and public administration and to continue her current role with the National EnvironMentors Program.