

December 2008

College Park Scholars



# Family Link eNewsletter

## DEAR PARENTS,

It is a fascinating time of year on campus, as students are between visits with family during Thanksgiving recess and the beginning of their holiday and winter break. It is during this time that students are prone to a unique kind of stress as they attempt to balance their focused studying in preparation for final exams with the *tug-on-the-heart* feelings from having just been surrounded by their family and friends for perhaps the first time in months. Layered on top of this challenge are the perceived priorities of holiday shopping and packing for winter break, all the while being blitzed by coverage of the recession and difficult economic climate.

Within this month's newsletter, you will learn about programs that are being provided to students to help confront the stress they are experiencing. Additionally, we will share some of the wonderful learning that has been occurring in our Arts program this semester. By now you may have noticed that we attempt to highlight a different Scholars program each month to



showcase some of the activities, speakers, and excursions in these twelve unique interdisciplinary programs.

Among the other features you will find in this month's newsletter, we will also provide information on holiday giving. We understand that these are challenging financial times and making philanthropic choices is difficult. If the charitable portion of your family's budget is fortunate to still have a few

dollars to spare, we hope you will think about supporting College Park Scholars. It is through the generous contributions of family and friends that we are able to continue to provide added value to students' Maryland experience.

Finally, I hope that each of you is able to spend some time over the next month sharing in the stories, achievements and challenges of your undergraduates. As you

know, it may require some prodding to get a full picture of their past semester, but such reflection provides a wonderful opportunity for these students to consider what that they have accomplished over these past few months and how it will help inform their decisions for the future.

Prior to the beginning of the spring semester, a number of Scholars students will be exploring other parts of the world with their program faculty. Students in Life Sciences will be returning to Belize for several weeks in January to explore its environment, culture, and

ecology. Cultures of the Americas will be visiting Ecuador and Public Leadership will venture to Morocco – both for the first time. Finally, students in Business, Society & the Economy will travel to Dubai, the most populous city in the United Arab Emirates.

Following these incredible learning excursions and a number of internships and employment experiences that students will engage in throughout the next month, we look forward to our Scholars returning to campus energized and prepared for the spring semester.

We are eager to reconnect with you in February and hope to see many of you during the Scholars in New York weekend (April 17-19), at the Arts Fair during Maryland Day (April 25), or at our Academic Showcase on the first of May. Until then, on behalf of all of us at College Park Scholars, we sincerely appreciate your continued interest and support of our program, and we wish you a wonderful holiday season and a very happy and healthy new year.

Best,

[Kevin Baxter](#)  
Assistant Director

## Service of the Season

College Park Scholars has a commitment to service work and this holiday season has not been an exception: students from each of our twelve programs have given back to the community. Many Scholars are participating in the 12<sup>th</sup> annual “From Our Heart to Yours” holiday project, which couples students, staff and faculty with disadvantaged children in the College Park area to help make their holiday season as special as possible.

Students are assigned the age and gender of a participant, and then receive a bag to fill with a small gift for him or her.



Sarah Todd, a former Life Sciences scholar and a Resident Assistant in Cumberland Hall, feels that it is heart warming to see Scholars bond together and unite for a good cause.

“It’s great because it allows students to give back to the community in their own creative ways,” said Todd. “I think that is a lot of what Scholars embodies; it allows students to learn in their own creative ways. It is a great program.”

From Our Heart to Yours helps children who are up to 18 years old. The project has set a high goal this year, aiming to fill more than 2,000 bags.

For more information, including a list of suggested gifts, please visit [the Resident Life Web site](#). The Department of Resident Life is the sponsoring unit on campus for delivering this major service initiative.

## Guide To Holiday Giving

As we reflect on the past year, we are especially touched by the generosity and kindness our community has received. All of us at College Park Scholars would like to extend our gratitude to the parents and families of our undergraduates for their continued support, which has allowed our program to deliver innovative on- and off-campus learning opportunities.

Families of our current and former College Park Scholars have already donated tens of thousands of dollars of support, in spite of a staggering economic crisis. We are humbled by this selflessness and will continue to be good stewards of your gifts.

If you find yourself able to make a gift to Scholars during this holiday season, please refer to page five of the newsletter for details on how to direct your support. And may you experience the same kindness that you have shown throughout the year during this holiday season.



## Managing Stress

For most, the middle of December typically brings visions of holiday cheer, but for students at our university, the center of their world is final exam week. Final exams at the University take place from December 15<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup>, and students are already in the throes of preparation. Finals week is notoriously one of the most stressful times on campus. The pressure of tests and papers can overwhelm some, but for students, it is important to keep a cool head. “Students need to keep things in perspective,” said Ken Joseph, the Associate Director of the Media, Self, and Society program. “The exams seem to be huge in their lives right now, but in the grand scheme of things they are only a small part.”

Students cannot help but stress, however. Finals tend to take over students’ lives for this week every semester. One test can be the difference between an A and a B; the difference between keeping your scholarship and acquiring more debt. “I put everything else aside until I’m done with exams,” said Clare Marcot, an alumna of Life Sciences. “I can’t worry about many other things when I’m studying; I really study a lot. Finals consume me.”

Naomi Rockler-Gladen, a feature writer for the Campus Life



section of Suite101.com online magazine, writes that getting enough sleep is key to a successful finals week. Some students feel like they have to stay up until 5 a.m. studying in order to learn the material. Rockler-Gladen says that more than three hours of sleep is essential for students to maintain a sharp mental state during exams. She also recommends exercise as a means of stress relief. She suggests short, stress-relieving activities such as racquetball or a run on the treadmill, as long as it doesn’t reach the point of procrastination.

Clare Marcot does make some time to unwind during finals week. “I’ll even take breaks to go out to dinner with friends. It always puts me in a good mood when I have to go back to studying.”

As daunting as finals week may seem, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. “The Holidays give everyone something to look forward to,” said Joseph.

## Spotlight on the Arts

Nurturing imagination, vision and originality since its inception in 1994, the Arts program has provided support for its students as they explore the diversity and scope of their studies. One of the first four programs to launch as a part of College Park Scholars, the Arts community has become a creative, constructive space for students. "I would say the mission of the arts program is to facilitate artistic learning in an open accepting community. Providing a safe place to learn and grow as an artist is key to the program's success," Ben Broder-Oldach, a senior Biology and Sociology major, and a teaching assistant for the Arts program, said.

The program has organized many events this semester, and the faculty and staff helped to translate ideas from the classroom into real, dynamic applications. According to Broder-Oldach, the semester began with Service Day and a scavenger hunt in Washington D.C. for the Arts Scholars, and expanded with field trips and informative colloquia. Students



and faculty attended performances by the Shen Wei Dance Company, Sweet Honey in the Rock, the Washington Shakespeare Theater Company, Jose Torres Tama, and the National Museum of the American Indian. Arts Scholars also hosted a coffee house, showcasing the talents of students through performances of poetry, improvisation and music. Before the end of the semester, the program will share original video presentations that have been prepared by second-year students.

One of the most important traditions of this Scholars program is its annual Arts Fair, which takes place on Maryland Day in the Cambridge Community Center. This year's theme, "One Hit Wonders", was selected during this fall semester.

"The program uses the fair to showcase the incredible talent of our students. It also allows us to teach lessons about the administrative side of performance, leadership, and art in general. It also allows for the arts program to reach out to the University and the surrounding community and hopefully provide a service to both," Broder-Oldach said.

Arts Scholars love their program because of the community and identity it provides them. It becomes a familiar family at a big university that also serves as a medium for personal expression, when academic responsibilities do not allow it.

Lisa Foreman, a sophomore Arts Scholar, said, "The mission of this program is to teach young adults how to be themselves and how to be at peace with it." She feels that it has become a truly important piece of her experience at the university.

"I have learned so much about myself as an artist and as a person by being in this program. I am so glad I chose Arts Scholars," Foreman said.

## Scholars in New York

Parents, your last chance to register for the sixth annual "Scholars in New York" event is quickly approaching! Registration ends on February 13, 2009. This annual visit to the Big Apple has become a tradition in the Scholars community and we are pleased to have a number

of parents in attendance each year. We hope you can join us!

Scholars will travel to Manhattan April 17-19 for a weekend filled with exciting activities. Major highlights include two nights at the Hilton New York, admission to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and a ticket to a Broadway show, with plenty of time left to

explore the city. Any parent or family member of Scholars is invited to register online. The registration process requires those applying to select their trip preferences, supply their contact information and submit payment details prior to being approved.

We look forward to seeing you in New York!

## Supporting Scholars

If you have any interest in providing financial support to College Park Scholars, please contact Kevin Baxter, or choose one of the following options:

1. You may send a gift by check. In this case, please make the check out to UMCP Foundation and indicate the area you wish to support, if any, in your check's memo field, next to 'College Park Scholars'. Gifts made by check without a notation beyond the program name will support College Park Scholars general fund.
2. You may make a gift [online](#), through the University philanthropy site. Please choose College Park Scholars as the fund.
3. If you are a University faculty or staff member, you may use payroll deduction as the method of payment, and you may indicate your preferred donation amount and the period during which the deductions should begin and end. Please contact Kevin Baxter if you are interested in this option.

On behalf of all of us in the College Park Scholars community, thank you for the consideration of your support.

Please visit our [website](#) for more information.



**For More Information, please visit any of the following websites:**

[College Park Scholars](#)

[Undergraduate Studies](#)

[College Park Scholars Alumni Association](#)

[UM Office of Parent & Family Affairs](#)

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