

# See beyond Newsletter

## A Letter from the MSB Superintendent

Greetings and happy fall! I am so excited that all our students and staff are back on campus for this new school year, and we are returning to normal school activities. We are also approaching the season of giving thanks! Soon we will all gather with family and friends to celebrate the holidays. It is a time to reflect on the people in our lives for whom we are thankful.

At MSB, we are very grateful for our students, families, and staff and the support of our friends and donors of the school. You are making a real difference for students who are blind or low vision. Without you, we could not fulfill our mission of serving students with blindness or low vision of all abilities from birth through 21 throughout their unique educational journey.

We are constantly working to improve our campus and provide modern, accessible facilities designed to accommodate our students, many of whom have additional disabilities. To that end, we just broke ground on the Cottages on the Hill, a 23,000-square-foot residential facility for students who live on the MSB campus during the school week. Plans also include relocating the Maryland Instructional Resource Center braille book repository to the lower level of this residential building. We are grateful to the state of Maryland, particularly the Inter-agency Commission on School Construction, for providing most of the funding for this critical campus improvement project.

If you want to learn more about this project or plans for our school, feel free to contact me at [robh@mdschblind.org](mailto:robh@mdschblind.org). If you are interested in supporting MSB, visit [www.marylandschoolfortheblind.org/support-us](http://www.marylandschoolfortheblind.org/support-us) or make a donation using the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your generosity.

I wish you and yours happy holidays!

Rob Hair

Superintendent/CEO

## A Brighter Future

Marie Ijambo highlights her life before MSB, during her time on campus, and her big plans for the future. Highlighted on page 2.

## So Beepin' Fun!

Images from the 2022 Beep Baseball Event with the Orioles and the League of Dreams. Featured on page 3.

## Star Staffer

Check out our Staff section on page 3 to learn about our very own POSB winners.



The Cottages on the Hill Groundbreaking with staff.





Marie Ijambo with the girl's track team.

## A Brighter Future

Marie Ijambo speaks with the eloquence of an adult, and at 17 years old, she already knows what she wants to do with her life. Her goal is to be a psychologist to help people, as others have done for her. Marie's inspiration is her school social worker, Ms. Paige, at the Maryland School for the Blind (MSB). "I feel amazing after talking to her. That is why I want to go to college and study psychology. If I can be a part of someone's life like that, it would be awesome – to lend an ear, unburden someone's heart about an issue - that would be great."

Born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Marie was diagnosed at 8 months old with Leber Congenital Amaurosis (LCA), a family of congenital retinal dystrophy that results in severe vision loss at an early age. She attended school in her home country as a child but moved to the United States with her parents and four younger siblings in 2018. "We love our home country, but we wanted better educational opportunities and medical resources for our children, especially for Marie," according to her dad Arsene. The family relocated to Maryland, which they had visited many times, to be close to other family members.



The Ijambo family.

When the family was researching educational options for Marie, the National Federation of the Blind referred them to MSB, and based on her IEP goals, she was accepted as a student in 2018. In her fourth year at MSB, Marie is thriving academically and socially. She has learned to read and write braille, improved her cane travel skills through Orientation and Mobility lessons, and plays sports with her peers, although she admits "sports is not one of my favorite things." She decided to join the MSB track team to be a more well-rounded person and to take her out of her comfort zone and try something new.



Marie Ijambo learning to sew.

An avid reader, she enjoys the *Anne of Green Gables* series. According to Marie, "It is such a beautiful story and walks you through when something new happens in your life. All of the characters learn to adapt to their situation." Perhaps she relates to the story because there are similarities in her life. Marie has had to adapt to many changes, including relocating to a new country, attending a new school, and making new friends. This could have been challenging as a teenager, but Marie has adjusted beautifully.

Going to school at MSB has helped her in this regard. According to Arsene, "I am so impressed with the school and the staff at MSB. There are children here with very big challenges, and the teachers are so patient and kind. You can see that they do this for love, not for the money." Marie echoes her father's sentiments. "I love attending school at MSB; it is an awesome place. The people here really care about us and are genuinely involved in our lives, and that's a great thing."

## So Beepin' Fun!



It was the perfect day for our annual Beep Baseball Fall Classic on September 13! MSB student athletes had the opportunity to play America's pastime with volunteers from the League of Dreams and Baltimore Orioles, including Orioles Hall of Fame shortstop Mike Bordick. The Oriole Bird and the MSB Bee mascots were also on hand to join in the fun. Thanks to the Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation for coming out to cheer on the participants and watch them play on the field they helped to build!



## Our Star Staffers

Principals of Schools for the Blind (POSB) presented their national awards in October at the American Printing House for the Blind annual conference in Louisville, KY. These awards are given in recognition of the contributions of remarkable people who work with students who are blind or low-vision. Schools of the Blind across the nation nominate their best and brightest; only seven total awards are given each year. This year two members of The Maryland School for the Blind staff were recipients of the prestigious award. Amanda Aaron, Occupational Therapist, was named the Outstanding Related Service Provider of the Blind and Visually Impaired. Dontay Kelly received the Outstanding Paraprofessional award.

**Congratulations Amanda and Dontay!!**



Amanda Aaron & Dontay Kelly

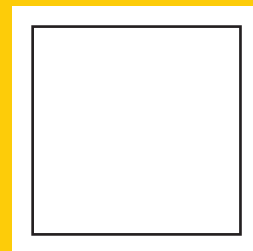




The Maryland School for the Blind

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[www.marylandschoolfortheblind.org](http://www.marylandschoolfortheblind.org)



# See beyond



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If interested call or  
email Marlo Jacobson:  
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