Ranita Ramotar graduated from Queens College in fall 2013 as an Economics and Psychology major. She is currently a graduate student at Baruch College pursuing the MSed in Higher Education Administration. In addition to school, Ranita works part-time in the Financial District as a Junior Accountant at the brokerage firm, GFI Group, and part-time as an Academic Advisor at the Academic Advising Center at Queens College. As a mentor in the Project ExCEL program, Ranita learned about interactions with different people and met people of various cultures, helping her to better communicate with a diverse group of people. Her mentee held her to high standards, which helped her to be better aware of her decisions and to be a stronger leader. She was always looking for academic and professional advice such as interpersonal relations and ways to get more involved at Queens College. During her time as a mentor in the Project ExCEL program, she had many obligations consisting of spending time with her mentee, working at the Academic Advising Center, and being a full-time undergraduate student.
Michael Stewart is a former student of the College of Staten Island, College Success Initiative Learning by Teaching Program. Michael graduated in the spring of 2007 and the CSILTP program was vital in shaping his professional career. He describes the moment that he met a “stern, yet kind hearted woman” named Mrs. Evans-Greene, who was committed, to every student’s success. Mrs. Evans-Greene allowed him to attend conferences where he met positive black role models who shared their life experiences and expertise. Michael was also afforded the opportunity to work with inner city students as a role model and tutor. These experiences and many others inspired him to pursue a career in education. Later, Michael became a math teacher in the community where he was born and raised in East New York, Brooklyn, while attaining Master’s Degrees in mathematics education. Today Michael is a New York City Firefighter in part because of involvement in the CSILTP program at CSI, which was a major factor in his desire to help others.
Aaron Serrano is a May 2013 graduate from Lehman College, who earned his Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration with a concentration in both Human Resource Management and Business Law. Aaron joined the Urban Male Leadership during his freshman year in fall 2009 when he was part of the fall 2009 UMLP LEH 100 Freshman Seminar Course. Mr. Serrano graduated Cum Laude and with departmental honors in Business Administration. Through his dedication and commitment to the UMLP, Aaron was inducted as an Ambassador of the program during the Annual Induction and Awards Ceremony in May 2011. Mr. Serrano’s involvement in the UMLP led him to work on obtaining his Master’s Degree in Social Work at the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College in where he graduated in May 2015 with his Master’s Degree in Social Work focusing on the track of Community Organizing.

Mr. Serrano is currently working with the North Brooklyn YMCA as a Program Coordinator, making a difference in the lives of the young people and families in the East New York community.
David Tavarez is a Lehman College graduate, earning his Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration with a concentration in International Business & Human Resource Management in May 2014. Mr. Tavarez started with the Urban Male Leadership Program during his freshman year in fall 2009 when he was part of the UMLP fall 2009 LEH 100 Freshman Seminar Course. During the May 2010 Annual Induction and Awards Ceremony, David was inducted as an Ambassador of the program. While at Lehman he excelled both in and outside the classroom volunteering as an ambassador and a mentor for the Urban Male Leadership Program since 2010. David was a Lehman L.I.F.E. (Leaders Involved for Everyone) member performing community service in and outside of his local community, including Caimito, San Juan, Puerto Rico and El Progreso, Honduras. Mr. Tavarez remains an active part of his community, participating in Community Service programs such as The Bronx is Blooming, 2013 & 2014 NYC Marathon and the 2014 & 2015 NYC Half Marathon Fluid Stations, and POTS (Part of the Solution).

David is currently working as the Data Coordinator of the Urban Male Leadership Program. He also served as a staff co-advisor for the Lehman L.I.F.E. alternative break program during spring 2015 where he was in charge of a group of fourteen (14) students that traveled to Managua, Nicaragua to do community service during spring break. Mr. Tavarez plans on obtaining his Master’s Degree in Business Administration.
Darnell La’Rue Gatling II is a Lehman College graduate, earning his Bachelors of Science in Accounting in May 2013. Mr. Gatling started with the Urban Male Leadership Program during his freshman year in fall 2009 when he was a part of the fall 2009 UMLP LEH 100 Freshman Seminar Course. Due to his dedication and commitment to the UMLP, Darnell was inducted as an Ambassador of the program during the Annual Induction and Awards Ceremony in May 2010. While at Lehman College, Darnell also was a student-athlete that achieved great success in his endeavors. Mr. Gatling was a recipient of the following scholarships: The CUNY Merit Scholarship, The Peter F. Vallone Scholarship, and The Edwin Kramer Scholarship. He was a member of The Golden Key International Honors Society, and is an active member of Sigma Phi Rho Fraternity Inc. Mr. Gatling also graduated Magna Cum Laude and with departmental honors in Accounting. Darnell is currently working full-time for Bank of America, tutors students in Math, and does event catering. He plans on obtaining his Master’s Degree in Accounting.
Perri Litton is a United States Army Veteran that currently works as a Community Liaison in the Office of NYC Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. In this role he provides community representation to NYC Council legislative health, higher education, and civil rights committees; ensure representation of stakeholders on issues around community college access, human rights violations related to housing, elder abuse and gender equality. He graduated Brooklyn College in 2012 with a BA in Philosophy. After graduation he joined the National Forum of Black Public Administrators (NFBPA) where he served on the board of director Emerging Leaders committee (2013-2014). Recently he obtained a Masters of Public Administration with a concentration in Public Management and Policy Analysis from Baruch College.
While working to complete his A.A. degree at Borough of Manhattan Community College, Zenas Gallion was introduced to the Urban Male Leadership Academy (UMLA). After participating in several UMLA workshops and making use of the program’s support services, Zenas went on to become one of the program’s most active and engaged participants. “UMLA provides a ton of resources” says Zenas. “Because of UMLA, I was able to obtain a scholarship from the college that helped me to cover some of my personal expenses.” In addition to demonstrating exemplary student leadership through UMLA, Zenas worked to develop his creative side, becoming a finalist in the 2013 BMCC Poetry Contest.

After graduating from BMCC in spring 2013, Zenas transferred to Hunter College and became a part of the Brothers for Excellence (BFE) during fall 2013 through his BMI affiliation. “I became a team leader during the fall of 2014 because my BFE coordinator saw my potential” says Zenas. “My participation in BMI has elevated my time management, and leadership skills, as well as my ability to address a large audience”.

Zenas is currently majoring in Psychology and English with a concentration in creative writing at Hunter College.
It was during his education at BMCC where Damian Smikle discovered his passion for mathematics and was introduced to the world of investing in the financial markets. Damian’s vision for his future was further honed through the support of faculty mentors at BMCC and his involvement with the Urban Male Leadership Academy. “UMLA’s network was a tremendous help to me” says Damian. “It was the connections I made through BMI that helped me reach my potential.”

At BMCC, Damian held various leadership roles such as Vice President of Accounting Club, Treasurer of the College Discovery Club and as a tutor for College Discovery. After graduating from BMCC in July 2012, Damian decided that he wanted to continue his education by pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in Finance and Mathematics at the Ohio State University (OSU).

Damian’s extraordinary work ethic and commitment to excellence allowed him to obtain his first internship in the summer of 2012 at Barclays Capital in their Global Markets Summer Intern program. In this program, Damian rotated through three desks: Securitized Products, Client Capital Management, and International Equities. He returned to OSU in the fall of 2013 where he became a member of the prestigious fraternity Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Incorporated.
Gregory Rodriguez grew up in Spanish Harlem, New York City and now lives in Brooklyn. After graduating from BMCC in 2014, he was accepted into NYU on a full scholarship for mathematics through a BMCC BMI-affiliated program called POISE, or Pipeline Opportunities for Intercollege STEM Education. There, he’s taken math courses such as Ordinary Differential Equations, Theory of Probability, and Real Analysis. He loves the challenge and is poised to continue getting deeper into the study of mathematics.

Gregory Rodriguez will be in Michigan State University during the summer of 2015 and will be conducting research there in mathematics with an assigned mentor. He also hopes to attend Michigan State University for graduate school in the fall of 2016 after graduating from NYU with a Bachelor’s degree in mathematics.

Gregory is excited about where he is going, but never forgets where he came from. He attributes much of his success to great programs at BMCC. Urban Male Leadership Academy programs such as the Each One Reach One Peer Mentoring Program with Professor Blake, and the Blue Chip Program with Ashtian Holmes gave him the support that he needed to graduate.
Even though his year of self-discovery and intellectual adventure was profoundly important, Kevin knew that a formal college education was his next step in actualization. But, first he needed to enroll in an HSE program.

Initially, Kevin felt anxious about returning to school, but soon fear turned to confidence as he put the knowledge he gained during a year off to good use. He earned his diploma at Brooklyn College's Adult Learning Program in one term and was presented with a life-changing opportunity. He was accepted into a program called BC Bound that allows HSE graduates to enroll in Brooklyn College as full-time students. Currently Kevin is a freshman at Brooklyn College and it's a dream come true. He plans to major in Psychology with either a minor or dual major in English. He would love to be a counselor or an editor and would love to write academic papers or be a writer/editor for a psychology magazine.
Pedro found himself light years from where he thought his life was going a few years ago. The son of a restaurant owner, Pedro figured he too was headed for the long hours and endless headaches involved in running a small business. Then, through a series of fortuitous events, he found himself enrolled in the GED program at Brooklyn College. Initially, with no thoughts of college, he planned to get his high school equivalency diploma and head out into the world. The Brooklyn College Adult Literacy Program is affiliated with CUNY BMI, whose main focus is to get people like Pedro to consider all the possibilities of college, matriculate and graduate.

After receiving a GED score just slightly less than what is needed to enter his school of choice, Brooklyn College, Pedro headed to Kingsborough. There were some spurts and starts in the early years. Nevertheless, through determination, strong will and a threatening letter or two from his old BMI mentor, he graduated. He then returned to Brooklyn as a full-fledged college student. While pursuing his BA, Pedro became a BMI mentor to struggling students hoping to get an HSE diploma. This reconnection with his old program was highly fulfilling. So much so, that upon graduation Pedro found himself once again in a class of eager Math students, this time as the instructor.
Jasmaine Calizaire holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Speech Communication/Theatre Arts and Childhood Education, a Master’s of Science Degree in Literacy Education, a certification in Childhood Education and in Literacy as a Specialist. She continues her effort to be the voice of service to the community through her career as a teacher within the public school system. She received a scholarship from the Quilt Committee to attend York College and was awarded numerous scholarships from companies such as Siemens Science Foundation, C.O.G.I.C Charities, Thurgood Marshall, Walmart and Costco. Jasmaine was CUNY’s "All-Star" scholar and recognized several times on the Dean’s list. She has also studied in Ghana where she attended two universities and volunteered in a village primary school teaching English grammar. As a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., she continues her “Service to All Mankind.”
Taahira Thompasionas holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Community Health Education and has applied to Fordham University's Masters of Social Work and Public Health program. Currently she mentors young women in her church's mentoring program and works as the Health Educator for Project CHANGE, a Creative Arts Team Program at the City University of New York (CUNY). As a student, she was involved in various CUNY initiatives such as Project CHANGE, Project CHERISH, and CUNY Malave Leadership Academy. She has also worked as a volunteer tutor at York College Student Support Services. Taahira was recognized for her outstanding community service by CUNY Malave Leadership Academy in 2013 and has been an honorary member of National Society of Leadership and Success because of her GPA standing. She is also a member of Eta Sigma Gamma (Health Education Honor Society).
Tiffany Cudjoe is a graduate of York College where she received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology. Originally from Guyana, she is currently a New York City based event photographer and business entrepreneur. She founded HumbleNation in 2012, a social media marketing management, photography, and apparel company. HumbleNation’s vision is rooted in educational support for children. Her background in photographic communication and web design entrepreneurship makes her a well-rounded CEO.
In the Spring semester of 2013, Jesus Benitez enrolled in the CUNY Fatherhood Academy. Mr. Benitez is a single father to his 6-year-old son, Mason. Upon successful completion of the academy Mr. Benitez obtained his HSE diploma and enrolled into LaGuardia Community College as a philosophy major. Through the BMI program he was able to become a mentor for new fatherhood academy participants by sharing his story, giving back and encouraging them through their journeys. Since his college enrollment Mr. Benitez has hit the ground running and never looked back. His educational career has had solid backing through the College Discovery Program. He is currently a recipient of the LaGuardia Foundation Scholarship and the IME Becas Scholarship. He is also a LUCE Heritage Scholar and will be traveling to Argentina this summer as a volunteer instructor for kindergarten classes. This semester he has been working at LaGuardia with Crear Futuros as a college consultant/mentor for freshman students. Mr. Benitez plans to graduate in the Fall of 2015 and join the CUNY BA program through Lehman College focusing on the ideology of Chicanismo.
In the Spring semester of 2013, Jquan Webb enrolled in the CUNY Fatherhood Academy College Prep program. He has a 5-year-old son named Jahmari. Upon successful completion of the academy Mr. Webb enrolled in LaGuardia Community College as a member of the College Discovery Program. He is majoring in Education with a concentration in Math. His knowledge of mathematics made him a valuable asset to the BMI sponsored Fatherhood Academy tutoring program. In addition to being a tutor he also took on the role as a mentor to other young fathers enrolled in the academy. Mr. Webb recently completed his internship requirements at a local NYC high school and plans to graduate this summer. Following his graduation he will be transferring to Brooklyn College with aspirations of becoming a high school math teacher for the NYC Department of Education.
In the Fall semester of 2012, Rajib Gonzalez enrolled in the CUNY Fatherhood Academy College Prep program. He is the proud father of three children, Tyler, age 9, Laila, age 9 and Rajib, age 6. Upon successful completion of the academy Mr. Gonzalez enrolled in LaGuardia Community College as a member of the ASAP program. He majored in Accounting and graduated this past February. Mr. Gonzalez was the programs first tutor and helped many of the students improve their GED math scores. He was also one of the fatherhood academy ambassadors and attended various youth conferences for the NYC Young Men’s Initiative and was honored by former Mayor Bloomberg at Gracie Mansion. Mr. Gonzalez became a mentor through the BMI sponsored mentorship program and mentored a caseload of young fathers that truly benefited under his tutelage. Mr. Gonzalez has plans to attend Baruch College in the Fall to continue his degree in Accounting.
Lerone Bleasdille is a Senior Software Engineer and a financial software provider with the Scivantage Company in the Jersey City, New Jersey. A native of the tiny island of Grenada, Lerone won a full scholarship to City Tech (NYCCT) in 2006, following the aftermath of devastating Hurricane Ivan. He then went on to become the institution’s 2010 valedictorian.

He attributes his success in equal parts to his motivation after all the obstacles that stood before him, and to the opportunities and support provided through the Honors Scholars and BMI programs. In his own words, Lerone, said that the "BMI, greatly improved my college life. I made new friends, traveled and enjoyed help from their tutors."

Currently, Lerone is pursuing a Master’s degree (part-time) in Computer Science at the Georgia Institute of Technology, and he also plans to write science fiction literature.
Ryan Jaipual graduated as Class of 2011 Salutatorian from New York City College of Technology. He joined the Black Male Initiative (BMI) Program during his first semester at NYCCT. Ryan worked closely with Dr. Reginald Blake, director of the BMI Program, as he ushered Ryan into the research community and exposed me to an environment where effective teamwork and collaboration were keys to a meaningful deliverable. Ryan conducted research at the NOAA-CREST Optical Remote Sensing Lab as a National Science Foundation REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) member and contributed to research endeavors with colleagues at Columbia University and Princeton University. Ryan published an article on climate change in City Tech's annual journal, the City Tech Writer. The opportunity to participate in multiple mentorship programs affiliated with BMI, the Honors Scholars Program and the STEP Program was both rewarding and insightful as they allowed him to connect with junior classmen as well as high school students from urban districts.

Ryan was fortunate enough to participate in NYCCT's internship program. As a participant in the Technology Bridge Program, he interned with Goldman Sachs for a total of four months in 2010. After his internship term was completed, he accepted a full-time offer with the firm upon graduation.
Salim Arfaoui is currently a Computer Science professor at the New York City College of Technology and has been in this position since August 2012. He has earned his Master’s degree in managing computer information systems from Brooklyn College in December 2013 with a 3.5 GPA. He has also received a Bachelor’s degree in computer information systems from the New York City College of Technology in June 2011 (Cum Laude). In November 2006 Arfaoui completed a Diploma in computing and micro-computing from the Higher Institution of Electronics in Tunisia. During his studies at the NYCCT Mr. Arfaoui has been a very active member of the Black Male Initiative program where he worked as a tutor and participated in many activities. He was also a recipient of the BMI’s Teacher’s As Leaders Scholarship.

Mr. Arfaoui completed two computer science internships at Goldman Sachs Company. He interned twice at the Bloomberg’s business Integrity Commission, and he has been a very active student and professional. He has been an active Professor, Application Developer, Tutor, Technician and Researcher.
John Bae graduated from CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice with a BA and an MA in Criminal Justice. While in college, John was awarded the Pinkerton Community Fellowship. There he was placed in the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES) as a college counselor and instructor. He has research experience in higher education and reentry, sex trafficking, and international black markets; he has co-authored publications and manuscripts on all three topics. On his spare time, he volunteered in rural Honduras providing medical assistance, and was part of the first cohort of John Jay students to participate in the Prisoner Reentry Institute's Prison-to-College Pipeline program. In addition, he was part of the award-winning Model United Nations team for four years, in which he served as Vice President and President in his final two years of college. He is a 2014 Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Associate, and a recipient of the 2014 SEEK Arthur C. Logan Award, 2013 Upper Division Scholarship, 2013 Jay Walk Scholarship and the 2011 Thurgood Marshall Scholarship. Currently, he works as the Coordinator of Core Programs at College Initiative, an organization helping individuals with criminal justice contact enroll and persist in college and a CUNY BMI program, and is also an Adjunct Instructor at CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College.
After years of selling drugs, homelessness and incarceration, Terrance Coffie came to The Doe Fund in April 2009. He was tired of feeling lost and broken, not being able to provide for himself, and needing to beg and to rely on his family and others. He came with a dedication to change, a strong work ethic and a high school equivalency diploma.

He also became involved with College Initiative (CI). Despite mountains of self-doubt and the fear of going back to school after 20 years out of the classroom, he enrolled at Bronx Community College for an Associate’s Degree in Human Services. After a year of college, he became a CI Peer Mentor so that he could give back to the community that served him. He helped other men make the adjustment from incarceration to higher education. He has made the Dean’s List three consecutive semesters. One of his shining moments was when both of his mentees made the Dean’s List with him. He also became involved in CUNY’s Black Male Initiative (BMI). Through his involvement with BMI, he was awarded a scholarship to attend a Men of Color Student Leadership Institute (MCSLI) conference in Phoenix in October 2012. In March 2013, he was nominated and selected to represent CUNY in the Salzburg Global Seminar International Study Program. MCSLI invited Terrance back to their conference in 2013, but this time he was asked to participate in their Presidential Roundtable. In December 2013, Terrance was inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.
Destiny Rivera graduated from CUNY LaGuardia Community College (LAGCC) with an Associates of Arts in Liberal Arts Psychology. Getting started with college was definitely a struggle for Ms. Rivera. She came to New York from Florida in 2008 right after graduating high school. Ms. Rivera spent her entire high school years living with family because her mother was incarcerated, so New York was a fresh start for her. Destiny could not start school right away like she had hoped being that she was an out of state resident and turned to volunteer work. She volunteered at the Fortune Society doing mainly administrative duties and assisting with their audit preparations. Through the Fortune Society, she met a supportive team at College Initiative (CI) and they assisted her throughout the entire college application process. She volunteered at CI to give back to the community and was later offered a part-time position as the Correspondence Coordinator. As the Correspondence Coordinator, she provided information to individuals who were incarcerated and were interested in joining the CI community. On Ms. Rivera’s free time she also volunteered and co-facilitated at Teen College Dreams which are groups that are dedicated to support teenagers have either one or both of their parents incarcerated.

Ms. Rivera was also a member of Phi Theta Kappa and Dean’s List throughout her college journey at LAGCC. Towards her last semester at LAGCC, she started a full time job at Center for Community Alternatives working with youth at an Alternative to Incarceration Program. This made maintaining class schedules harder for Destiny however; she pulled through and graduated with honors on December 2013. Currently, Destiny is attending Baruch College and is majoring in Marketing Management and working full-time at CI as an Academic Counselor.
Kelvin Ramos is a student at Lehman College, where he is pursuing a Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree in Social Work. Kelvin’s journey in the Social Work field began while he was attending the Future Now Program. He decided to join Future Now’s GED classes in 2008 because he was not very focused in high school. Kelvin obtained his GED diploma in early 2009 and immediately enrolled in Bronx Community College where he received his Associate’s Degree in Psychology in 2013.

In 2011, Kelvin was also selected for a prestigious internship program at Burberry where he worked in the public relations department at Burberry’s headquarters in midtown Manhattan. In 2014, he was hired to work as a full-time Peer Mentor at Future Now. In this role, Kelvin assists HSE graduates with the college enrollment process and supports them with various needs and challenges that they face as college students. He also helps coordinate activities for Club IMPACT which is an academic club for former HSE students who have transitioned into college. Kelvin loves to motivate students to pursue their goals and remain focused by sharing his experience with them.
Hipolito Rosario has over 10 years of experience working with court-involved students at every level from outreach while incarcerated to pre-GED/GED, college prep and on thru college.

In Hipolito’s own journey as a student, he obtained his HSE from the Future Now program at Bronx Community College and then went on to earn his Associates Degree at Bronx Community College. He earned a Bachelor’s Degree at Herbert Lehman College and is currently pursuing a Master’s Degree and PhD in mathematics.

From 2008-2011, Hipolito helped reshape adult education in New York City first as an intern and then as the Learner Leadership Coordinator at the Mayors’ Office of Adult Education. It was there that he ran the Transition to College Internship - an innovative leadership development internship for HSE and justice involved students - and, as a peer leader, motivated and encouraged over 3,000 students to continue their education beyond just a high school diploma or HSE. He is currently serving as a Coordinator at Future Now. In this capacity he is the primary liaison for the successful replication of IMPACT model in two CUNY campuses: Hostos Community College and Medgar Evers College.
Donavan L. Ramon was born and raised in Harlem, New York. He earned his BA in English and the Special Honors Curriculum (Magna Cum Laude) from Hunter College in 2009. He was one of the founding members of the Brothers For Excellence program at Hunter College. Now he serves as a big brother and mentor to the program. He has just completed his doctorate in African American Literature at Rutgers University, where he wrote a dissertation on narratives of racial passing. He is now beginning a tenure-track position in African American Literature at William Paterson University.
Kinte graduated from Cardozo School of Law in 2014, where he was a Berg Fellow and a student attorney in the Kathryn O. Greenberg Immigration Justice Clinic. Kinte spent his summer internships with the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem and the Prisoners’ Rights Project at the Legal Aid Society. At Cardozo, he was a student advocate in the Unemployment Action Center, an Executive Board member of the Black Law Students Association, and an intern with The Bronx Defenders. Prior to law school, Kinte was an organizer with the Student Liberation Action Movement, and a volunteer with the Incarcerated Mother’s Program. As a Brothers For Excellence member at Hunter College, Kinte was very active in the student body, and served as a mentor and team leader. Kinte was also a Mellon-Mays Fellow at Hunter College, where he earned his B.A. in Political Science and English Literature, and graduated cum laude.
Tyler Garvey graduated in 2014 from the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law. While at Berkeley, he was a Berkeley Board Fellow, William K. Coblentz Civil Rights Fellow, Folger Levin & Kahn Scholar, and Berkeley Law Dean’s Fellow. He also served on the Board of Advocates: Moot Court Team and as a citations editor for the Berkeley Journal of Entertainment and Sports Law. His scholarship while in law school focused on the intersection between race and corporate law. His first article titled “Law Firm Diversity Scholarships: Good Intentions, Incomplete Solutions (Suggestions from the Eyes of a Diverse Candidate)” suggests ways that firms can fully benefit from diversity scholarships and claims that the current system in place for providing diversity scholarships hurts both the firm and the diverse candidate.

Tyler graduated from John Jay College of Criminal Justice in 2011 with a degree in Humanities and Justice Studies. He was the 2011 Graduation Commencement Speaker and was awarded the Scholarship and Service Award, as well as being named a Steamboat Scholar, Ron Brown Scholar, and Thurgood Marshall Scholar. Currently, Tyler works as a Legal Fellow at the New Jersey Bureau of Securities where he helps lead investigations regarding instances of investment fraud and other white-collar crimes.
Darryl Brazley is a Ronald. H. Brown Law School Program Fellow, who graduated from John Jay College of Criminal Justice in 2011 with a bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice. He received his J.D. in 2014 from the University of Colorado Law School and received the Don W. Sears award for contributions to the classroom learning experience.” Since then, he has interned at the Colorado State Public Defender and the Denver Sheriff’s Department.
Kareem Yusuf-Farnum attended Kingsborough Community College. With no direction, Kareem did not have any idea where he was going and found college to be really stressful. But after crossing paths with the Men’s Resource Center (MRC), he found hope, energy, love and a chance to develop. He learned at MRC to believe in his abilities and harness his academic skills. Through the support at MRC, he found his destination. Now, he moves independently to help others find their way towards success. He graduated from KBCC and is currently attend SUNY Downstate for Nursing.
Rashidi Ashman is a student at Kingsborough Community College (KBCC). On his first day of school, he received a student manual for the semester. Within the confines of the manual, there was a section explaining all of the programs the school has to offer. One of the programs was The Men’s Resource Center. It was pitched as a mentoring/leadership program for African-American and Latino males, so it caught his interest. While a member of MRC, he has been engaged in a multitude of events and programs around the school, including: KCC Reads, Enough Is Enough (an anti-bullying campaign), the Diversity panel and Black History Month panel, Brother’s United, and served as Vice President of the Poetry Club. He was also a financial literacy counselor for approximately two weeks for two years for children in Brooklyn. After that initial experience, Rashidi became a teacher for a day through the Junior Achievement program, which was inspired by me volunteering to teach children financial literacy—which I was offered through MRC. Overall, through the BMI program, he learned to make flyers, promote events, promote ideas, and to think critically think on an even deeper level. “I am not the same person I was, when I first debuted in this establishment.”
Before joining the HSE Program at the Adult Literacy Center, Gary Montegue’s main goal was to provide for his family. Without a high school diploma, he realized that it was much harder to do so. Gary started the program in September 2013 with a full time job. Because he knew the value of a good education, he made an executive decision and cut back on his work hours in order to be a full time student in the HSE program.

Prior to coming to the program, it had been seven years since Gary had been to an educational institution of higher learning. Now at 23 years old, just starting the program, he found it difficult to balance his academic life with his life outside of school. His first impression of the program was that “It is helpful for the community and because it is a free program, this makes it easier for struggling families to get an education and promote their lives.”

On December 16th 2013, Gary received his diploma. After receiving his diploma, Gary applied for the spring 2014 Semester at Medgar Evers College. Gary is currently in his second semester at Medgar Evers College pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in nursing. His ultimate goal is to eventually work in the Health and Hospital Cooperation (HHC) of New York where he can give back to the community and pass on the life lessons that he learned to others.
Mohammed Riyad grew up in a five member family in Bangladesh. From childhood, he was always fond of doing math, but later computer programming became his passion. His parents wanted him to be a doctor, so after completing high school, he entered medical school in Bangladesh. Even though he was doing well there, he was never able to connect with medical studies. After spending six years in medical school, he came to realize that he could not continue these studies anymore. So he left medical school and came to USA in 2013.

When he arrived, he did not have the credentials to go to college. But fortunately, Mohammed had the chance to join the BMI HSE Program at Medgar Evers College where he received his HSE Diploma in September 2013. In January 2015, after passing CUNY Assessment Tests, he entered college as a freshman student to major in Computer Science. In the meantime, he has become a mentor and a math tutor in the program. All the things he has been through the last two years have made Mohammed a new person. Now he is quite happy the new goals he has set in life. The goal is not only to be a computer programmer, but also to become a math professor after completing his Ph.D.
Michael nearly called it quits. It was not until the director of the Medgar Evers Adult Literacy Program saw his potential and encouraged him to attend a few math only classes. The Adult Literacy Program became like home. After a few months of one-on-one tutoring and attending evening classes three times a week, he felt confident enough to take the HSE and passed it.

It was through, I.M.P.A.C.T, “Improving My Progress At College Today” that he was given the opportunity to give back and influence others. There he worked with students on a one-on-one basis, and in groups to help them with areas that they were struggling.

Currently, he is working in the field of his concentration at SCO Family Services, providing direct care to young teens with mental and behaviors challenges. After graduating, he plans on continuing on to grad school and work on obtaining a master’s degree in social work. I am also the Vice President of the Association of Black Social Workers on campus where I lead workshops, forums and activities that address some of the social issues in our community. My 3.7GPA earned me the honor to be on the Dean’s list, and I plan on repeating that achievement again.

Programs like BMI and Adult Literacy at Medgar Evers College give people a second chance to achieve success while influencing people around them to do the same. Continuing education programs like Medgar Evers College Adult Literacy Program (MEALP) also help to break the cycle of poverty, as it empowers individuals to strive for more and contribute to the betterment of our society.
Albert A Nixon is a graduate of Bronx Community College (BCC) where he majored in Education. At BCC, he was on the 2014 Dean’s list and participated in the Men of Color Initiative – BMI program.

Now Albert is the RAP-SI- BMI President at City College of New York. Additionally, he is a program designer and facilitator for Brotherhood of Minisink Boys, a young men's leadership development program in Harlem. His goal is to help bridge the achievement gap of young black and brown men in Harlem and eventually the nation. He believes that learning happens both in and out of the classroom. His mantra is the African proverb “it takes a village to raise a child”. Stating that, it is important for parents to work with teachers, and for teachers to work with the community to ensure student success.

Currently, he is majoring in Sociology with a minor in Black Studies at City College. He looks forward to continuing learning methods to help inner city youth excel in education.
Quintin Price is a native New Yorker and has a beautiful five year old son. He graduated from Bronx Community College (BCC) in May 2015 with an Associate’s degree in Business Management. Since then, he has enrolled at City College of New York – CUNY where he majors in Political Science. He is interested in politics and has worked with politicians, activist groups, and serves as a member of his neighborhood community board as the chair of the youth committee. Quintin also served as President and Vice-President of BCC’s Student Government. His career goal is to be a politician. He believes his experience of working with the community plus his educational background in business, law, and law enforcement will continue to be of great service to his community.
Jordan Ortega has been a RAP-SI member since 2012 and a senior mentor in the program while simultaneously playing for the City College Basketball team for 3 years and being the captain for 2 of them. He completed his degree in English: Literature in December 2014 and has been working in the office for the last few years as an Office Assistant before becoming the Peer Mentor Coordinator. He credits RAP-SI (BMI) with giving him the tools to succeed and the resources to pursue a variety of potential careers paths. He is being recruited by the FBI and is also being considered as a fellow in the New York City Teaching Fellows.
Wayne Backus has been a RAP-SI member since 2012 and took a mentoring role during his senior year at City College of New York. He has received his degree in sociology and is currently applying to graduate programs. In addition, he was a Colin Powell Fellow in his senior year at The City College of New York. His future goals include becoming a social worker and a professor at the City College of New York. He credits RAP-SI for his success and is a proud alumni member of the RAP-SI (BMI) program.
Alex Griffith is currently a Program Coordinator at **exalt**, a nonprofit organization that provides an educational paid-internship opportunity for court-involved youth, ages 15-19. Before working for **exalt**, Alex attended John Jay College of Criminal Justice where he worked at the Urban Male Initiative (UMI) for three years before graduating with a Bachelor’s degree in English. Alex attributes much of his personal and professional success to UMI. In the fall of 2009, he joined UMI as a mentee and Research Assistant, receiving mentorship and support that helped frame his college experience and positioned him to graduate with honors. While in UMI, Alex was also a recipient of a number of scholarships and made the Undergraduate Dean’s List for three years. In his third and fourth year of college, he worked as a Mentor where he helped support the personal, academic, and professional growth of other mentees while contributing to the growth of UMI. Today, Alex is a proud ambassador of the Black Male Initiative (BMI) and informs the college-bound youth of **exalt** about BMI’s resources across CUNY. UMI has helped shape Alex’s undergraduate experience and broadened his opportunities for success.
As a child growing up on the island of Jamaica, Andrew Wilson knew that he wanted to become a Lawyer, and make his parents’ proud. Andrew became a member of the John Jay Urban Male Initiative, where he advised high school and college students in their academic advancements and spoke at College Now Program Conference. In continuing on his journey to become a Lawyer, Andrew accepted enrollment at Touro Law Center. There he was elected as the Articles Editor for the Journal of Race Gender and Ethnicity. Andrew also served as a Public Interest Law Fellow in 2013 and became a member of the Black Law Students Association. While in Law School, Andrew interned at ERASE Racism, for the Honorable Judge Lenora Gerald and for the Honorable Judge Martin Efman. Andrew was the recent recipient of the White Rose Social Justice Award, which is given to the student who has made extensive effort in achieving social justice for others.
Cesar Irigoyen currently attends Touro College’s Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center. Prior to attending law school, Cesar earned my Bachelor's in Political Science from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. While at John Jay College, he worked at the Urban Male Initiative and participated in the Ronald H. Brown Law School Prep Program. It was his exposure to these programs that helped pave the path to his legal career. However, life experiences created my passion to work in the legal field.

Growing up in the Bronx, Cesar saw an overwhelming entanglement of the community and the legal system. Whether it was the bureaucracy of the public housing system or the incarceration of our young men and women, he knew he needed to help these communities. As a law student, he encourages conversations about the flaws in the criminal justice system to classmates and future attorneys. Lastly, as an aspiring attorney, he hopes to advocate for his community and continue to educate the world about the struggles within communities like his.
James Bravo is a recent graduate from Baruch College/CUNY with a BA in Psychology. He is part of the first graduating class of the Percy E. Sutton SEEK Urban Male Leadership Academy Scholars Program. During his time at Baruch College he became Co-founder of the UMLA Advisory Board, which gives Undergrad UMLA students a chance to give back and help the program continue to grow inside and out of Baruch College. He served as Vice-President for the UMLA Advisory Board for the 2011-2012 academic year.

He was fortunate enough to show others the growth and success of the UMLA by presenting at countless conferences. Throughout his time as an undergrad he has aided in the interview processes for perspective incoming UMLA students and has served as an UMLA Advisory Board Advisor. He has brought some insights as Chair of Marketing for the Dominican Club named ASEDOM (Asociacion Estudiantil Dominicana). Post-graduation he has become the Program Coordinator for the UMLA Scholars Program, a Black Male Initiative project at Baruch College, with a mission to expand awareness of the UMLA Program within Baruch and CUNY wide.
During Ray’s time at Baruch he was a part of two organizations the Urban Male Leadership Academy (UMLA) and the School of Public Affairs (SPA). Both organizations allowed him to be where he is today. Ray learned through UMLA how to build lasting relationships and allow not only allow himself to succeed, but assist those who are around him to also succeed. What made UMLA out of the ordinary was that they did not strive to worship or be like someone who was already a leader. UMLA members wanted to change the perception of what a leader is and what a leader does.Furthermore, by majoring in Public Affairs, Ray learned how to incorporate many interpersonal skills to a non-profit or political setting. By becoming more personal with his work, it made what he was doing more practical. Thanks to what he learned in both UMLA and in Public Affairs department, Ray will start working June 2015 as a member of Children’s Corp as a Case Worker for the Child Welfare System.
Bintou Jobarteh, high school senior at South Bronx Preparatory Academy, plans to attend Spelman College in Atlanta, GA in Fall 2015. Ms. Jobarteh was a participant in the Young Men’s/Women’s Leadership Institute, the BMI program operating out of CUNY Collaborative Programs, from 9th through 12th grade. Ms. Jobarteh says that the BMI program has opened her mind to different perspectives and points of view, has given her confidence to voice her opinions without retribution, and has helped find solutions to improve herself. The activities she enjoyed the most were the vision boards, where she was able to represent her goals and aspirations, the group discussions on current events and social issues, and the workshops to prepare students for college and career.

Ms. Jobarteh is heading to college in the fall and is looking forward to being a part of the sisterhood of an all-black, all-female university. She is excited to be around people who want to change the world and have an impact on it, like herself. She plans to major in political science and minor in finance. She eventually wants to start her own non-profit organization and is hoping college will give her the skills she needs to abstract her learning and put it to real-world use. Her career aspirations are to become a civil rights attorney and to help people like her and others in her community. She would like to influence educational policy, bring resources to low-income communities, and serve as a mentor.
Amy Largacha, high school senior at South Bronx Preparatory Academy plans to attend Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in Fall 2015. Ms. Largacha was a participant in the Young Men’s/Women’s Leadership Institute, the BMI program operating out of CUNY Collaborative Programs, from 9th through 12th grade. Ms. Largacha says that the BMI program was a motivating factor for her wanting to attend this particular high school. She mostly enjoyed the dynamic discussions and the very interesting and eye-opening speakers and instructors. She also fondly remembers that very positive energy in the group and strong supportive friendships and positive peer role models.

Ms. Largacha, in turn, is a mentor to her older sister – she helps to motivate her academically and encourages her writing.

Ms. Largacha is looking forward to attending Franklin and Marshall College in the fall. She believes college will help her build the skills she needs to obtain a high-powered career focused on government and public policy. She feels positive that she can achieve her goals and use her knowledge and experience to mentor and inspire others.
Malcolm Robertson is a middle school educator. When Malcolm graduated from Park West High School in 1988, he had every intention of becoming a Culinary Arts teacher at the school. Determined to make the best of the situation, he worked his way up through the ranks from cook, to chef, to food and beverage director of two midtown hotels. He then made a career move and took the series 7 exam and became a financial advisor/stockbroker.

As a father of now six public school children, he tried to stay active in his children’s social and academic lives. Despite the prestige being a stockbroker brought, Malcolm decided after the September 11th attacks life should be spent doing something he loved and felt he was meant to do. That was teaching. So, after a 17 year hiatus, in 2005, Malcolm returned to college. He started part-time at York College taking one class and eventually worked his way up to full-time, at times taking 18 credits a semester.

While at York, he was inducted into three Honor societies; the Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education (KDP), Phi Alpha Theta National Honor Society in History (PAT) and Pi Eta Kappa Honor Society, Inc. for Progressive Black Males (PEK). While a York student, he also became involved with the Men’s Center, which gave him the opportunity to mentor and tutor young men who were attempting to pass their Global History Regents.
Emmanuel Thelusma first joined the CUNY Black Male Initiative program as part of the first cohort of Teachers as Leaders Scholars in 2007. This opportunity allowed Emmanuel to work within a variety of organizations including: as an Assistant Teacher with BELL, a song writing coach with Citizens Schools, head of the Journalism Club with Community Youth Care Services Inc., and as a Queens Site Director with Let’s Get Ready. Through these opportunities, Emmanuel was able to work directly with students ranging from kindergarten to high school. It was these experiences that strengthened Emmanuel’s commitment to CUNY BMI and serving students from underserved communities.

In the summer of 2012, Emmanuel began working within the Queens College Academic Advising Center. Wearing two hats, Emmanuel worked as an Academic Advisor and as Program Coordinator of the CUNY BMI funded program, Project ExCEL. Through Project ExCEL Emmanuel lead a cohort of over 20 Queens College students to serve as Peer Mentors for first and second year scholars. Through the commitment of Project ExCEL’s staff, program highlights included summer SAT programs with Let’s Get Ready, monthly professional development workshops and a Multicultural Leadership Retreat.

Currently Emmanuel serves as an Academic Advisor at the Borough of Manhattan Community College.
Michael graduated York College with a B.S. in Mathematics Education, in June of 2011. He also became a New York State certified Math teacher in that same month. He furthered his education by acquiring an M.A. in Math Education from Brooklyn College in December of 2013. While working with the Teachers as Leaders Program at York College, Michael served as a Math Coach with the Let’s Get Ready Program and was a Teaching Assistant at the Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice. In 2010, Michael served as a Teaching Intern for Q217/JHS 217. Upon graduation from York College, Michael began teaching at the High School for Learning and Service. He currently serves as a full-time Math Teacher at the Brooklyn College Academy. In addition to being a TALP Scholar, Michael also was selected to participate in the Hunter College Professional Development series on Common Core Standards, from Fall of 2012 to Spring of 2013.
Gregory is a proud graduate of the York Early College Academy and was salutatorian of his graduating class. With the credits that he earned in the YECA Program and unparalleled determination, he is now a candidate for graduation from York College, with a B.A. in Political Science and a grade point average of 3.9, all at the tender age of 19. Gregory holds several prestigious honors and memberships, some of which include: The Ronald H. Brown Scholars Program, The Hank Sheinkopf Scholarship, and member of Pi Eta Kappa – Beta Chapter.

Gregory is attending St. John’s University Law School in the Fall of 2015.
David Ourlicht is currently a 1L at the CUNY Law school. He graduated from the BMI sponsored CUNY Pipeline to Justice program in the Spring of 2014. Born in New York City in a biracial household, David’s interest in public law was nurtured by his experience as a lead named plaintiff in the federal class action law suit, Floyd vs. the NYPD and City of New York, et al. This landmark suit has challenged the City of New York and its policies of ‘Stop and Frisk’ without probable cause. For the past six years, while working diligently with the Center of Constitutional Rights, CCR, he has contributed to this case with his own personal, firsthand experience being profiled and harassed by the NYPD. David’s participation in Pipeline to Justice Program as a law student, and working within the system to affect change, has been instrumental to his development. He is continuously looking forward in strengthening his skills as an advocate of reform.
Everett K. Hopkins was born and raised in Queens, New York and attended Saint Francis Preparatory high school in Fresh Meadows.

Everett has always had a passion for the law, similar to his father. His dad has been practicing law in Queens, New York ever since he was a young child. As a result, Everett would lend a hand to help mom and dad keep the small family business operating until he left to attend college in Hampton, Virginia. But Everett always knew that his passion for law was at home in New York. Growing up in southeast Queens has allowed him to experience for himself the injustices within the legal system effecting the many young black men and women who are considered walking statistics rather than valuable human lives. These stereotypes and statistics motivated him to come back home and attend law school to change the many issues surrounding minorities and to be a role model for the young black youth in his community.

When no other law school would, CUNY School of Law decided to invest in Everett and invite him to attend their Pipeline to Justice Program to improve his LSAT scores. Because CUNY believed in him, he decided to attend CUNY Law where he served as Secretary on the Black Law Students Association and on the Executive Board as President of the CUNY Law Moot Court Team. Everett graduated CUNY Law School in May of 2014 and passed the bar that same year. He is currently employed with The Legal Aid Society as a Staff Attorney where his journey to bring about change as a criminal defense attorney continues and thrives in his hometown Queens, New York where his passion for law all began.
Somalia Samuel is a Bertha Fellow in CCR’s Government Misconduct & Racial Justice docket, where she works on discriminatory policing, racial injustice, and mass incarceration. Major CCR cases Somalia works on include *Floyd v. City of New York*, a landmark federal civil rights class action lawsuit that found the New York City Police Department’s stop and frisk practices racially discriminatory and otherwise unconstitutional, and *Ashker v. Brown*, a class action lawsuit challenging long-term solitary confinement at California’s Pelican Bay prison.

Somalia earned her J.D. from CUNY School of Law, where she served as Vice President of the Black Law Students Association, a moot court team member, and an editorial staff member on CUNY Law Review. She interned at the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem (NDS), where she worked alongside seasoned public defenders to provide holistic defense to indigent persons accused of crimes. Somalia was a Thurgood Marshall Fellow at the New York City Bar Association, serving on the Committee on Civil Rights and working in the City Bar Justice Center’s Bankruptcy project and Immigrant Women and Children project, where she assisted clients with complex immigration issues, and she was the recipient of the Luis Sanjurjo Memorial Scholarship, which is awarded to a student who will use their law degree “to advance the interests of civil rights and human rights.”

Prior to attending law school, Somalia earned her B.A. in Humanities in Justice Studies from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, where she also attended the Pipeline to Justice Program to help her prepare for the LSAT and for life in law school.