

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



B.E.S.T.

Baltimore Educational
Scholarship Trust

MESSAGE FROM

BOARD PRESIDENT, KARLO YOUNG AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JESS SURIANO

OUR MISSION

The Baltimore Educational Scholarship Trust, in partnership with our seventeen 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.

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Dearest Friends of **B.E.S.T.**,

Each year during this season of gratitude and thanksgiving, we pause to celebrate the accomplishments of the Baltimore Educational Scholarship Trust as we carry forward the promise of our 36-year mission – a celebration made possible by your investment in the young people we serve. And we are thrilled to share that this year, we are supporting

405 B.E.S.T. students grades K-12 at our 17 Member Schools! Our students, in turn, are transforming the broader Baltimore independent school community through the excellence they bring to their campuses and beyond, and we are grateful for the partnership we share with our Member Schools who elevate these wonderful students each and every day.

B.E.S.T., a leading educational institution with a rich history in Baltimore, continues to create pathways to independent schools and supports a full and meaningful experience for academically ambitious Black students from families with financial need who matriculate to one of our Member Schools. Our admissions and financial aid counseling, parent engagement, community connection, academic enrichment, leadership development, college-bound programming, internship pipeline and behind-the-scenes financial support all serve to **remove obstacles and open doors** for the children and young adults we are so proud to call **B.E.S.T.** students.

There is much to celebrate as we reflect on the past year, and in the pages that follow, we have highlighted the foundations of our work: SUPPORT, LEADERSHIP, FAMILY, CONNECTION, and ACHIEVEMENT, with an emphasis as always on our outstanding students, Alumni, Member Schools, and partners – and you, our funders and dearest friends.

With you in their corner, our B.E.S.T. students are unstoppable!

With deep gratitude,



Karlo G. Young
Board President



Jessica Wolf Suriano
Executive Director

SUPPORT

2023 School Year Kickoff with our B.E.S.T. Member School Colleagues



Since our founding in 1987, **B.E.S.T.** identifies and supports academically ambitious Black students from families with financial need in the Baltimore region who will thrive in an independent school. We identify candidates for the independent school admission process for grades K-9 through strategic recruiting partnerships with public and parochial schools, and other nonprofits and organizations in our city serving young people, including academic, arts, and athletic programs. And after thirty-six years, we receive substantial referrals from families throughout Baltimore. 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, an ISEE Exam, a Financial Aid Workshop for parents/caregivers, a Member School Fair for **B.E.S.T.** applicants, and personalized, continuous 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 impactful opportunities for connection, leadership development, essential support, and engagement. Our programs and support are intended to enrich each family's independent school experience and strengthen their relationship with both **B.E.S.T.** and their Member School. We also create opportunities for meaningful, sustained engagement with our college-aged and older Alumni. Many of our Programs are featured throughout this Report.

Here are some of our 2022-2023 Student, Family, and Alumni Programs:

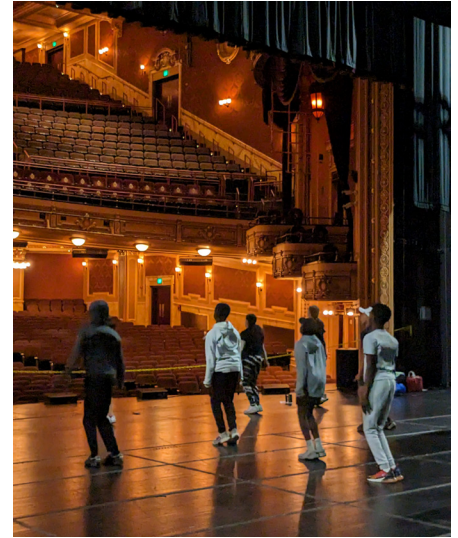


SUPPORT

SUMMER SCHOLARS

Summer Scholars, our longest-running, signature support and transition program, prepares our newly enrolled **B.E.S.T.** Middle and Upper School students for the rigor and opportunities awaiting them at their new independent schools. We spend the duration of the program ensuring that our students are affirmed and celebrated, and that - as our newest members of the **B.E.S.T.** family - they feel 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 engage fully when they arrive at their new independent school in the fall. Additionally, Summer Scholars establishes a rich network for our students of friends and faculty who will stay with them long after the summer is over. In addition to rigorous academic courses, Summer Scholars 2023 featured the following experiences:



- Field trip to Camp Hippodrome at The Hippodrome Theatre
- Day at Outward Bound for team-building and leadership development
- Story Telling Workshop with **B.E.S.T.** Alumnus, David Fakunle '05, Ph.D.
- “Black Joy: Claiming Your Power” Transition Workshop with Michael Powell, Director of Community, Equity and Inclusion at the Boys’ Latin School with special guest, Jonathan E., **B.E.S.T.** & Boys’ Latin Alumnus '21
- Virtual field trip to the Lillie Mae Carroll Jackson Museum
- Roller Skating Party

Our thanks to Caroline Blatti, Head of School, and Roland Park Country School for graciously and lovingly hosting us; Summer Scholars Director, LaShanda Lawrence; and the incredible Summer Scholars faculty, including **B.E.S.T.** & RPCS Alumna Kendall B. '23. Your support of our students is an enduring gift.

A Tremendous Thank You to:



Thomas Wilson Foundation

&



for their Outstanding Commitment to Summer Scholars

SUPPORT

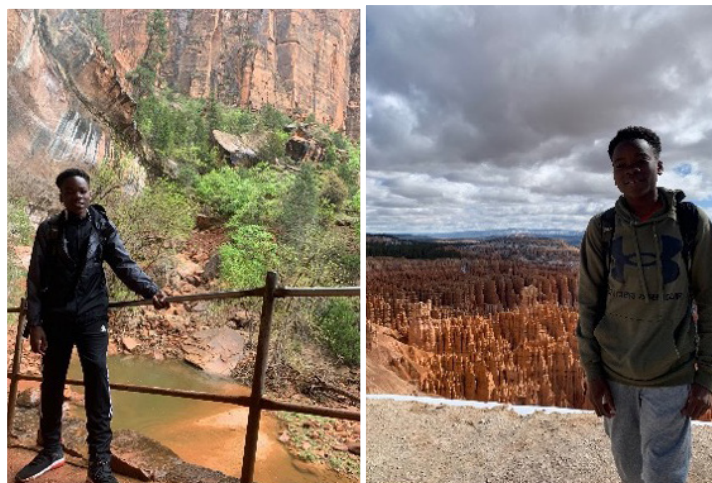


Scenes from Summer Scholars

SPECIAL FUNDS

STUART O. SIMMS PRESIDENT'S FUND

The Stuart O. Simms President's Fund at **B.E.S.T.** was established to honor Stu Simms, Past President and Trustee Emeritus, for his unwavering commitment to the Baltimore Educational Scholarship Trust. The Fund provides transformational support for **B.E.S.T.** students above and beyond the existing support provided by **B.E.S.T.** and our Member Schools. This includes but is not limited to: experiential learning, out of state travel for college visits and school-sponsored spring break trips, academic supports, and significant transportation challenges.



Jemyl B. '27, St. Paul's School for Boys, on his trip to the Grand Canyon and Hoover Dam. This trip was partially funded by the Stuart O. Simms President's Fund.

THE RODGERS FAMILY EMERGENCY FUND

The Rodgers Emergency Fund, named for Past President and Trustee Emeritus Theo Rodgers and in loving memory of his wife, Blanche, was created to respond to emergency grant requests for a family at risk of their student's disenrollment from their Member School due to financial crisis caused by health challenges, the loss of employment, or other life-complicating circumstances.

ANTHONY DEERING CULTURAL ENHANCEMENT FUND

Established and endowed by Theo Rodgers to honor the memory of Anthony Deering, the Anthony Deering Cultural Enhancement Fund enables **B.E.S.T.** students the opportunity to have enriching cultural experiences, including school-year and summer opportunities at Baltimore area cultural institutions.



SAT/ACT PREP

Thanks to special funding provided by Trustee Emeritus, Lee Owen and his wife, Jenny, **B.E.S.T.** supports SAT/ACT prep for all **B.E.S.T.** Juniors through a significant partnership with premier test-prep company, Capital Educators.



B.E.S.T. students enjoying summer camp

SUMMER CAMP INITIATIVE

B.E.S.T. is proud to share that, for Summer 2023, we offered families of K-3rd grade students the opportunity to receive financial support to attend a summer camp of their choosing. **This special offering was created to provide the possibility for meaningful summer experiences for our students while eliminating a significant financial burden for parents/caregivers.** We look forward to expanding our offering for Summer 2024 to all Lower School Students.

LEADERSHIP

B.E.S.T. *LEADERS ON LEADERSHIP* BREAKFAST

In 2022, **B.E.S.T.** resumed our annual *Leaders on Leadership* Breakfast at The Center Club, convening our Upper School Students, Trustees, and funders for a morning of community and inspiration. This event brings together our city's top philanthropic, educational, and corporate leaders with the next generation of Baltimore leadership—our students. The morning features empowering messages and expressions of deep appreciation for our distinguished funders, Heads of School, Community Trustees, Alumni and friends of **B.E.S.T.**



Our Honored speakers, Cinneah El-Amin '12, Friends School of Baltimore and **B.E.S.T.** Alumna, Founder of Flynnanced; and Niles R. Ford, Ph.D., Former Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department, shared important messages of strength and persistence in the face of adversity, highlighting their careers and the strategies they used to carve their own unique path to personal and professional success and fulfillment.

A special thank you to our other speakers Karlo Young, **B.E.S.T.** Board President; Christian Donovan, Head of Friends School of Baltimore and **B.E.S.T.** Trustee; and Diane Hutchins, **B.E.S.T.** Trustee and Roland Park Country School Distinguished Alumna.



LEADERSHIP



Celebrating Some of our Past Leadership Breakfast Honored Speakers
Thank you to our Alumni and Community Leaders for empowering and inspiring future generations of Black leaders.



Chace C. '24
St. Paul's School for Girls

Isaac A. '24
Friends School of Baltimore

2023 STANLEY I. PANITZ LEADERSHIP AWARD

This award, in memory of the late Stanley I. Panitz, Founding **B.E.S.T.** Board Chair, is presented annually to two **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 Chace and Isaac!

LEGACY LUNCHEON

Upper School **B.E.S.T.** Students were invited to attend the Legacy Luncheon of the Alliance of Black Women Attorneys of Maryland as guests of Tiffani Sterrette Collins '00, a **B.E.S.T.** and Friends School of Baltimore Alumna and Vice President of the **B.E.S.T.** Board of Trustees. Over lunch at Stanford Grill, students had the opportunity to connect with many accomplished women in the legal field. Thank you to Tiffani for this wonderful opportunity.



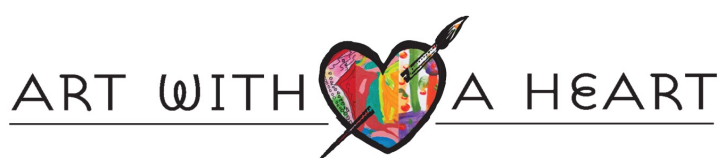
LEADERSHIP

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 has been 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 2023 cohort included 16 **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 2023, through the Molly Hathaway Leadership Fund, **B.E.S.T.** sponsored two **B.E.S.T.** Upper School students to have this wonderful leadership opportunity.

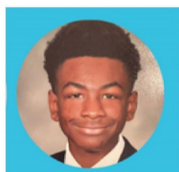


Ciara G. '25

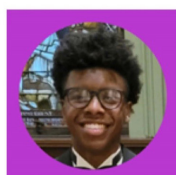
Ja'la F. '24



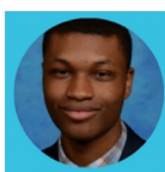
2023 B.E.S.T. Summer Interns



Aamir E. '26



Xavier B. '24



Christian H. '24



Farrah A. '24



CJ B. '24

STEMcx PARTNERSHIP

B.E.S.T. celebrates our students who were selected for paid summer internships through our partnership with STEMcx. Aamir E. '26 and Christian H. '24 participated in an Architecture Internship at Morgan State University supported by the Baltimore Chapter of the National Association of Minority Architects. Xavier B. '24 participated in a Healthcare Internship provided by New York University School of Medicine, and CJ B. '24 and Farrah A. '24 participated in the Environmental Justice Internship provided by George Washington University. We are thrilled to connect our students with terrific internship experiences throughout the summer.



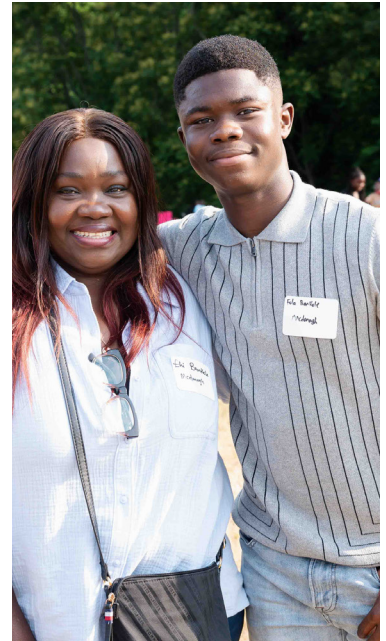
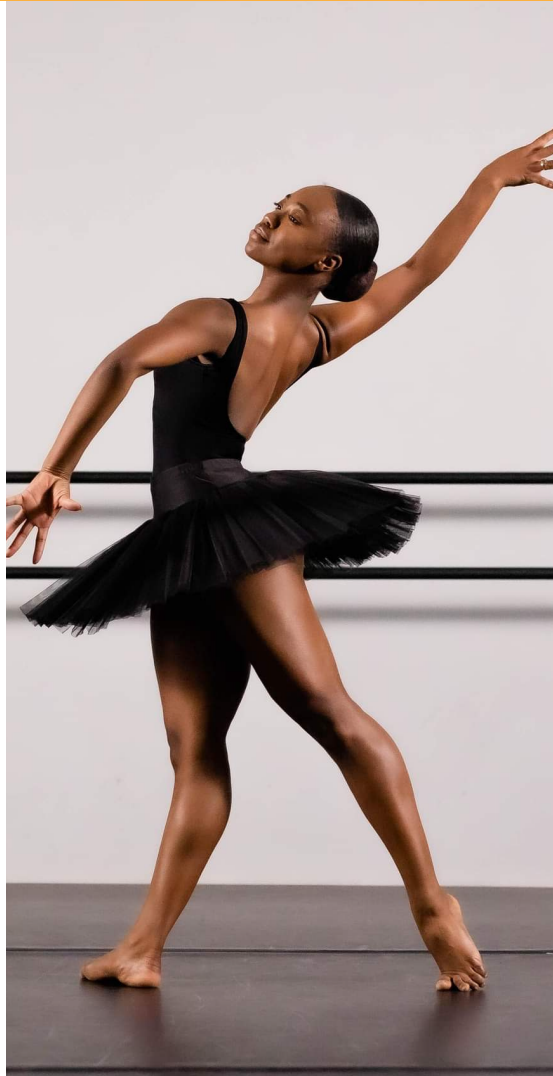
INROADS PARTNERSHIP

B.E.S.T. Young Alumni continue to build their professional experience through partnerships like INROADS. INROADS is a non-profit organization that creates pathways to careers for ethnically-diverse high school and college students across the country. They position graduates to advance in their careers and help employers foster diverse and inclusive workplaces.

FAMILY



FAMILY



CONNECTION

B.E.S.T. prioritizes community and connection – connection between **B.E.S.T.** and our students, families, and Alumni; between **B.E.S.T.** and our 17 Member Schools; between **B.E.S.T.** and our partner organizations; and between **B.E.S.T.** and the Baltimore community and beyond.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK VISIT

***B.E.S.T.** Connects our Students and Families to Local Colleges and Universities*

This year, we visited University of Maryland College Park for a tour and information session.



COLLEGE ADMISSIONS FAQ WORKSHOP

***B.E.S.T.** Connects our Students and Families with Resources to Support the College Admission and Matriculation Process*

Special thanks to Calvin Wise, Deputy Dean of Admissions at Johns Hopkins University, and Paula Dofat, Associate at Four-Point Education Partners for leading this informative session for our Upper School families.



BLACK PANTHER: WAKANDA FOREVER SCREENING

***B.E.S.T.** Connects at Meaningful Movies*



CONNECTION

BLACK HISTORY MONTH STUDENT BOOK MAILING

B.E.S.T. Connects with our Students During Black History Month

In February, we sent specially selected books to our students in an effort to uplift, affirm, and create a “Leadership Library.”



KICKOFF TO SUMMER CELEBRATION

B.E.S.T. Connects with Students, Families, and Alumni to Celebrate the Start of Summer

Thank you to Odyssey School for hosting this annual evening of connection and fun. Families enjoyed food trucks, a DJ, lawn games, and a terrific evening with the **B.E.S.T.** Community.



NEW PARENT/CAREGIVER WELCOME DINNER

B.E.S.T. Connects our New Parents and Caregivers

B.E.S.T. parents/caregivers of our newly enrolled students gathered for a Welcome Dinner at Bryn Mawr School, featuring a Current Parent Panel Discussion and lots of time for meaningful networking and connection.



Current Parent Panelists at our annual New Parent/Caregiver Welcome Dinner

ACHIEVEMENT

WE ARE SO PROUD OF THE B.E.S.T. CLASS OF 2023



MEMBERS OF THE B.E.S.T. CLASS OF 2023



Kellsie L. '23
Yale University

The Bryn Mawr School – 2023
Yale University – Major: Ethics, Politics & Economics

“**B.E.S.T.** has curated a welcoming community of ambitious Black students and allies who are there to support me in my academic endeavors and beyond. I am forever grateful for **B.E.S.T.** for believing in me and providing me with the tools needed to succeed.”

ALUMNI

YOUNG ALUMNI LUNCHEON



B.E.S.T. Alumni gathered to reconnect with each other and the **B.E.S.T.** staff for lunch at the Mt. Washington Tavern before returning to their college campuses for the spring semester. Highlights included time together as well as inspiring remarks from Karlo Young, **B.E.S.T.** Board President, Darius Jennings, **B.E.S.T.** and Gilman School '11 and Maxwell Costes, **B.E.S.T.** and Gilman School '18.



ALUMNI COCKTAIL PARTY

B.E.S.T. Alumni gathered at the Mt. Washington Tavern for an evening of networking and connection. Joined by **B.E.S.T.** Alumni Trustees, Josh Perry (Calvert School '96 and McDonogh '02) and Keyia Yalcin (St. Paul's School for Girls '02), Alumni spanning four decades were in attendance and had the chance to hear all the ways **B.E.S.T.** supports students and their families throughout their independent school journeys.





B.E.S.T. celebrates Josh Perry as he was named the 2023 Distinguished Alumnus by Calvert School.

Joshua Perry, **B.E.S.T.** & Calvert School '96 & McDonogh School Alumnus '02 with Jess Suriano, Executive Director and Crystal Lee Alston '96, Director of Advancement

THE POWER OF ALUMNI GIVING

Daryl Peace '95 recently made a leadership gift in honor of his grandmother, Nellie Peace. With his gift, he shared the following:

"Nellie is the daughter of a sharecropper and a domestic worker. She was reared in the rural South. Nellie was expected to remain in the home as the eldest daughter to assist in the care of younger siblings. This expectation caused her to discontinue her formal education beyond the eighth grade.

Her story is about individual sacrifice for the betterment of generations to come. Langston Hughes asked the question of what happens to a dream deferred? Familial obligation deferred Nellie's dreams, yet the deferred dream was realized two generations later. This donation acknowledges the quiet warriors within every family who gave unselfishly for a future generational return."



Daryl Peace '95, McDonogh School

WITH GRATITUDE

INDIVIDUAL GIVING

Suzanne and Eric Adler
Teri and Tedd Alexander
Bonnie and David W. Allan
Crystal Lee Alston '96
Vasundhara and Ashish Arora
Danielle and David Ascione
Heather K. and Clifford M. Athey
Nancy and Preston Athey
Peter Baily
Emily and Christopher Baratta
Cricket and John Barrazotto
Silverio Basile
C. Joyce Baughn
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Sydney and **Alan-Michael Carter '11**
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Susan Cashman
Lise Charlier
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Tiffani '00 and Reco Collins
Marina and Luke Cooper
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George Davenport
Ann and David DeMuth
Christy and David DiPietro
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John H. Doak
Christian Donovan
Deborah and Philip D. English
Becky and David J. Farace

Hadley and Christopher Feiss
Dominique Ferguson
Wesley and Thomas P. Finnerty
Jean Finney
Karen and Martin Fisher
Cecil E. Flamer
Evelyn A. Flory
Vanessa and Michael C. Ford on behalf of the
P.O.W.E.R. Foundation
Tracey and Thomas Ford
Maya Foster-Brown '00
Kwaisi T. France '99
Kay and William G. Franey
Amy and Sean Furlong
Patricia M. Whitehead and
Mr. Philip JB Gallagher
Martha and Earl P. Galleher, Jr.
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Jeffrey Gouline
Denise Simmons Graves
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Erika Hamlet
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Diane and Victor L. Hoskins
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Penney C. and A.C. Hubbard
Lexa and Crawford Hubbard
N. Leigh Hubbard
Farida and Christopher Hughes
Lilly and David B. Hunter
Julia A. Day and Joan M. Hurley
Zenita and Cheo D. Hurley
Diane Hutchins
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Joshua R. Perry '02
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Susannah and William F. Rienhoff IV
Gail and James Riepe
Nneka Rimmer
Meghan Risper '07

WITH GRATITUDE

Carolyn M. Roberts
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Theo C. Rodgers
Tara Romine
David Ruekberg
The Salisbury Family
Janet and John E. Schmick
Elizabeth and Stephen T. Scott
Nathan A. Scott
Kathryn and Ronald Shapiro
Jean and F. Parvin Sharpless
Benjamin Shifrin
Joy O. and Steven J. Sibel
Stuart O. Simms
Gwendolyn D. Skillern
Erika and Josh Slater
Anna and Beetle Smith
Brenda Wolf Smith
Brina and Floyd O. Smith
Teresa and Robert Smith

Shawn T. Smith-Moulden '95

Elizabeth and Henry P.A. Smyth
Charlotte and Lawrence R. Snyder
Magge and Wick Sollers
Judith and Thomas S. Spencer
Annie Staley

Donna and Kerry Staton

Jeffrey B. Sterrette, II, '96

Marsha and Randy S. Stevens
Lisa and Bill Stromberg
Jessica and Scott Suriano
Martha H. and Brian D. Sweeney
Jeannè Lewis and **Shane P. Tanzymore '91**

John and Diane Tiffany
Read and John H. Timken

Ashlee S. Tuck '02

Susan and Hutch Vernon
Kathie Wachs

April C. Walker '07

Eleanor and Alan Waller, Jr.
Manuele and Richard L. Wasserman
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Venable Foundation
WBAL Radio Kids Campaign
The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company
The William L. and Victorine Q. Adams Foundation

WORKPLACE GIVING

America's Charities / Maryland Charity Campaign
The Benevity Community Impact Fund
United Way of Central Maryland

GIFTS IN KIND

Hippodrome Foundation
Johns Hopkins University
Qdoba Mexican Eats
STX Sporting Goods
University of Maryland, College Park

This list includes all donors to the Baltimore Educational Scholarship Trust during the 2022-2023 giving year (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023).

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

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Jessica W. Suriano
Executive Director

Thank You!

On behalf of our **405** B.E.S.T. students, thank you to our engaged Alumni, our generous funders, our dedicated Head of School and Community Trustees, our Member School administrators and faculty, our Admission and Program partners, and our dear friends of **B.E.S.T.** We are grateful for all the ways that you show up for our students.

B.E.S.T. is the BEST because of you!



Peggy Bittner, *Director of Programs & Alumni Relations*

Crystal Lee Alston '96, *Director of Advancement*

Jess Suriano, *Executive Director*

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