

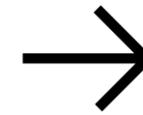
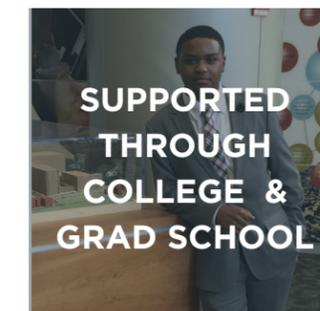
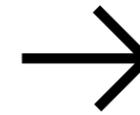
MERIT

Medical Education Resources Initiative for Teens

2014-2015 Annual Report

OUR **MISSION**

MERIT aims to eliminate health care disparities by transforming under-represented high school students into health care leaders.



MERIT is not your average career exposure program.

We create a holistic support system to change the trajectory of our Scholars' lives.





Letter from the Executive Director

FIVE YEARS AGO, I met two students who taught me about life in Baltimore while I was teaching them biology. Breonna was hospitalized seven times due to uncontrolled diabetes and had no concept of primary care. Trevor entered my classroom not knowing the heart's purpose but left with one of the city's highest scores on the Maryland Biology High School Assessment and a strong desire to become a physician. I wondered: what if we could capitalize on our students' potential for greatness and prepare them to become health care leaders? They could eventually ensure that everyone, including Breonna, has access to high-quality care.

From there, the Medical Education Resources Initiative for Teens (MERIT) began. We were initially a small group of teachers spending our nights and weekends discussing how to prepare our students for health careers. We started with a handful of Saturday workshops and a summer internship opportunity at John Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. We spent the next four years reviewing data, trying new ideas, and refining our curriculum to figure out what worked.

Last year, as I was ending my third year of medical school and contemplating residency, I realized we had created something special. I decided to go all in and committed to one year away from school. For the first time, I could make MERIT my sole priority, not an after-school activity. I had one goal: build MERIT's capacity to increase our impact. At that time, our annual budget was under \$5,000, we had one hospital partner, and we supported 30 Scholars.

Today, our annual budget is \$535,000, we have a staff of four full-time employees, we partner with six local hospitals, and we will support 200 Scholars by 2018. There has never been a better time to scale. Our city's unrest has refueled a widespread investment in our youth. On April 27, we saw our city's passion for equity transform into a rage of despair. The uprising proved that Baltimore is hemorrhaging and we need more than Band-Aids. MERIT is poised to become the trauma surgeons, nurses, and follow-up care needed to heal our wounds.

I am thrilled our first-ever Annual Report has landed on your desk or in your inbox. If you already support us, thank you. If you are just learning about us, welcome to the MERIT family. It will take all of us to prepare our Scholars to become the positive change agents our city needs.

Together, we will achieve equity.

Sincerely,

Tyler Mains,
Founder and Executive Director

MEET OUR SCHOLARS

Class of 2017: Jessica Cooley is a rising junior at Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women, where she achieved a 4.1 weighted GPA during her first year in MERIT. Since she was young, Jessica has thought about what she could do to make Baltimore a better place. She's interested in health care because it has such a big influence on society. As Jessica rotated through different departments during her Art of Medicine Internship, she honed her focus on neurosurgery. She said, "I find the brain fascinating! I know it's a challenging field, but I think I can do it." Jessica credits MERIT with helping her improve her professionalism, while giving her a better idea of what the medical field will really be like.



Class of 2016: Kahlid Fowlkes is a rising senior at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School. He commits to excellence in everything that he does; from school, where he has earned all A's and B's since joining MERIT, to his summer internship, where he worked alongside Hopkins researchers to understand how autism functions on a molecular level.

Earlier this year, Kahlid was awarded the Annual Henrietta Lacks Memorial Scholarship from Johns Hopkins. As the recipient, he will receive \$40,000 towards his college education. In the future, Kahlid plans to become a trauma surgeon and practice in Baltimore City.



Class of 2015: Taylor Holmes graduated from Vivian T. Thomas Medical Arts Academy this spring. She overcame severe migraines to earn a 4.3 weighted GPA while leading her basketball team as captain. Taylor plans to become a Physician Assistant in neurology.

During her senior year, Taylor worked with other MERIT Scholars to reduce high rates of teen pregnancy throughout Baltimore City, by adding a youth voice to sexual health policies. Taylor's hard work and achievements led her to be featured in the Baltimore Sun. This fall she will start at McDaniel college, where she earned a generous scholarship.



Class of 2013: Maame Agyapong excelled in the MERIT program while in high school at REACH Partnership Academy, earning a 4.18 GPA. She is now a junior at Salisbury University, where she earned a 4.0 GPA last year. Maame earned all A's, while taking rigorous psychology, chemistry, and biology courses. She will begin preparing for the MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test) this year and plans to become a cardiologist because of a rewarding experience during her first MERIT internship at John Hopkins Bayview Medical Center.

MERIT PRODUCES RESULTS

MERIT continues to show what is possible when young people are holistically supported on the path to their dream careers.

100% Admission to 4-year universities

79% Of Alumni are planning to pursue health care careers

100% Scholar retention

3.81 Average High School GPA

3.3 Average College GPA

ULTIMATELY, MERIT WILL ACHIEVE ITS MISSION when our Scholars commit to improving health care in Baltimore. Our alumni are starting to do just that. Perviva is a senior at McDaniel College and graduate of Friendship Academy of Science and Technology (a high school that has since closed). She received a full scholarship, currently has a 3.4 GPA, and serves as a College Support Coach for two younger MERIT Scholars. Perviva plans to dedicate her career to treating children exposed to trauma in Baltimore City. She recently completed an internship at the Kennedy Krieger Institute and will be applying to PhD programs in clinical psychology next year.



DRAMATIC SAT GROWTH

440

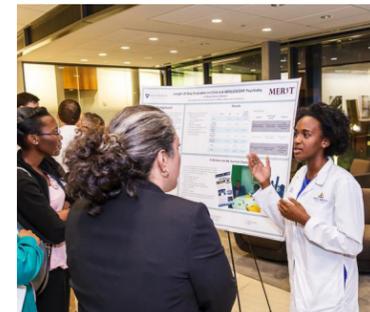
average MERIT Scholar SAT Growth from diagnostic (Fall 2013) to final score (Fall 2015)

365

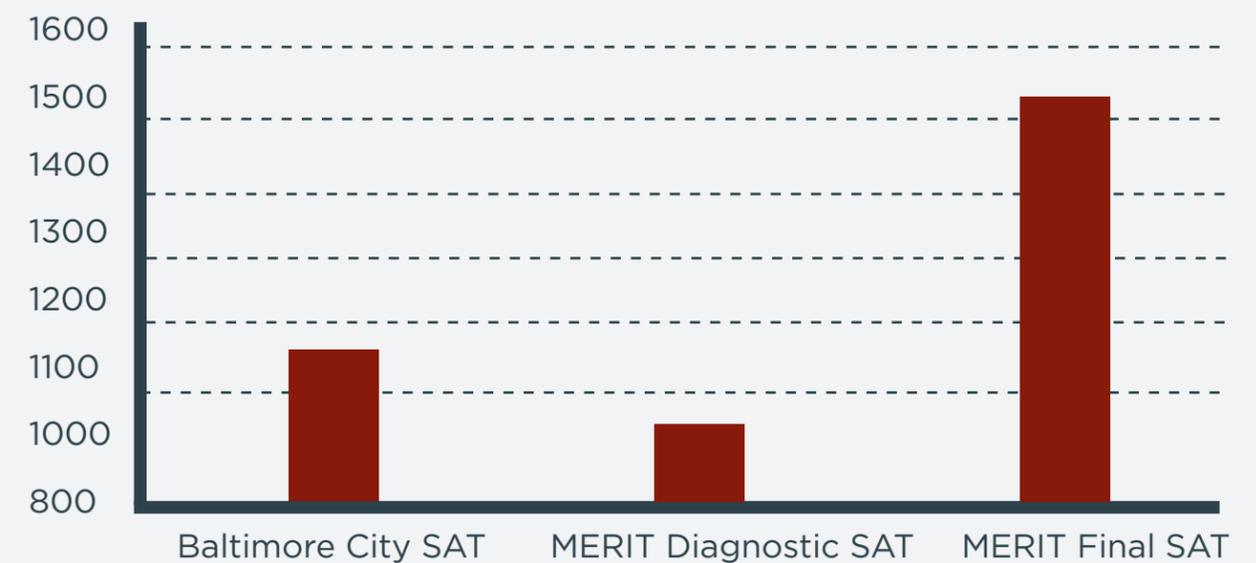
average SAT score difference between MERIT Scholars and Baltimore City Public School students overall

105

total hours of SAT prep provided to each MERIT Scholar



AVERAGE SAT SCORES: MERIT VS. BALTIMORE CITY



*scores out of 2400

THE PROBLEM:

HEALTH CARE IN BALTIMORE IS UNEQUAL.

ROLAND PARK

Life Expectancy: 83

SANDTOWN

Life Expectancy: 65



Growing up 5 miles north adds almost 20 years to your life.

The U.S. spends more on health care per capita than any other nation, but some Baltimore City residents have life expectancy rates similar to people living in Sudan and Rawanda¹⁻³

“I live in Sandtown and I see evidence of inequality and health care disparities every day. Change is not going to happen overnight, but we can do it. We must do it.”

- Deaira Parker. MERIT Sophomore



A PUBLIC HEALTH IMPERATIVE

Health care equity can be achieved by increasing the diversity of professionals in the field. MERIT’s theory of change is supported by research, which outlines three primary benefits of diversity in health care:



SERVICE LOCATION

Minority physicians are more likely to practice in underserved communities



TRUST & ENGAGEMENT

Patients are more likely to adhere to their care plan if they share a similar background or identity with their provider



ADVOCACY

A diverse workforce is more likely to shift the research agenda to problems that disproportionately impact minority patients

DESPITE THIS EVIDENCE, A LACK OF DIVERSITY PERSISTS

6%

of practicing physicians are from under-represented minority backgrounds, despite Latinos, African-Americans and Native Americans comprising 26% of the U.S. population¹

5.5%

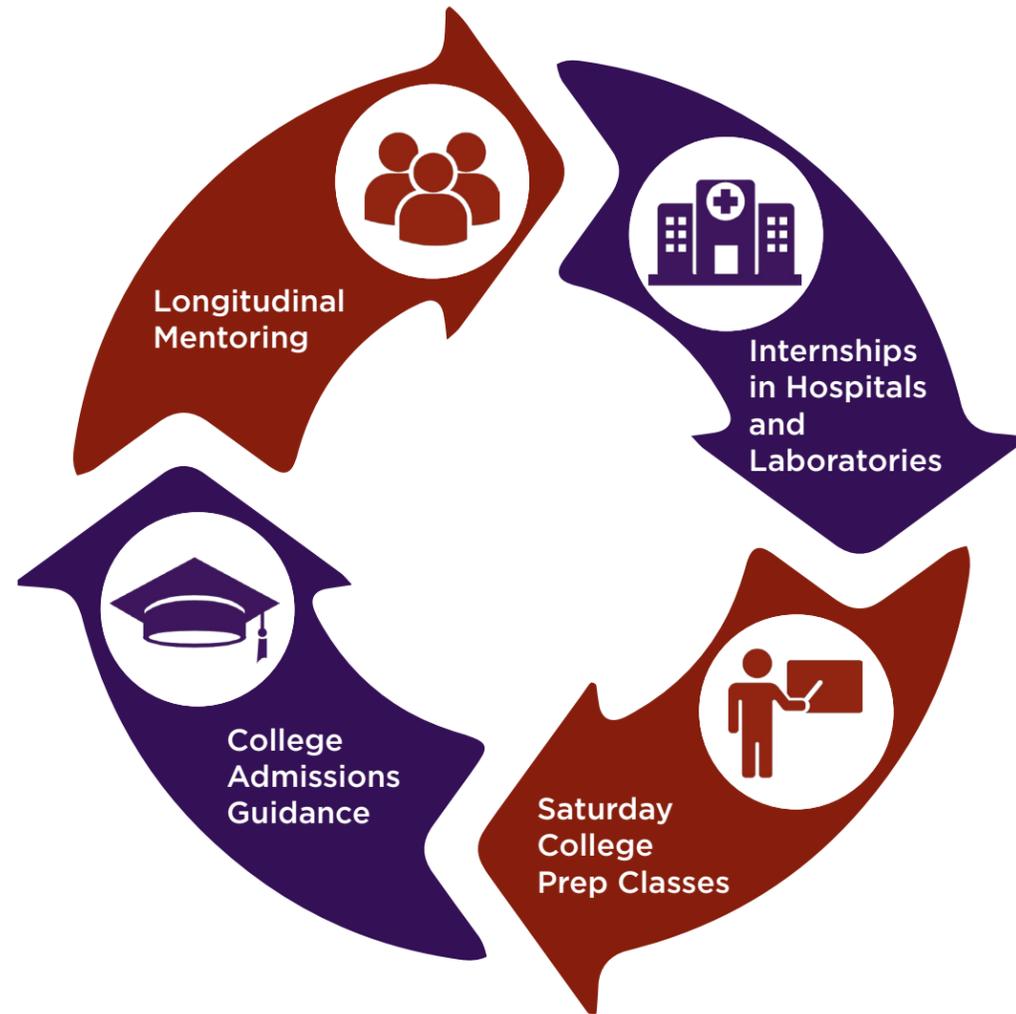
of medical students are from the lowest income quintile, while over 75% of students are from the top two income quintiles²

3.1%

of NIH research grants were awarded to black and Hispanic researchers³

OUR SOLUTION

In order to promote health care equity, MERIT is focused on empowering the next generation of health care leaders. To that end, we provide comprehensive, longitudinal support that facilitates personal growth and development.



“MERIT gave me access to a plethora of medicine-related resources. From the summer internships to the medical lectures, it deepened my understanding of what it means to be a health care professional. Learning more about the disparities in Baltimore City and around the world has inspired me to give back to my community when I become a doctor and even in college.”

-Sabreenah Kahn, MERIT Senior



SATURDAY SESSIONS



HEALTH CARE DISPARITIES COURSE (HCD)

Scholars delve into the root causes of health inequities and brainstorm possible solutions through readings, videos, case discussions, and personal experiences.



PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP COURSE (PLD)

Scholars learn how to set goals, manage their time, and present themselves as health care providers.



DIVERSITY IN HEALTH CARE SPEAKER SERIES

During the spring, we host minority health care professionals, who speak to the Scholars about challenges they faced throughout their lives, why they continue to pursue their goals, and the impact they have on patients' lives.



INTRO TO MEDICINE LESSONS

Medical students teach Scholars the physiology and pathophysiology of human body systems. Additionally, Scholars learn medical examination skills and discuss complex patient cases.



COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (CHIP)

Seniors partner with community organizations, and work to make a tangible impact in their neighborhoods. They develop critical problem solving skills, while furthering their view of themselves as positive change agents.



SAT PREP

During junior year, Scholars receive 3 hours of SAT instruction each Saturday. By differentiating instruction to meet Scholars at their individual levels, we work to achieve dramatic growth for all learners.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Each week before beginning academic content, Scholars engage in a variety of health and wellness activities including yoga, meditation, Zumba dance, making kale smoothies, and much more.

LONGITUDINAL MENTORSHIP

Scholars and Mentors spent **70 hours** working together this year. MERIT mentors *Illuminate the Path* for Scholars, helping them understand what it takes to get from high school to graduate school and beyond. During senior year, each Scholar is matched with a College Support Coach who will serve as an additional mentor and guide as they move to and through college.



“My mentor Allie shares my goal of becoming a pediatrician but it’s more than that. She’s like a big sister who is there for me whenever I need anything.”

-Coty, MERIT Sophomore

“Working with Coty has been an absolute joy. She is such a motivated and ambitious student, and she constantly impresses me with how well she is able to juggle all of her classes and extracurricular activities. I have also enjoyed getting to know her family. I am proud to be a member of Team Coty, and I am so excited to watch her leap towards her dream of becoming a pediatric health care professional.”

-Allison Greene, MD Candidate, Class of 2018

SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

ART OF MEDICINE INTERNSHIP

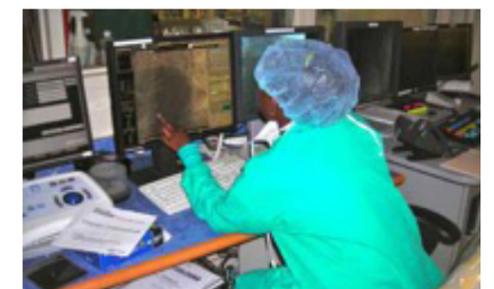
Each Scholar shadowed 20 different health care providers in a variety of settings including the Emergency Department, pediatrics, primary care clinics, operating rooms, OBGYN, and more. They experienced various career paths including medicine, nursing, social work, and pharmacy.

This year we had more preceptor sites than ever before:

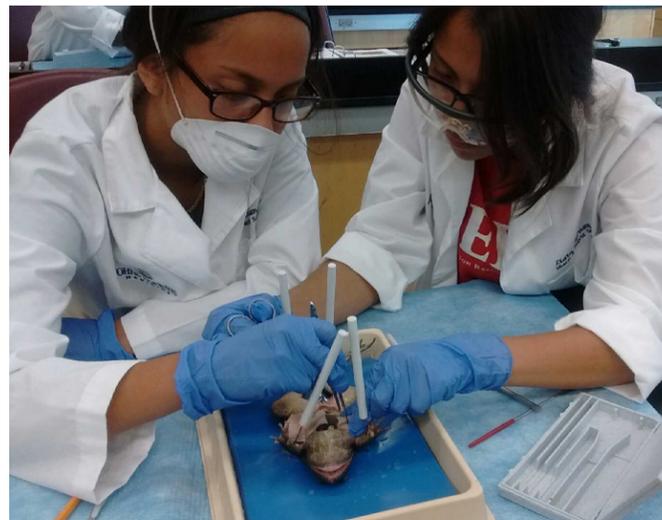


4.9/5 THE AVERAGE SCORE EARNED BY SCHOLARS

when clinical preceptors evaluated their professionalism and curiosity during the internship.



SUMMER INTERNSHIPS CONTINUED



SCIENCE OF MEDICINE INTERNSHIP

The primary goal of the second MERIT internship is to prepare Scholars for their introductory biology, chemistry, and physics courses in college. These college courses are often considered “gateway” courses to health careers and many students falter due to inadequate academic preparation. This summer, Scholars built laboratory skills such as pipetting, gel electrophoresis, and stoichiometric calculations through inquiry-based experiments. Twice per week, they worked in a Johns Hopkins research laboratory to understand how basic science skills are applied to a larger medical question.

“Branecia is well on her way to a bright future! She is poised and inquisitive and demonstrated knowledge well above the expected level. She expressed a desire to be a trauma surgeon and if she continues performance such as this, she is sure to do exceedingly well!”

- Dr. Linderman, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Surgery

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS SUPPORT

Scholars received individualized support throughout the college admissions process. Families joined Scholars for lessons such as, “How to Complete the FASFA” and “Reading Strategies for College Textbooks.” Additionally, Scholars had the opportunity to visit local colleges and meet with student leaders, such as the president of the Black Student Union at the University of Maryland.



100%

of seniors were accepted into
four-year colleges



100%

of Scholars earned
financial aid



67%

college tuition costs will
come from financial aid and
scholarships

PRESTIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED:

Kahlid Fowlkes - \$40,000 Henrietta Lacks Memorial Scholarship

Sabreenah Kahn - Presidents Scholarship to University of Maryland’s Honors College

Chikaodi Nwanegwo - Baltimore Ravens Scholarship

The Baltimore Community Foundation’s Scholarship for Young Civic Leaders

Sharron Moore - Morgan State University Harriet Tubman Scholarship

SCHOLAR RECRUITMENT

80

STUDENT APPLICATIONS



18

HIGH SCHOOLS REPRESENTED



20

SCHOLARS SELECTED

“The Medical Leadership Course takes our selection one step further than the traditional written application and interview. We engage students in a three week long course of fun and learning that allows for a truly holistic view of each candidate. It also gives potential scholars a better understanding of MERIT before they commit to the program. All of the potential MERIT scholars benefit from their participation in the MLC and MERIT is able to extend this hands-on work to even more Baltimore City students.”

- Tamara Jolly, MERIT Volunteer and MLC Coordinator

SCHOLARS AS LEADERS



4TH ANNUAL MERIT SYMPOSIUM

The Scholars impressed families, teachers, medical students, physicians, and community leaders, while showcasing their work at this year’s Symposium. A Johns Hopkins Dean commented “MERIT is unleashing great talent to their benefit and to the considerable benefit of our future as a city.”



SCHOLAR SHARES STAGE WITH NOBEL PRIZE WINNER

At the Hopkins CARES Symposium, Branecia Bull spoke after Nobel Prize Winner, Dr. Peter Agre. She bravely told her story of growing up in Baltimore, while striving to become a trauma surgeon. Bre told the audience, “I’m aiming high, and I will hit my mark.”



INNOVATION GRANT AWARDED TO SCHOLARS’ CHIP PROJECT

A team of MERIT seniors was awarded a small grant after placing third in the Warnock Foundation’s Innovation Challenge with their novel approach to incorporating youth voice into sexual health policies. Scholars went on to collaborate with the Health Department and the Center for Disease Control. The result was the creation of a Youth Advisory Board (YAB). Sharron, who is a MERIT Senior, was hired by the Health Department to lead the YAB.



SCHOLARS RESPOND TO THE BALTIMORE UPRISING

Scholars, families, mentors and MERIT staff came together for a community meeting after the uprising in May. Scholars shared their dissatisfaction with how Baltimore youth were being portrayed in the media. The MERIT community took a proactive step to change that with a video and social media campaign, called #MyBaltimore.

VOLUNTEERS AS CHANGE AGENTS

This year **193** volunteers dedicated **1,500 hours** to empowering MERIT Scholars. **100%** of volunteers completed their commitment.



WHY DO YOU VOLUNTEER?



“Volunteering with MERIT was an opportunity to pay forward the lessons I was taught in my youth. As a Saturday session teacher, my job was to equip Scholars with the tools and mindsets they will need to be successful. I’m excited to see how the Scholars apply what they learn in their health care careers.” - Onumara Opara, MPH Candidate, Class of 2017



“I volunteer with MERIT because I enjoy sharing my love for science and medicine with a new generation of brilliant and passionate students. MERIT employs a dynamic, innovative strategy to surround motivated young people with resources for working in a clinical and laboratory environment, ensuring their success for college applications and future careers.” - Mike Foote, MD Candidate, Class of 2016

MERIT COMMUNITY

At MERIT, we strive to build community amongst Scholars, parents, and volunteers. The program is rigorous, but we find times to celebrate and have fun over the course of the year. This year we held BBQs, holiday celebrations, and more!



At our end of the year event, graduating seniors offered words of encouragement and advice to younger MERIT Scholars. Taylor said, “Take advantage of every opportunity MERIT puts in front of you. You won’t understand how much these opportunities mean until later.”

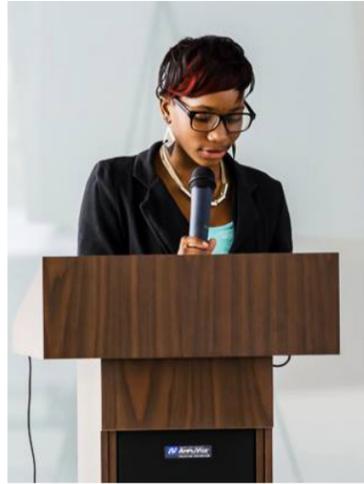


“I really enjoyed the parent involvement activities. It was good to build relationships with the other scholars, mentors, and parents. MERIT has created a great new support system!”

-MERIT Scholar Parent

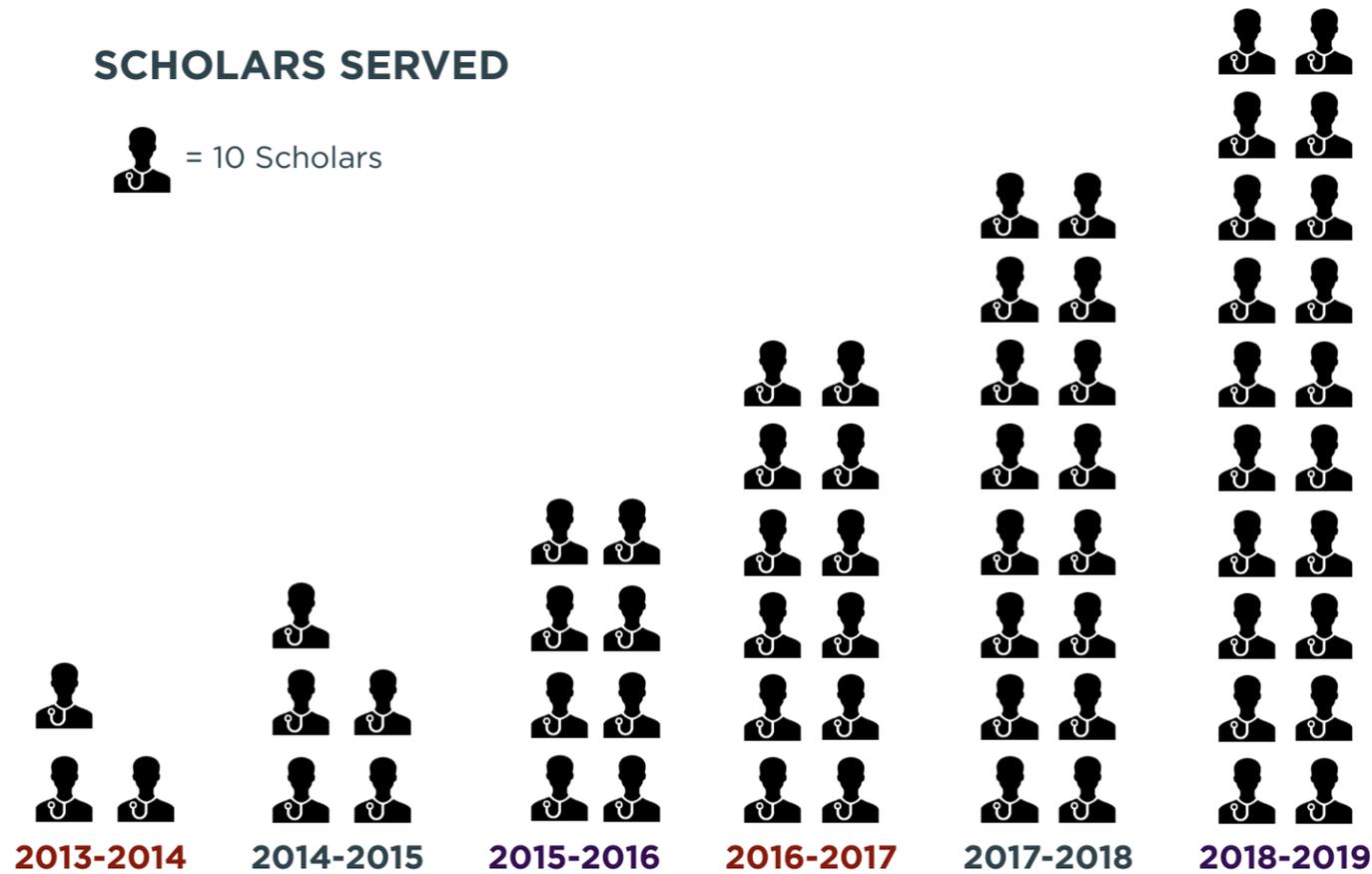
STRATEGIC GROWTH: OUR IMPACT

During our first five years, MERIT focused on providing holistic support to a small number of passionate Scholars. Now, it is time to grow our impact. This year we took the first step in our growth plan, by doubling the size of our sophomore class. Over the next five years, we will continue to strategically grow.



SCHOLARS SERVED

 = 10 Scholars



“The MERIT model has proven to be effective over the past five years. Now it is time for them to increase their impact, by supporting more Scholars here in Baltimore and across the nation.”

- **Scott Wright, M.D.**, Deputy Director for Medical Education Research at Johns Hopkins University

STRATEGIC GROWTH: OUR TEAM



STEPHANIE LANDICHO, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Stephanie taught high school chemistry as a Teach For America teacher before earning her Masters in Public Health in Los Angeles. Since then, she has worked with several non-profits dedicated to increasing diversity in professional STEM and health fields, most recently as a Program Evaluations Consultant based at the Saban Research Institute of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. Stephanie recently completed a specialized Masters in Education from Harvard University and is excited to bring her expertise in health curriculum design and passion for STEM career mentorship to MERIT. Stephanie moved to Baltimore from Boston and began working with MERIT last spring.



JAKE WEINFELD, STRATEGIC GROWTH DIRECTOR

Over the past several years, Jake taught science at KIPP Harmony Academy in Baltimore, while volunteering as a Professionalism and Leadership Development teacher with MERIT on Saturdays. In college, he developed an entrepreneurship education course that served high school students. Jake worked in marketing for a business process outsourcing firm, before joining Teach for America in 2012. Last year, he received his Masters in Education at Johns Hopkins University. He is excited to bring his passion for empowering students as leaders to MERIT where he will oversee volunteer recruitment, communications, development, and the PLD curriculum.



ASHANTI CARTER, COLLEGE AND CAREER COUNSELOR

Ashanti taught high school math and biology for the Los Angeles County Office of Education before earning her Masters in Public Health at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science. Since then, she has worked with third year medical students at the Office of Medical Student Affairs (OMSA) of the Drew/UCLA Medical Education Program as the Medical Student Affairs Coordinator. She also served as advisor of two co-curricular mentoring programs: Partnership for Progress (P4P), which aims to provide mentorship to high school juniors, and the Pre-Medical Mentoring Program (PMMP), which provides mentorship and career advice to post baccalaureate students. Ashanti moved from LA to Baltimore, and began working for MERIT in September.



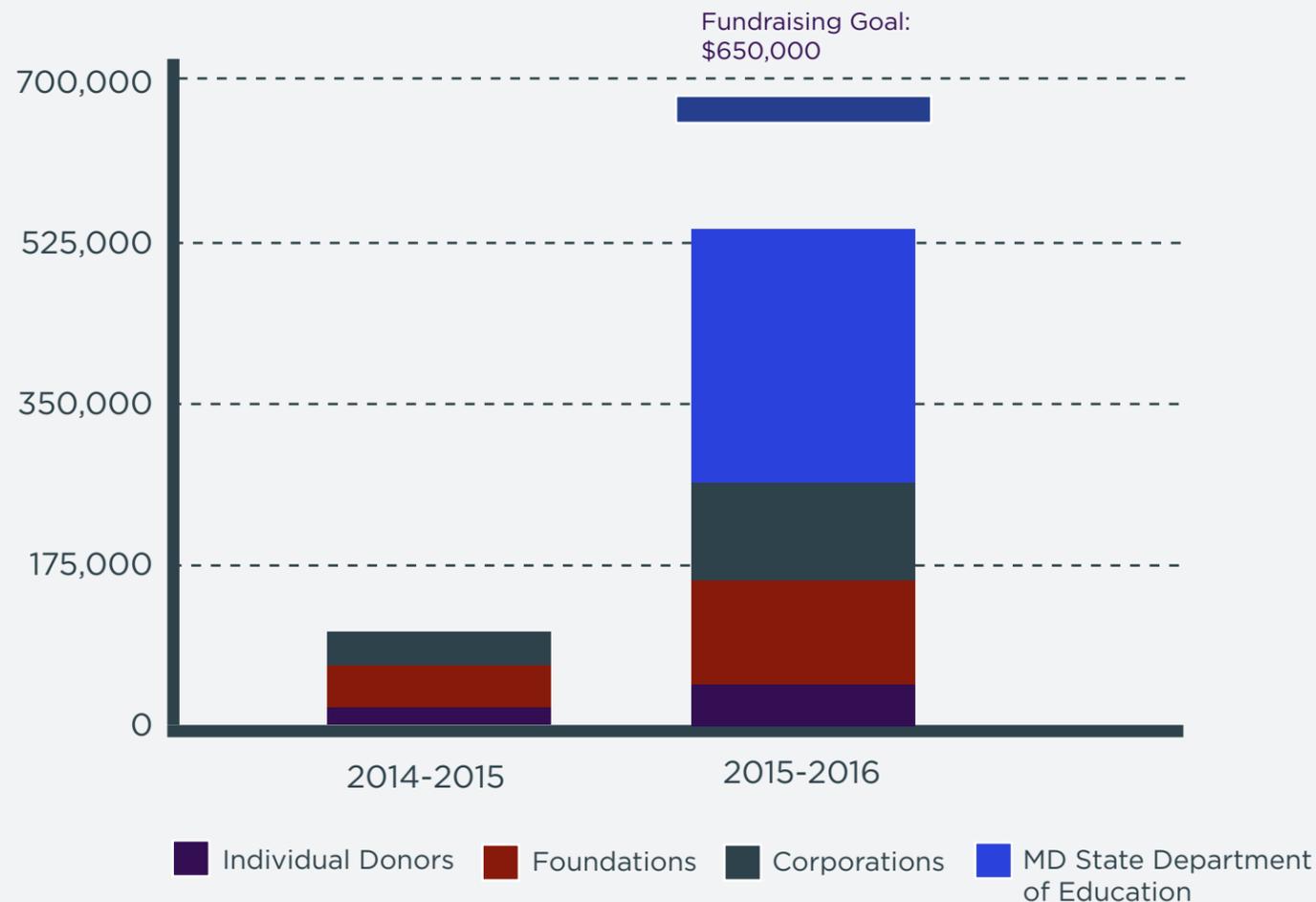
CIARA BARKLEY, SCHOLAR SUPPORT COORDINATOR

Ciara graduated from Bowie State’s honors college last spring with a dual degree in Psychology and Sociology. Her experience as a mentor and program leader in college fueled her passion for community involvement, mentorship, and youth academic achievement. For the last three years of college, Ciara worked as a live-in mentor/tutor for Bowie State University’s Pre-College Science Scholars Academy. During her final year of college Ciara served as President of her sorority, where she led an initiative focused on successful freshman matriculation. After college, Ciara joined Public Allies, which is an Americorps program that places young leaders with non-profit organizations.

STRATEGIC GROWTH: OUR FINANCIALS

MERIT's generous donor community is making it possible for us to empower more aspiring doctors, public health professionals, and disease researchers than ever before. Additional funding this year will allow us to build our staffing capacity, to ensure we increase the efficacy of the program as we increase the number of Scholars we serve. 85% of our funding is used for direct programming expenses including books, laboratory supplies, Scholar transportation, food, and staffing. The remaining 15% is allocated for essential expenses which help the organization run.

FUNDING BREAKDOWN



2014-2015 BUDGET: \$88,000

2015-2016 BUDGET: \$535,000

ADVISORY BOARD

Richard G. Bennett, MD, President of the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center.

Jean Lud Cadet, MD, Chief of the Molecular Neuropsychiatry Research Branch and Associate Director of Diversity at the National Institute of Drug Abuse.

Gregory Carey, PhD, Director of Student Summer Research and Community Outreach at the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Stephanie Cooper Greenberg, Co-Director of the Erwin & Stephanie Greenberg Foundation.

Chitamawe Daka Mulwanda, Managing Director of District, School, and State Partnerships for Teach For America Baltimore.

W. Daniel Hale, PhD, Special Advisor to the President of Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center and Director of the Healthy Community Partnership.

Steven Hamlette, MD, Regional Medical Director, Physician Inpatient Care Specialists.

David Hellmann, MD, Director of the Center for Innovative Medicine, and Director of the Department of Medicine at the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center.

Amy Kleine, MPH, MSW, Program Director of Basic Human Needs and Health at the Weinberg Foundation.

John Kontor, MD, Executive Vice President of Clinovations within Advisory Board Consulting and Management.

Krista Ratliff, Health Care Administration Leader and former Vice President of Ancillary Services for Bon Secours Baltimore Health System.

Elsie M. Stines, DNP, CPNP, Project Director to the President of University of Maryland Baltimore and Pediatric Nurse Practitioner in the University of Maryland Medical System.

Daniel Teraguchi, EdD, Director of the Office for Student Diversity and Assistant Dean for Student Affairs at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Jacqueline Wheeler Lee, Director of the University of Maryland Incentive Awards Program.

Mark Wilcox, MERIT Co-Founder and fourth-year medical student at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Scott Wright, MD, Director of the Division of General Internal Medicine, Deputy Director for Medical Education Research, and Director of the Medical Education Track of the General Internal Medicine fellowship program at Hopkins.

Shyam Gadwal, MERIT Co-Founder and former Managing Director of Teacher Training at Teach For America.



OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

\$25,000 and Above

- The Abell Foundation
- The Family League of Baltimore
- Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center
- Johns Hopkins Center for Innovative Medicine
- Johns Hopkins School of Medicine
- Robert E. Meyerhoff and Rheda Becker
- The Aaron and Lillie Straus Foundation
- The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation

\$10,000-24,999

- BD Diagnostics
- The Henry and Ruth Blaustein Rosenberg Foundation
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- The Erwin and Stephanie Greenberg Foundation
- The Irving Foundation
- Johns Hopkins Hospital Department of Medicine's Diversity Council
- Rosedale Federal Savings & Loans Association

\$1,000-9,999

- Albert Schweitzer Fellowship
- Mark Anderson, MD, PhD
- Emile Bendit, MD
- Shyam Gadwal
- David Hellmann, MD
- Johns Hopkins Alumni Association
- Johns Hopkins East Baltimore Community Affairs
- Johns Hopkins Medical Student Senate
- Tyler Mains
- Charles Scheeler, JD
- Albert Schweitzer Fellowship
- Barbara Shapiro
- The University of Maryland Baltimore Foundation
- Wells Fargo
- Mark Wilcox

\$1-999

- Peter Agre, MD
- Anthony Anderson
- Christopher Bailey
- Baltimore City Public School System
- Andrew Bertamini
- Raanan Bloom
- Joann Bodurtha, MD & Thomas Smith, MD
- Rachel Bordoli
- Harry & Joanna Brandt
- Sarah Brandt
- Anna Brown
- Jean Lud Cadet, MD
- CAN Dream Fondation
- Colleen Christmas, MD
- Jeremiah Cross
- Julian Chun, PharmD
- Ghazale Dastghaib
- Cyrus Ebnesajjad
- Sina Ebnesajjad
- Natasha Endrei
- Roxanne Escandar
- Harley Frankel
- Freeport-McMoran-Copper Gold Foundation
- Michael Foote
- Kermit Fowlkes
- Christine Ford
- Lindsey Frost
- Estelle Gauda, MD
- Vickie Golobic
- Nicholas Greer
- Marilyn Haberlach
- Mitra Haeri
- Amanda Hageman
- Camille Hammond
- Kathleen Haney
- Andy Huang
- Nikhil Jiwrajka

- Deepak Kapur
- Hunter Kellett
- Ernest & Elizabeth Lester
- Elssy Lopez
- James & Ellen Mains
- Jarrod Mains
- Clarence Mascarenhas
- Matt Mettille
- J Mierkowski
- Heidi Minken
- Kayvon Modjarrad
- Kalyani Nambiar
- Ramya Pratiwadi
- Mark Procopio
- Katherine Reedy
- Marvel Sarmiento
- Carol & Harvey Segur
- Gay & Dan Shackelford
- Sunil Shah
- Frederick Stamp
- Stony Branch Growers
- Lisa Qi
- Roberta Surill
- Marcella Symonette
- Dezmond Taylor-Douglas
- Emilia Thurber
- DW Tunnage
- Thomas Uldrick
- David Verrier, PhD
- Andrew Wardlow
- Brid & Jesse Wardlow
- Warnock Foundation
- Yenny Webb Vargas
- Kevin Wilcox
- Evan Williams
- Iris Wright
- Zaid Zaid