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CURE Scholars Program Extolled for ‘New Vision’

January 4, 2016 | By [Patricia Fanning](#)

The [CURE Scholars Program](#) of the [University of Maryland, Baltimore](#) (UMB) and its promise for West Baltimore families is being showcased by WYPR-FM.

The University's role in encouraging middle school youngsters to become physicians, cancer researchers, and other health workers through the innovative program is the focus of an audio story that aired Dec. 24 and continues to be available online.

[“Seeing, Really Seeing, Urban Youth.”](#)  by reporter Fraser Smith, describes the opportunities being offered to 40 CURE Scholars from three public schools in Baltimore through a partnership of the [National Cancer Institute](#)  (NCI), the [University of Maryland Marlene and Stewart Greenebaum Cancer Center](#) , and UMB.

UMB CURE is a new pipeline initiative that prepares children through hands-on workshops and lab experiences, and mentorship. The program addresses two major issues – race- and income-based cancer disparities – as well as diversity in the cancer health workforce. The students who began the process of matching with mentors at the launch are the first class of children to enter UMB CURE, and the youngest ever to participate in the NCI's Continuing Umbrella for Research Experiences (CURE) national program.

The WYPR story takes listeners back to [the launch event on Oct. 10, 2015](#), during which U.S. Rep. **Elijah E. Cummings** of Baltimore thanked the NCI and UMB for paying attention to young people from disadvantaged neighborhoods in Baltimore and helping them to meet high aspirations. The NCI was represented by Sanya A. Springfield, PhD, director of the NCI's [Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities](#) , which established the CURE nationwide initiative.

Cummings, a 1976 alumnus of the [Francis King Carey School of Law](#) at UMB, said the urban challenge is to have "a new vision." He directly thanked UMB President **Jay A. Perman, MD**, for his role in UMB CURE.

In the piece, Perman recalls interacting with a Baltimore boy who talked about his future even though, in reality, difficulties were likely. He said urban youngsters face numerous obstacles and his job as president "is to remove those obstacles one by one."

The story includes interviews with Karin Soden, the parent of one of the CURE Scholars, Katelyn Paige, and with a teacher at the sixth-grader's school, Franklin Square Elementary/Middle School. He is Maryland Carey Law alum **Kirk Crawley, JD '88**, who is a member of the CURE Scholars advisory board.

Other participating schools are Southwest Baltimore Charter School and Green Street Academy. The CURE science activities at the latter and an interview with CURE Scholars Executive Director **Robin Saunders, EdD, MS**, [aired on WBAL-TV](#) in the fall. A group of CURE Scholars also were greeted warmly on Dec. 7 during [a presentation to the Baltimore City Council](#).

Smith's story is the third part of a WYPR series on the [Southwest Partnership](#), a collaboration involving UMB and seven neighborhoods that lie south and west of the campus. The University's commitment is led by its [Office of Community Engagement](#) (OCE), which welcomed the CURE Scholars in November to its new Community Engagement Center, where they began preparations to compete in the Maryland Science Olympiad. These science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) activities are among many designed to put UMB's CURE Scholars on a path to the bright futures envisioned by Cummings, Perman, and the youngsters' mentors.

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