



BUTTERFLIES EXPLORING A NEW WORLD

TONI STOKES

MSB 12TH GRADE STUDENT



One can never  
consent to creep  
when one feels an  
impulse to soar.

HELEN KELLER

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STRATEGIC VISION

The Maryland School for the Blind will exceed parent and local school expectations for student achievement by setting high standards and providing best practice programs in state-of-the-art facilities.

MISSION

As a statewide resource center, The Maryland School for the Blind provides outreach, school and residential services for students to reach their fullest potential by preparing them to be as successful, independent, and well-rounded contributing members of their communities as possible.

COVER ART: Toni painted the background using tempera paint and a long handled paint brush to make it easier for her to reach all parts of the paper. She then took a piece of "Model Magic," air dry clay and sculpted a butterfly, pressing buttons and other small objects into the surface to give it texture. Finally, she painted the clay butterfly and pressed it onto the painted background before the paint dried.



A MESSAGE FROM THE  
President and Chairman of the Board



*"One can never consent to creep when one feels an impulse to soar."*

Although Helen Keller made more than her share of astute observations, this particular comment seems to capture the very essence of our school and its mission. In fact, The Maryland School for the Blind assisted students to spread their wings time and again, to reach new heights.

With your steadfast and generous support, we have developed innovative programs and incorporated the latest assistive technologies for the students MSB serves both on campus and in the community. We have also expanded our outreach services and strengthened our early intervention efforts. We obtained funding to construct needed state-of-the-art facilities to help our students spread their own wings.

This year, we proudly watched yet another graduating class of 21 students prepare to take flight. As in the past, some of them went on to college, others to work, and still others to live in the community with assistance. Students like Kate Kolm and Benjamin Waldman, who are featured in this report, left here ready to make the most of the future.

Of course, there are still thousands of stories left to unfold, as MSB enters the next chapter in its 159-year history. Stories of growth and triumph that will inspire us to even greater heights. With all of you there to champion our efforts, we will continue to rise to the occasion.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Bina, Ed.D.  
President

Edward J. Veilleux  
Chairman of the Board



## Kate Kolm

< s p r e a d i n g   o u r   w i n g s   >

Even with a solid support system and the right education, it takes a tenacious spirit to accomplish what graduate Kate Kolm did in just five short years at MSB.

Kate was born with CHARGE Syndrome, a complex genetic condition that causes significant vision and hearing loss. Although Kate was enrolled in another special education program, she had never gotten the individualized help she needed to become proficient in sign language or effectively use what vision she had.

When Kate transitioned to MSB, a trained deaf-blind intervener, Judy Ramsey, immediately stepped in to serve as her bridge to the world, by providing intensive, one-on-one support. Judy began with the basics, signing and spelling Kate's name into her hand over and over "until she got it," and then slowly moving on to everyday objects.

Judy also worked with Kate's educational team to implement adaptive strategies and technologies for improving visual efficiency, facilitating simple tasks, and making it easier to navigate the environment. The real breakthrough came, however, when Kate received her very first pair of glasses. As Judy recalls, "It was like flipping a light switch and watching all the pieces come together. Almost overnight, she went from keeping her head down to socializing with everyone she met. She also began learning and exploring at a much faster rate."

For Peg Kolm, her daughter's progress has been nothing short of miraculous: "The day Kate received the MSB Faculty Commendation Award, we were more than proud. We were absolutely amazed at how far she had come. And as she moves into the next phase of her life, we know she has what it takes to keep right on going."



MSB staff members like Judy Ramsey use both their extensive training and tremendous ingenuity to help students such as Kate turn small steps into big achievements. They spend hours researching innovative instructional approaches and looking for cutting-edge assistive technologies that enable our students to develop their abilities and tap into their talents. They also work closely with families to obtain necessary diagnostic assessments, locate additional resources and replicate successful interventions at home.





## Benjamin Waldman

< s p r e a d i n g   o u r   w i n g s   >

MSB graduate Benjamin Waldman is doing something that many of us only dream of. He's turning his passion for music into a job he loves, playing piano for seniors at an assisted living community in Baltimore.

An avid and versatile musician with perfect pitch, Benjamin learned to play by ear, a talent he further refined as a member of MSB's Blue Duffs Jazz Band. Thanks to the school's Career Education program, he also figured out how to leverage that gift into a vocational opportunity, one of three he is now pursuing through the ARC of Baltimore's supported employment program.

Born three and a half months premature, Benjamin has dealt with the many tough challenges that come with serious visual impairments and developmental delays. After years in public schools, his parents jumped at the chance to enroll him at MSB, where he not only mastered a wealth of customized life skills (which included maintaining a kosher Jewish kitchen), but he also broke into the entertainment field.

In fact, the school's Career Education staff arranged Benjamin's first music "gig" at a local senior facility, as an off-campus, on-the-job training experience. He has since become a regular and much-loved performer, who with the help of his ARC counselors, continues to study his music at the Peabody Institute.

Of course, his parents are proud of his achievements and delighted he is doing something he truly enjoys. According to Marjorie Waldman, "It's actually a fantastic situation all around. Ben is at his best when he's on his keyboard, and the folks he plays for really love him. It doesn't get better than that."

Career Education is but one of many customized support services MSB offers to help its students live more independently, while also pursuing their special talents and interests. The idea is to provide them with marketable job skills and practical, hands-on experience in a variety of on and off campus employment settings. Over the years, we have seen dozens of graduates like Benjamin apply their education in communities across the state. Our latest on-campus training venture is the Hip Hop Shop, a thriving boutique that gives our students a chance to try their hand at running a business.



# 2012 Graduates

< spreading our wings >



James Becker



Theresa Coby



Devin Davis



Francis Garove



Justin Gibson



Joshua Gregory



Katherine Kolm



Kendall May



Tyler Mayo



Rasheeda McCrae



Tymeke McDowney



Allison Neff



Ariana Orndorff



Dayshauna Purdie



Daniel Price



Dontia Ray



Shekida Reed



Carlos Elmo-Reyes



Jamel Simon



KeShaun Thomas



Benjamin Waldman

**James Becker** Loved by all for his easygoing manner and great sense of humor, James always enjoyed a good joke and never missed a chance to socialize. He lives with his family in Parkville, and is becoming involved in some of the special community activities there.

**Theresa Coby** A budding cook with a green thumb to boot, Theresa is best known for her exceptional work ethic and fun-loving personality. She plans to stay close to home in Baltimore County, and looks forward to finding a great job with a good paycheck.

**Devin Davis** Also known as "Double Dizzle" and "De Bo Brown," Devin was always willing to try just about anything once. He now attends a day program in Annapolis, while living at home with his parents and brother Camryn (who also graduated from high school this year).

**Francis Garove** In his 18 years at MSB, Francis distinguished himself as a hard worker, with an indomitable spirit. He now lives with his family in Perry Hall, where he also attends a day program.

**Justin Gibson** An eager learner and enthusiastic athlete, Justin mastered more than a few important life skills during his four years at MSB. His plans for the future include a college degree, followed by a career in information technology.

**Joshua Gregory** As a guy who's always "up for a challenge," Josh is now off to a successful start in life, thanks to relentless determination and MSB's Independent Living program. After studying political science in college, he will focus on clearing the biggest hurdle of all: finding a job he enjoys.

**Katherine Kolm** Kate will always be remembered for her radiant smile and enthusiastic "high fives," while cruising the halls with her mail cart. Her plans for the future include moving into an ARC-supported group home in Baltimore with two of her fellow MSB graduates.

**Kendall May** Known by many on campus as the "happiest guy at MSB," Kendall was a huge fan of bowling, baseball, and horseback riding. With school behind him, he plans to room with two of his fellow MSB classmates in an ARC-supported group home.

**Tyler Mayo** During his years at MSB, Tyler discovered the wonders of technology for accomplishing any number of important tasks, including big wins on his favorite arcade game, Wheel of Fortune. He now lives with his family and attends the Harford Center Day Program.

**Rasheeda McCrae** As both a natural leader and an extraordinary team player, Rasheeda knows what it takes to make things happen around her. Having already completed a child care certificate at Dundalk Community College, she wants to continue her education, while also working in her field.

**Tymeke McDowney** Tymeke loved learning as much as she did hanging out with her friends, and spent many enjoyable hours doing both. After a good start at Prince George's Community College, she hopes to earn a bachelor's degree at University of Maryland Baltimore County.

**Allison Neff** Known for her computer skills, vibrant personality, and entrepreneurial spirit, Allison continues to expand her basket business, with plenty of help from her mom. She also plans to keep moving with her music, taking piano and drum lessons whenever she can.

**Ariana Orndorff** A young woman who was always on the move, Ariana took an active role in everything from therapeutic swimming and horseback riding, to performing with the Magical Experiences Arts Company. She will attend a day program with her peers back home in Prince George's County.

**Dayshauna Purdie** A big believer in the power of hard work, Dayshauna has come a long way in her 13 years at MSB. She is now putting her considerable skills to use in the Chimes Program, while living at home with her family.

**Daniel Price** At 18, Dan is already an accomplished musician, with an unusually keen ear and a highly organized mind. After completing his degree at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, he dreams of launching a successful career as a performer and songwriter.

**Dontia Ray** A regular at MSB sock hops, Dontia was well known for his musical interests and passion for dancing. Looking ahead to the future, he hopes to help his mom finish and promote a book they are working on.

**Shekida Reed** As senior class treasurer, Shekida dazzled everyone with both her problem-solving skills and her knack for balancing budgets. She is now working on her childcare certificate at Dundalk Community College with help from The Alliance, a supported employment program.

**Carlos Elmo-Reyes** A tireless learner with a penchant for horseback riding (and the faster, the better), Carlos gave his all to everything he did at MSB, always rising to the occasion for teachers and friends alike. Carlos lives on the Eastern Shore, with support from Somerset Community Services.

**Jamel Simon** Dubbed "Most Athletic" by his fellow senior class members, Jamel played every sport he could sign up for, from swimming and track to wrestling and goal ball. He lives in Howard County and plans to continue his education at the local community college.

**KeShaun Thomas** Voted "Best in the Kitchen," KeShaun puts cooking at the very top of her growing list of independent living skills. She now lives at home and attends classes at Harford Community College.

**Benjamin Waldman** A born performer who loves to make people smile, Benjamin ended his senior year at MSB on a high note, as a headliner in the musical, *Mary Poppins*. He lives with his family in Baltimore, where he takes part in the ARC's supported employment program.

Congratulations!



**Our Heartfelt Thanks** We are grateful to the many businesses, foundations, public agencies and private citizens who have helped us spread our wings over the past year. Thanks to your generous donations, MSB has made a real impact in the lives of the **1,300 students** we serve throughout the State of Maryland. Here are just a few of our many accomplishments.



We finalized plans and secured funding for the **state-of-the-art Learning Activity Center and Cottages**. As the first phase of MSB’s School of the Future master plan, this facility will enable us to better meet the needs of students with multiple disabilities.



Our beautiful new **Independent Living Home** is now a reality. Built with public and private funds, it provides a unique opportunity for students to test drive important life skills before graduation.



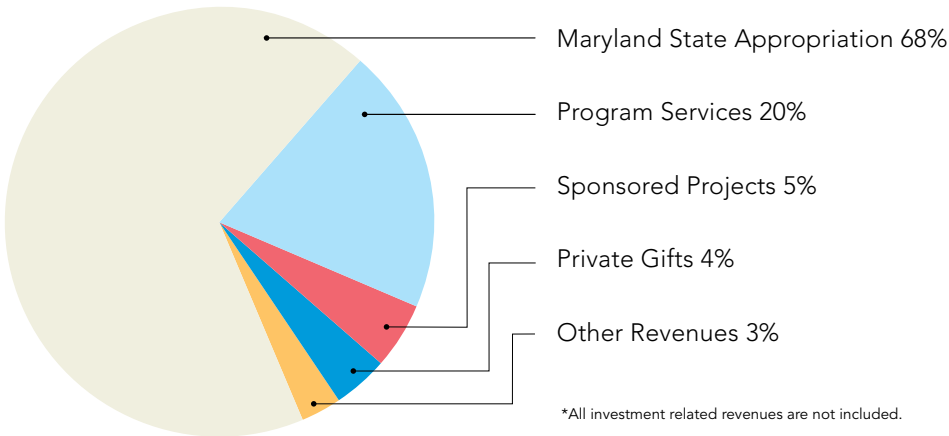
We celebrated the grand opening of the **Hip Hop Shop**, a thriving, student-run boutique located next to MSB’s infamous Rock ‘n’ Roll Café.



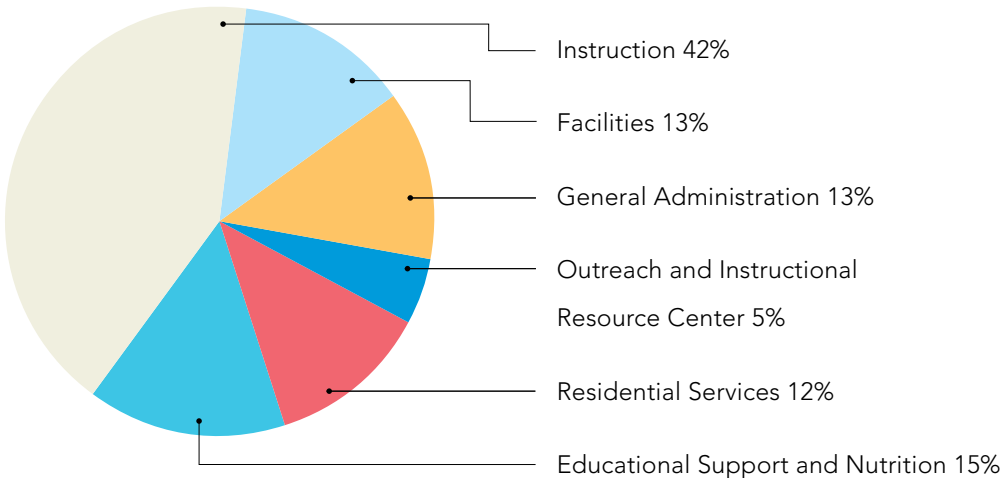
With substantial support from three local foundations, we purchased cutting-edge assistive technology, including interactive **Smartboards**, which help level the learning field for students with physical and developmental challenges.

**Financials** The Maryland School for the Blind is a private, 501(c)(3) school under Internal Revenue Service regulations. The School’s fiscal year ends June 30<sup>th</sup>. Funding is provided primarily through grants from the Maryland State Department of Education and payments from local school districts. Contributions are received from individuals, corporations, foundations and community groups. Total expenses approximated \$24.6 million.

**REVENUES\***



**EXPENSES**



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