



Message from

Board President, Karlo Young and Executive Director, Jess Suriano



Dear **B.E.S.T.** Friends,

This time of year always brings reflection and gratitude – reflection on all that we have accomplished together, and gratitude for those by our side along the journey. This school year is vastly different than last, with our 379 students in grades K-12 fully enjoying the benefits of in-person learning – truly joyful! We are in awe of our eighteen independent member schools, and the ways in which they have adapted to keep our students safe and together. At **B.E.S.T.**, with our own adaptations, we remain anchored in our work and are eager for you to share in our celebration of the past year of SUPPORT, ACHIEVEMENT, FAMILY, LEADERSHIP and CONNECTION.

B.E.S.T. is in the business of creating life-changing opportunities for Black students from families with financial need in the Baltimore area. Our parent engagement, community connection, academic enrichment, leadership development, college-bound programming, internship pipeline and behind-the-scenes financial support all elevate the children and young adults we are so fortunate to call **B.E.S.T.** students. Their achievements today are just the beginning, as you can see from our **B.E.S.T.** alumni, who are making an impact in Baltimore as well as cities around the world.

We hope you will enjoy reading more about our beloved students, families, alumni, funders and Trustees. Thank you for supporting our outstanding young people and taking this journey with us.

With deep gratitude,

Karlo G. Young
Board President

Jessica Wolf Suriano
Executive Director

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Our Mission

The Baltimore Educational Scholarship Trust, in partnership with our eighteen independent member schools, recruits and supports through the admissions process academically ambitious African American students with financial need from the Baltimore area. Once students are enrolled, **B.E.S.T.** positions them for success through academic preparation, character and leadership development, and support programs.

Support

B.E.S.T. Admissions

At our founding in 1987, **B.E.S.T.** was charged with identifying and supporting academically talented Black students from families with financial need in the Baltimore region who have the ability to thrive in an independent school. Today, we continue to support children seeking independent school admission in grades K-9 through strategic recruiting partnerships with public and parochial schools and other non-profit organizations serving young people. Following a comprehensive admission process each June through September, when a family is accepted into the **B.E.S.T.** program, they receive individual admissions counseling and support as they apply to our member schools, as well as a comprehensive overview of additional Baltimore area educational options. Included is Independent School Entrance Exam (ISEE) preparation for students, a Financial Aid Workshop for parents, and tailored, ongoing guidance throughout the entire process.

B.E.S.T. Student, Family and Alumni Support Programming

B.E.S.T. Programming is thoughtfully designed to provide meaningful opportunities for connection, leadership development, essential support and engagement. Our programs and support are intended to enhance each family's independent school experience and create a deepened relationship with both **B.E.S.T.** and their member school, as well as to strengthen ties with our alumni both in and out of college.

Please see below for a comprehensive list of our 2020-2021 student, family and alumni programs:

**Unless indicated, all programming for the 2020-2021 academic year was held virtually.*

- **B.E.S.T.** Parent Listening Sessions
- **B.E.S.T.** Alumni Listening Sessions
- Upper School Student Town Hall
- **B.E.S.T.** Back to School Student Goody Bag Mailing (including **B.E.S.T.** blue light glasses)
- FAFSA 101 Workshop for Senior Parents and Parents of College-Aged Alumni in partnership with Gilman School, Bryn Mawr School and Roland Park Country School
- "Maximizing the College Counseling Experience" Workshop for Upper School families
- HBCU Information Zoom with Alumni Panel
- SAT/ACT Prep with Capital Educators for all **B.E.S.T.** Juniors
- Halloween Trivia Zoom for Lower & Middle School Families
- Family Holiday Zoom with Senior Speaker from the Class of 2021 and Musical Presentation by **B.E.S.T.** Alumnus Darryl Jordan '96
- INROADS Information Sessions for College-Aged Alumni
- Upper School Student Leadership Book Talk featuring *Five Days: The Fiery Reckoning of an American City* by Wes Moore and Erica L. Green
- Virtual College Tours:
 - Johns Hopkins University
 - University of Southern California
 - North Carolina A&T State University
- Lower School Zoom Scavenger Hunt
- Kickoff to Summer Drive-Thru Celebration for all Students and Families
- New Parent Welcome Zoom featuring Current Parent Panel
- Maryland Zoo in Baltimore for Lower School Families
- Gilman Black Alumni Leadership Institute – 18 **B.E.S.T.** students selected to the cohort
- Art of Leadership, a program of Art With a Heart – 5 **B.E.S.T.** students selected to the cohort

B.E.S.T. Alumni engagement remains a top priority for those alumni in college, and those who are part of our post-college network. As such, our older alumni were included in our Listening Sessions, as well as the following:

Alumni Zoom Series

- "Investment Considerations as the World Reopens" seminar hosted by **B.E.S.T.** Alumni Victor Abiamiri '03 and Joshua Perry '02, Partners and Portfolio Managers at Brown Advisory
- Cooking Class hosted by **B.E.S.T.** Alumna, Keyia Yalcin '02, Owner of FishNet Restaurant at Mt. Vernon Marketplace



Achievement



Leadership

2021 Stanley I. Panitz Leadership Award Winners

This award, in memory of the late Stanley I. Panitz, Founding **B.E.S.T.** Board Chair, is presented annually to **B.E.S.T.** Juniors in recognition of their academic achievement, their demonstrated leadership in both their school and the broader community, and their strength of character. **We are so proud of Jonas, Zawadi and Ty'Shea!**



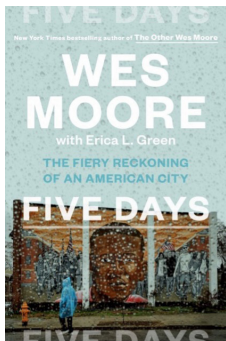
Jonas B. '22, The St. Paul's School



Zawadi S. '22, The Bryn Mawr School



Ty'Shea W. '22, Garrison Forest School



B.E.S.T. Upper School Leadership Book Talk

Through the Molly Hathaway Young Women's and Redmond C.S. Finney Young Men's Leadership Programs, **B.E.S.T.** sent each upper school student a copy of Wes Moore and Erica L. Green's *Five Days: The Fiery Reckoning of an American City*. This book was specially selected for an Upper School Book Talk, as our upper school students lived through the history in Baltimore shared in the book, and it allows our students to consider many differing perspectives, an essential component of leadership. Our virtual book talk was led by current **B.E.S.T.** parent and English teacher at St. Paul's School, Ms. LaShanda Lawrence. The conversation centered on the importance of considering more than one narrative and perspective, how to make connections to the stories we read, and to hear ourselves in them. Ms. Lawrence also shared resources for further learning and engagement, including several recommendations for books, films, and websites.

During the discussion, students and family members described the book as "captivating," "inspiring," "enlightening," and "informative," and that it allowed them to feel like they were "re-living" some of the experiences shared. **B.E.S.T.** looks forward to continuing to build our students' "Leadership Libraries" in the future with additional meaningful selections.

GILMAN BLACK ALUMNI LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The Gilman Black Alumni Leadership Institute (GBALI) is a non-academic co-educational leadership program designed to expose Baltimore Area high school students to business, college, career and life concepts not typically addressed in the curriculum and pedagogy of most schools. Since 2005, the foundation of GBALI is the idea that success is defined by more than a career, and that a career is determined by more than academics. Emphasis is placed not only on educational and career choices but also on the importance of interpersonal relationships and accountability to oneself and others. GBALI students develop a more complete and stronger understanding of the connection between decisions, career, friendships and family. **B.E.S.T.** is proud to partner with GBALI in supporting our shared students. The 2021 cohort included 18 **B.E.S.T.** students.



Each year, **B.E.S.T.** students participate in Art With A Heart's yearlong leadership program "Art of Leadership." In 2021, through the Molly Hathaway and Redmond C.S. Finney Leadership Funds, **B.E.S.T.** sponsored five **B.E.S.T.** sophomores and juniors to have this meaningful leadership opportunity.

Family



Kick-Off to Summer Drive-Thru Celebration

Family



B.E.S.T. Families Visit the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore

Family



Back-to-School 2021

Connection

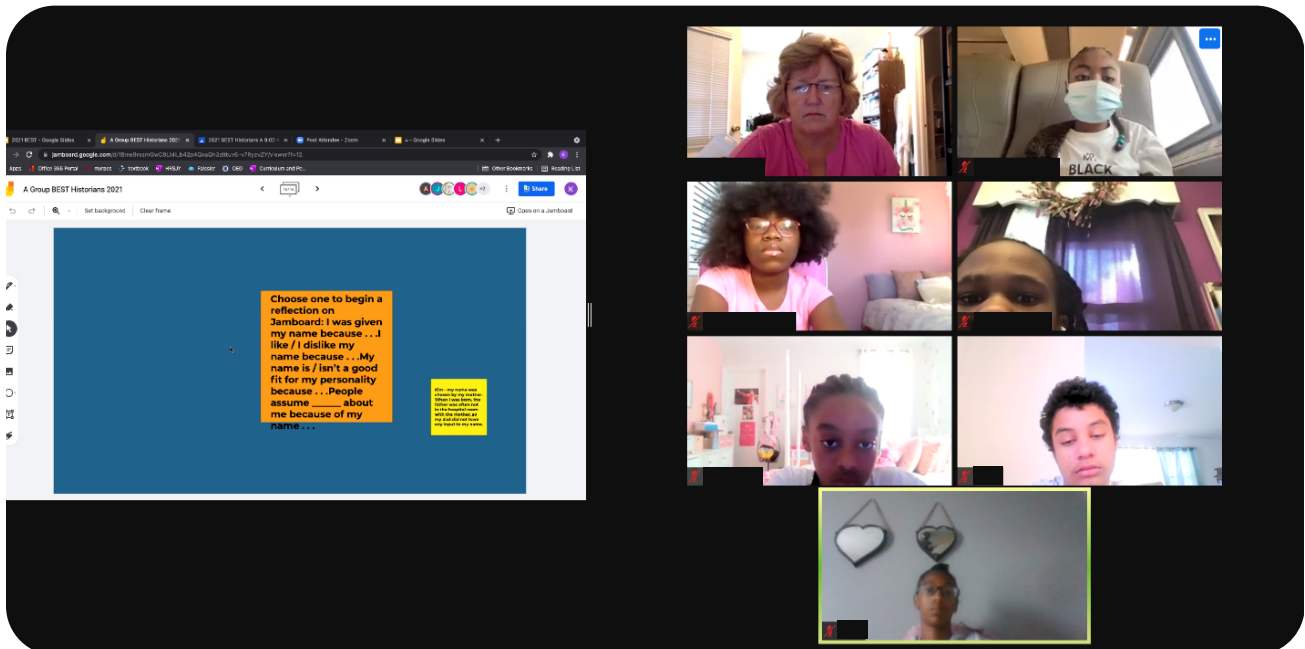
Summer Scholars

Summer Scholars, our signature support and transition program, prepares our newly-enrolled **B.E.S.T.** Middle and Upper School students for the demands and expectations of their new independent schools. CONNECTION is at the core of this program, ensuring that, as our newest members of the **B.E.S.T.** family are preparing to start at their new schools, they are feeling connected to **B.E.S.T.**, each other, and the broader independent school community.

An engaging curriculum comprised of academics, athletics, art, field trips, study skills, advisory and affirmational programming provides the experiences necessary to support a smooth transition for our students and enables them to focus their energy and attention on their academic success as they begin at their new schools in the fall. Additionally, Summer Scholars provides our students with the opportunity to develop a rich network of friends and faculty who will stay with them long after the summer is over. Summer Scholars, though virtual for Summer 2021, contained all of the hallmark components of this essential and impactful program, including some new and exciting elements:

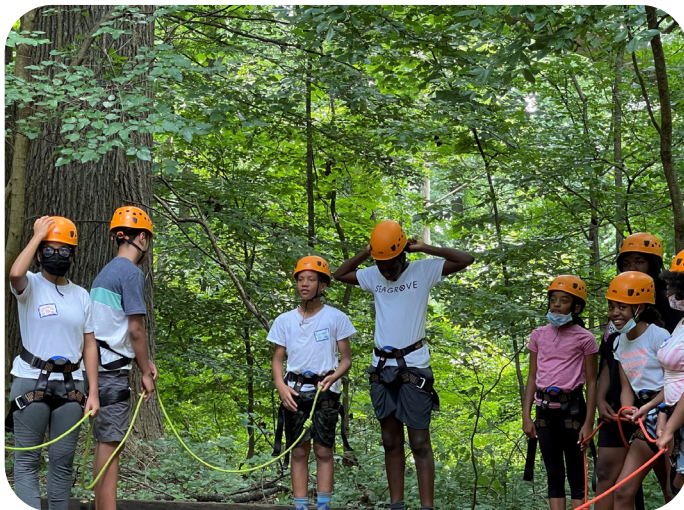
- Virtual field trips with the Lillie Carroll Jackson Museum and The Hippodrome Theatre/Camp Hippodrome
- In-person day at Outward Bound for team building and leadership development
- Story Telling Workshop with **B.E.S.T.** Alumnus, David Fakunle, Ph.D.
- Transitions Workshop – “Identity Safety and Black Student Success” - with Marlo Thomas, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Georgetown Day School.

Our thanks to Roland Park Country School; Summer Scholars Director, Elisha James, and her incredible faculty and interns; the Thomas Wilson Sanitarium for Children of Baltimore City, and STX. Their commitment of time, talent and treasure ensure the continued success of this program.

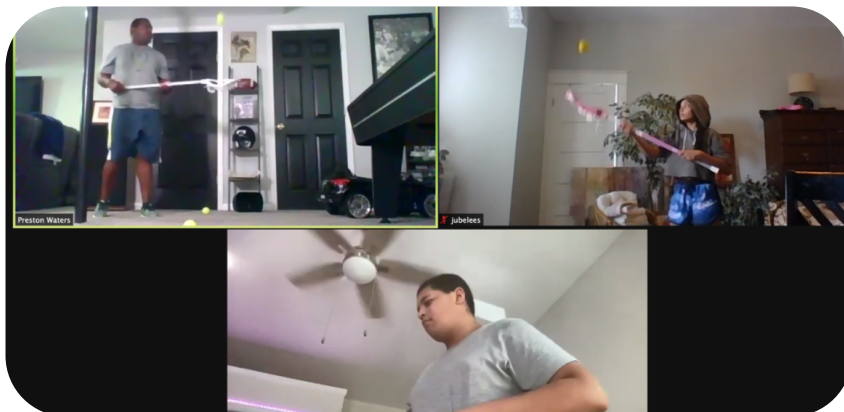


Summer Scholars Students in Action

Connection



In-person day at Outward Bound for team building and leadership development



Virtual Lacrosse with STX Gear



Story Telling Workshop with **B.E.S.T.** Alumnus, David Fakunle, Ph.D.

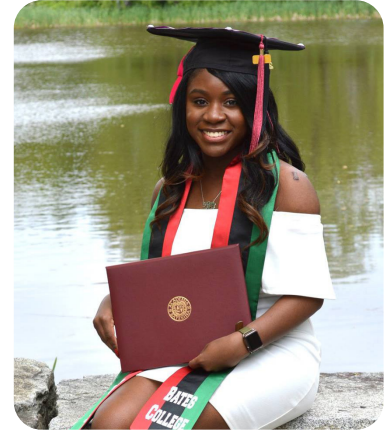
Alumni Spotlights



Cinneah El-Amin,
Friends School of Baltimore '12
Global Product Manager, Mastercard



Damian Perkins, McDonogh School, '92
Associate Director, Customer Team Leader,
Merck & Co., Inc.



Rachel Chappell,
Park School of Baltimore '14
Research Assistant, Johns Hopkins
University School of Education



Dr. Sara Bleich, Garrison Forest School '96
Senior Advisor of COVID,
Office of Secretary,
US Department of Agriculture



Mattecín Bayne,
St. Paul's School for Girls '15
Writer's Assistant of Netflix's
"Never Have I Ever"



Joshua Perry, Calvert School '98,
McDonogh School '02
Fixed Income Portfolio Manager,
Brown Advisory



Samantha Frazier, Oldfields School '16
Operational Support Technician,
US Department of Justice



Victor Abiamiri, Gilman School '03
Private Client Portfolio Manager,
Brown Advisory



Britta Brown, Garrison Forest School '04
Senior Director of Basketball Administration
at Detroit Pistons

With Gratitude

The **B.E.S.T.** Community – all 379 current families and our 143 college students – is bolstered by our independent member schools, our outstanding partners, our vast **B.E.S.T.** Alumni network, **and you – our loyal and generous funders.** Your support of our mission and belief in our students is a gift for which we are immeasurably grateful.

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If an error has been made, please accept our sincere apology and notify Crystal Alston '96 at 410.752.2225 or calston@besttrust.org.

* Donor passed after making gift

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Thank you to our **B.E.S.T.** Member Schools for the mountains you move each day to support our shared students and families, especially now. For the 2021-2022 academic year, member schools are providing over \$9 million in financial aid to our 379 **B.E.S.T.** students in grades K-12. We are grateful for their partnership and commitment to our mission.

B.E.S.T. Member Schools



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