



A Story of “Full Circle” Inspiration...

Valentines Day, 2014

D. lived just blocks from Johns Hopkins Medical Campus, a neighborhood so violent he was afraid to walk with his little sister to school. About to enter the 6th grade, D. desperately wanted to learn, but the drug related crime festering outside his front door made it impossible. D.’s mother, doing double shifts as a janitor at a hospital to make ends meet, grew increasingly worried about her children’s safety. What this hard-working, loving mother so urgently needed was a way to ensure her children’s safety away from the crime, poverty and decay of the East Baltimore/Hopkins corridor. Little did she know, one of the doorways to her son’s future success was right in front of her.

The family’s wish was granted the following year when D. was accepted as a Boys Hope scholar. He was able to move into the safe and structured environment of the Boys Hope house. No longer crippled with fear, he could now focus on academics, community service and leadership development. D. transferred to a private middle school and later was given a full academic scholarship at Loyola Blakefield High School in Towson, MD, where he played ice-hockey, learned Spanish, and decided that more than anything else, he wanted to be a scientist.

D. was consumed by science, especially biology. He enrolled in all the required science classes and spent hours in the school science lab. The words *atomic*, *molecular*, and *cellular* were peppered into every conversation. He was, what Dr. Doug Robinson, celebrated cell biologist, geneticist, and biophysicist refers to as the kind of kid who is poised for scientific success: teachable, hardworking, and determined.

D. was the perfect candidate for SARE, the Summer Academic Research Experience, designed by Dr. Robinson for high school students from low-income families who would benefit from STEM studies and careers.

D. was mentored by a PhD candidate who helped him to improve his math and writing skills while participating in the lab. The SARE program includes a curriculum designed for personal learning needs and professional competencies and takes place in Dr. Robinson’s science lab at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Participants earn a stipend for their scientific research.

Little did D. know years before that the SARE program was just steps away from his own neighborhood. Two worlds so different. One filled with opportunity, the other with fear.

While at Loyola Blakefield, D. was awarded the coveted Daniel W. McNeal Scholarship, named for a 1990 graduate who died during the 9-11 attacks on the World Trade Center. “This was a memorable moment for Dwayne and his family.” says Cynthia Burks-Harriel, BHGH Baltimore Program Director. “His service to others within the school community and the community as a whole were deservedly recognized.”

Now a Junior at Loyola University Maryland, with a double major in Biology and Spanish, D. says that the two summers in Dr. Robinson’s lab were, “The most challenging, but most important door openers for my academic growth and professional career.” It allowed him to acquire a core vocabulary for lab work, advance his writing skills by several grade levels, earn a stipend that was put to good use, and change the slope of his life’s trajectory with both the hard and soft skills he acquired. “Dr. Robinson and SARE have prepared me to someday become a pediatrician and give back to the children of Baltimore. I want to help people to the fullest extent possible.”

Want to learn more about Dr. Doug Robinson and the Summer Academic Research Experience (SARE)?

Please visit www.bhghbaltimore.org to read his research published in *CBE Life Sciences Education*.