ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT EDITION

Hello Mentoring in Medicine & Science Family!

This marks the 6th Anniversary for Mentoring in Medicine & Science. We have been inundated with phone calls, emails and personal visits from students regarding their recent achievements. This edition of our newsletter will highlight a few of our alumni. We hope it will motivate you the same way the alums drive us to continue the work we do.

Peace and Blessings.

Jocelyn Freeman Garrick, MD

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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: ESTELL WILLIAMS

“I was a better medical student and clinician because of my experience with MIMS.”
– Estell Williams, MIMS Alumni

Estell Williams is currently a fourth year medical student at the University of Washington. She will be starting her general surgery residency at the University of Washington this year. The youngest of seven siblings, she was raised by a single father in East Oakland, California. She attended Xavier University of Louisiana for her undergraduate education, but was displaced by Hurricane Katrina during her junior year. She finished her Bachelors of Science at the University of San Francisco in 2007.

As an undergraduate, Estell participated in the MIMS Summer Internship Program, where she received clinical experience working with patients at a level-one trauma center, ACMC-Highland Hospital. She credits MIMS for exposing her to case presentations, academic research, pathology, and social issues within the population she aims to work with in the future. Estell claims the unique MIMS programs prepared her tremendously for medical school. She quotes, “I was a better medical student and clinician because of my experience with MIMS.”

Estell’s future aspirations are to pursue a trauma/critical care fellowship and to be involved with health disparities/health outcomes research. She plans to work in academic medicine in an urban county hospital for underserved populations.

MIMS Involvement: MIMS Summer Internship Program
Current Status: Graduating from UW Medical School
Next Steps: Surgery Residency at UW
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: LUIS GUTIERREZ

“MIMS motivated me and helped me believe in myself; now more than ever, I feel prepared and hopeful that I will reach my goal in the near future.” – Luis Gutierrez, MIMS Alumni

Luis Gutierrez is currently attending UC Berkeley and is expected to graduate in 2014. He aspires to be an Emergency Medicine physician or a surgeon. Through MIMS, he participated in the Summer Internship Program. He is grateful for the experience and asserts, “MIMS changed my life.” Before participating in the internship, he felt overwhelmed by the academic competition at UC Berkeley. He couldn’t keep up with his classes and he was constantly filled with self-doubt. Fortunately, helping high school students and interacting with patients through the internship reinforced his goal of becoming a physician. He knew he had to work hard and to never give up. “MIMS motivated me and helped me believe in myself; now more than ever, I feel prepared and hopeful that I will reach my goal in the near future.”

MIMS helped Luis have the confidence to become more socially open with other students. He joined Chicanos in Health Education and became more involved in the Biology Scholars Program.

Luis overcame many obstacles in his path towards success. Growing up in East Oakland, he constantly heard gunshots, and feared for his safety while walking home. He did not let any of the negative influences around the community distract him. Instead, he focused on his goals and did everything in his power to come closer to achieving them. Right now, the academic competition at Cal is his main obstacle, but he continues to be involved in school organizations and seeks academic support from peers.

MIMS Involvement: MIMS Summer Internship Program
Current Status: Attending UC Berkeley – Class of 2014
Next Steps: Obtain Bachelor’s degree and apply to medical school
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: IJEOMA OKWANDU

Ijeoma Okwandu was raised in Diamond Bar, CA and graduated from UC Berkeley in 2005. She is currently attending Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine as an MD/MPH candidate for the class of 2015. Her aspirations are medicine, community health, and maternal and child health with emphasis on international prevention of HIV vertical transmission. Ijeoma praises MIMS for invaluable mentoring and networking experiences. Being involved with MIMS’ programs helped give her confidence and access to resources, both of which promoted her success. After MIMS, Ijeoma participated in Health Coaching at Highland Hospital and worked as a high school college counselor through AmeriCorps.

MIMS Involvement: MIMS Mentoring and Network
Current Status: Attending NU Medical School
Next Steps: MD/MPH from NU

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: KIMESHIA THOMAS

Kimeshia will be starting her first year of medical school this fall 2013 at the University of Washington with aspirations to obtain an MD and MPH. She grew up in Chino, California and attended UC Berkeley for her undergraduate education. Notably, while attending UC Berkeley, she balanced her academic life with working a job, MCAT preparation, and family obligations.

With MIMS, Kimeshia was involved in the Clinical Emersion Program where she received insightful hands-on experience. Outside of MIMS, she volunteered as a Doula in the San Francisco General Hospital Doula Program.

MIMS Involvement: Clinical Emersion Program
Current Status: Starting UW Medical School
Next Steps: MD/MPH from UW
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: LISANDRA FRANCO

“My experience with MIMS encouraged me to continue pursuing a career in medicine even when I wasn't sure if I could make it.” – Lisandra Franco, MIMS Alumni

Lisandra Franco was raised in San Leandro, California and completed her undergraduate education at UC Berkeley in 2009. She will be attending medical school this fall 2013 at UC Davis School of Medicine. Lisandra aspires to become a primary care physician to be an advocate for patients in urban, underserved communities. She is considering a Master’s degree in public health or public policy in the future.

Through MIMS, Lisandra participated in the Healthy Ambassador Program and the Summer Internship Program. She credits her experience with MIMS in encouraging her to pursue a career in medicine. The Highland Summer Internship gave her the opportunity to see through the eyes of a physician. She quotes “My interactions with the attending physicians, residents, and medical students gave me a better understanding of how a variety of people work together to provide quality care to patients regardless of their ability to pay.” During the internship, she researched patient histories, symptoms, diagnoses, and treatments and presented her findings on a weekly basis. Her hands-on experience affirmed that she was capable of researching and understanding medical conditions, which ignited her love for the field.

Lisandra is no stranger to hard work and overcoming obstacles to obtain success. She was raised by immigrant parents who worked multiple low paying jobs to support her family of six. Her parent’s minimal knowledge of the English language and their unfamiliarity with the U.S. educational system made it difficult for them to help her with school. Despite her challenges, she earned a scholarship to a private high school and became the first person in her family to attend college. She attributes the Biology Scholars Program for giving her the support and guidance she needed balance her academics, work, and family responsibilities. After undergrad, she completed a post-baccalaureate program and maintained a 4.0 GPA. She declares “In spite of the obstacles I have faced, I continue to pursue my goal of becoming a physician, and I am excited to begin medical school in the fall.”

MIMS Involvement: Healthy Ambassador Program, Summer Internship Program
Current Status: Starting UCD Medical School
Next Steps: MD from UCD, primary care physician in underserved communities
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: SHANNA TUCKER

“Despite the obstacles, I became the first in my family to graduate from college.”
– Shanna Tucker, MIMS Alumni

Shanna Tucker grew up in Los Angeles, CA and completed her undergraduate education at UC Berkeley in 2010. She will be attending Harvard Medical School this fall 2013. Her career goal is to practice in Family Medicine and to possibly open her own clinic to help the underserved.

Shanna had her first clinical experience at Highland Hospital through the MIMS Summer Internship Program. “I LOVED being at Highland and around doctors who truly cared about improving the health of the community in East Oakland. I was inspired to continue on my path towards helping the underserved and ill resourced. It was one of the most valuable experiences I had before applying to medical school.”

Shanna had to overcome several obstacles to get where she is today. She grew up in a single-mother household and was responsible for tutoring her niece in school. Shanna attributes her strong work ethic and self-motivation to helping her become the first in her family to graduate from college.

MIMS Involvement: Summer Internship Program
Current Status: Starting Harvard Medical School
Next Steps: MD from HMS, Family Medicine

MIMS’ Mission:
To increase the number of underrepresented health professionals through mentoring, career exposure, and leadership development.
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: DAVID HAMPTON

“My determination and resilience assure me that one day I will make a great doctor.”

– David Hampton, MIMS Alumni

David Hampton grew up in Carson, California and is currently living in Oakland, California. He graduated from UC Berkley in December of 2010. This July 2013, David will be attending medical school through the Drew/UCLA Medical Education Program with a career aspiration of working in the pediatric field. David claims the MIMS Summer Internship Program confirmed his interest in medical education and pursing a medical career.

During his years as an undergrad at UC Berkley, David overcame many obstacles including balancing the demands of being a fulltime student while living an active, social life. In 2008, his resolve was tested after his sister was diagnosed with Huntington’s Disease. David realized he too could have been diagnosed since Huntington’s Disease runs in his family. From then on, he faced an internal conflict. He wondered “Is the path towards your passion still as sweet even if you may never truly reap the experience of the end product? Is all the time and energy I am sacrificing for this dream worth it?” David eventually realized that his obstacles only strengthened his aspiration to become a physician. He quotes “My determination and resilience assure me that I will one day make a great doctor.”

MIMS Involvement: Summer Internship Program
Current Status: Starting Drew/UCLA Medical School
Next Steps: MD from Drew/UCLA, Pediatrics
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: VERONICA WILLIAMS

Throughout my time in MIMS, I had the invaluable opportunity to gain insight from all aspects of the healthcare profession.” – Veronica Williams, MIMS Alumni

“MIMS made such a huge impact in my progress towards medical school. Recently, after completing my post-baccalaureate program at Cal State East Bay, I was accepted into both Michigan State College of Osteopathic Medicine and Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine, and I still have interviews pending at Kirksville COM, Philadelphia COM, and Pacific Northwest COM. I will likely be attending Alabama because the environment, the faculty, and the primary care initiative suit my personal interests most.”

“Throughout my time in MIMS, I had the invaluable opportunity to gain insight from all aspects of the healthcare profession. Working among like-minded pre-health students and current healthcare professionals provided me with support and encouragement that was so pivotal in my decision to apply this year.”

“Admittedly, a large part of my medical education pursuit was met with academic shortcomings. I was disheartened when my first MCAT was less than ideal, and knew that I would have to retake it (as it turns out, a cumulative 3 times). I felt very much the same throughout my persistent struggles in undergrad, having to remediate a majority of my science courses to meet my prerequisites. Fortunately, having the chance to impart healthcare knowledge to others was what really compelled me to keep improving. Working at the East Oakland Youth Developmental Center was such an inspiration, not to mention, it fed most of my supplemental essays and testimonials used throughout the medical school application process.”

“Whether it was the life coaching lessons we received, the ability to directly impact the education and lives of students in Alameda County, or the chance to converse and collaborate with future colleagues, I cannot tell you how appreciative I am. I know this experience will be something I take with me in the forthcoming years of medical school, and something I will remember when I see patients of my own. Should I delve into the realm of Emergency or Internal Medicine residency, I will hope to return to Highland General to talk to present-day Healthy Ambassadors and share my gratitude with them as well.”

Current Status: Interviewing at Osteopathic Medical Schools
Next Steps: DO, Emergency Medicine
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: DANTIA HUDSON

“MIMS fostered a sense of community and allowed me to be around like-minded students and health care professionals.” – Dantia Hudson, MIMS Alumni

Dantia Hudson will be attending Boston University School of Public Health this fall 2013 with the goal of receiving her MPH in Maternal and Child Health. She was raised in Oakland, California and graduated from the University of California, Berkeley in 2011 with a bachelor’s degree in sociology. Her future aspirations include obtaining a Ph.D. in maternal and child health and conducting research on the benefits of breast feeding and prenatal yoga in reducing infant mortality.

During her time with MIMS, Dantia participated in the Healthy Ambassador Program and the MIMS Summer Internship Program. She praises MIMS for giving her the confidence to pursue her dreams and reaffirming her passion for public health. She is grateful for MIMS’ life-coaching series, which helped her keep her priorities in perspective. After MIMS, Dantia worked for Planned Parenthood and conducted research on the African American Women’s Heart Health Study. These experiences have inspired her to further investigate early childbearing in African Americans including prevention strategies for unintended pregnancies and methods to reduce infant morbidity and mortality.

Dantia explains that being a first-generation college student was difficult because there was no paved road for her to follow. She had to actively seek guidance and support in order to move and grow in the right direction. She was glad to find a home in MIMS. She quotes, “MIMS fostered a sense of community and allowed me to be around like-minded students and health care professionals. If I didn’t know in the back of my mind that there was a strong network of individuals rooting for me, I may not have actually taken that leap of faith [toward my career].”

MIMS Involvement: Healthy Ambassador Program, Summer Internship Program
Current Status: Starting BU School of Public Health
Next Steps: MPH from BU, Maternal and Child Health
Mentoring in Medicine & Science Inc.

Thank You!

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