

ALUMNI SNAPSHOT

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Shawna Quianna Murray

- ~ Woodlawn High School, 2005
- ~ Bachelor of Science, Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Maryland College Park, 2008
- ~ Master of Social Work, Child Welfare Academy, University of Maryland Baltimore, 2011

personal accomplishments and pride

- ~ Achieving Student of the Year and the UMD Homecoming Spirit of Maryland Awards in 2008
- ~ Receiving a full scholarship to University of Maryland, College Park (1st generation college student)
- ~ Developing and maintaining my own natural hair and handcrafted jewelry business

their journey, their words

The truth is, both of my parents are drug addicts. I was homeless for a short period in high school, but I knew one day I would help children like myself. Eventually, family pitched in and I was gifted with teachers and mentors who saw my potential. I was always passionate about education because at an early age my mother instilled a love of reading and the need to strive for excellence. Building STEPS taught me how to use those skills to reach beyond a high school education and achieve something greater. I was accepted into 10 universities including the University of Chicago and George Washington University, but the University of Maryland College Park offered me a full scholarship. When I got to the University of Maryland, I was overwhelmed with new ideas and people. Soon after, I navigated through Neurobiology (thought I would be a doctor), I went to New Orleans for Hurricane Relief and realized the hospital was not for me. I found that criminal justice, policy and family science would better prepare me to serve populations like the one I come from. I served in varying positions in my honor societies, cultural student and service organizations, while focusing on how I could be groomed to advocate for those underprivileged. I studied in Egypt and realized how famine and injustice spread through the world, both in the past and present. I translated this experience into my own career path, social work. I am enrolled in the Masters of Social Work program at the University of Maryland Baltimore where my studies focus on child welfare and families. I experienced episodes beyond my dreams because of Building STEPS and I will help others do the same.

The Alumni Snapshot was designed by a Building STEPS' alumna, now a Towson graduate and is produced by Building STEPS.

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