



# UMB News

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## CURE Scholars Show Off Research at Virtual STEM Expo

**August 29, 2020** | By [Jena Frick](#)

On Aug. 29, the [University of Maryland, Baltimore's](#) (UMB) [CURE Scholars Program](#) hosted its annual and highly anticipated STEM Expo. The event brings together middle school and high school scholars so they can present their individual STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) research posters to their peers, medical professionals, and UMB leadership.

Like much of the programming and events this year, the STEM Expo was held virtually due to the restrictions and safety procedures put in place by the [COVID-19 pandemic](#). The expo, which is normally held in April on UMB's campus, was instead pre-recorded and streamed on the UMB CURE Scholars Program website so the scholars and their families could watch the research presentations together. The dozens of research posters covered a number of topics ranging from *How Robotics Can Help Brain Cancer* to *Food Insecurity in Baltimore*.

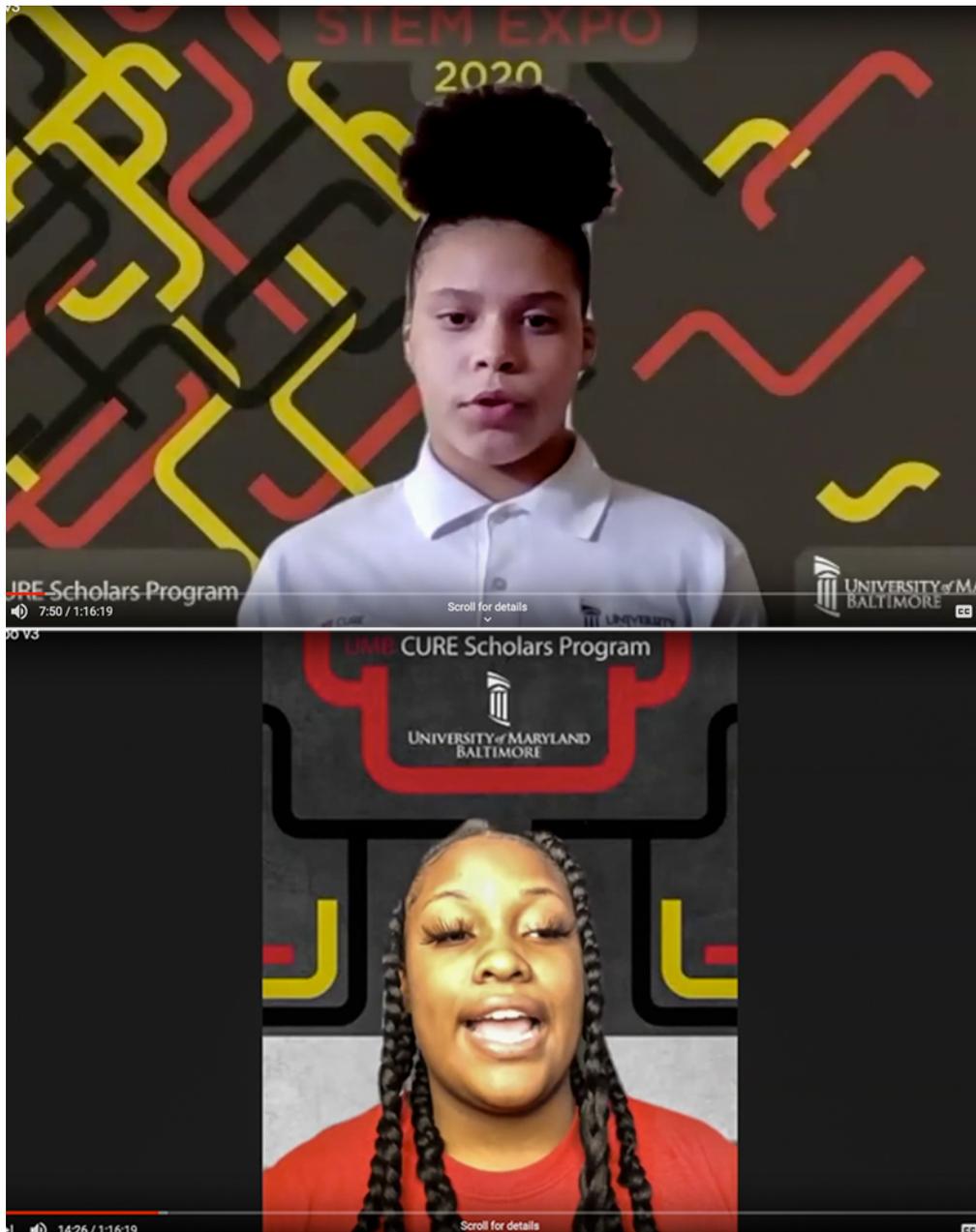
"This year's expo is the culmination of a summer of hard work and perseverance for our scholars," **Gia Grier McGinnis, DrPH, MS**, executive director of the CURE Scholars Program, said during her opening remarks. "We had a great virtual summer program, with over 60 scholars online in the months of July and August. I want to congratulate the scholars and their families for their dedication to learning despite this difficult time. Many of our scholars faced hardship and personal losses this summer but continued to come online with us week after week."

During the STEM Expo, each scholar had the opportunity to present their research posters, which were reviewed by a panel of volunteer judges. The judging was done in a feedback-only format with no numerical scoring, and the comments to scholars were sent privately.

The scholars learned how to develop a research question and find credible sources so they could put together a poster and presentation. Jaliyah Smith, a Cohort 5 scholar who delivered one of the expo's keynote speeches, did her research poster on breast cancer in African-American women. She explained that she was enlightened and inspired by the research she conducted.

"At first, I was shocked by the number of people who die from breast cancer," Jaliyah said. "Now that I have done the research, I think that it is important for me to share this information with as many people as possible. I want to spread awareness of breast cancer so that people seek more preventative care and screenings. Hopefully, one day, we find a cure."

The second keynote speaker was Hali Smith, a rising 10th-grade student at Green Street Academy who gave words of advice and encouragement to the rising ninth-grade scholars.



*Jaliyah Smith, a scholar in Cohort 5 (top), and Hali Smith, a scholar in Cohort 2, delivers the keynote speeches at the CURE STEM Expo.*

“CURE is always there for you when you need them,” said Hali, a Cohort 2 scholar. “I’ve been in CURE for four years, and I can tell you that it doesn’t matter which mentor you’re assigned to, because the whole CURE team will always be there for you. They are the helping hand you need to be successful in your school, career, and life.”

UMB Interim President **Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS**, who also gave remarks during the expo, commended the scholars for the hard work they had put into their posters as well as their summer curriculum.

“Scholars, I’m proud of your resilience, especially this year, and am in awe of your dedication to this program,” he said. “You inspire all of us.”

*(Watch the full CURE STEM Expo below.)*

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