



Rebecca Luth, Alyssia Hence and Demarco Johnson working on their Team Challenge proposal in the McNair office.

In This Challenger

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Semester Break Edition!

We all look forward to a break! For many of us, this means going home, connecting with family and friends, and taking some well-earned R & R! But this isn't always as easy as it sounds. This edition is dedicated to helping us make the most of our time off. We at McNair want you to come back rested and ready for a new semester of exciting activities and research. So read on...

Surviving the Semester Break

by *Thomas Passwater*

Classes. Projects. Papers. Exams...Home.

In a perfect world, going home would be like a vacation in Jamaica! We all know, nonetheless, that home can sometimes be can be just as exhausting and challenging as school. **Courtney Williams**, EMU McNair alumna and recent recipient of an M.A. on Psychology from Pepperdine University, offered the following thoughts about how to survive the holidays:

1. It's okay to say NO—if you are returning home for the holidays, you will more than likely be bombarded with requests for your time. You've been away from loved ones a long time and it is understandable they want to see you and vice versa. However, please remember that you are only one person and cannot do everything in one trip. **2. Reconnect with your passion**—Often times we put things to the side that we enjoy doing due to writing papers, working, studying for tests, etc. Use your holiday as a chance to practice self-care. Pick up that book you have been wanting to read for six months, or practice the instrument that you haven't played in two years. **3. RELAX**— Take a nap, go on a walk, ride your bike, go to a movie. Do things that will help you balance yourself and clear your mind. You work so hard and when you return from break, you will be right back at it. You deserve this time, so take it!!”

Dr. Pamela Landau, Psychologist and EMU Lecturer—who also happened to be Courtney's McNair Mentor, adds, “Re-entry to family life can be challenging—students may have very different expectations of ‘vacation from school’ from their parents’. Some students may want to sleep late, spend time with friends, go out at night, or all night, or just chill. Some parents may expect their college age students to be home, visit with family, help with family and household responsibilities, and follow house rules. Both have legitimate perspectives. The key may be to **talk with your parents about what they expect, and listen and respect each other's views**. In some families, this may not be possible, but attempting open communication may alleviate some conflict, or at least open the door for negotiations. For example, it may be helpful to let parents know what your plans are and ask what the family plans are before going home. Knowing schedules ahead of time or adjusting schedules to fit each other's needs may avoid last minute conflict and stress. If a family situation is too stressful, **have a plan B**. That is, find a friend or family with whom you may spend the holiday break, or a situation that is less stressful. **Part of holiday break is for you to have an opportunity to relax, restore, have fun, be safe and return to school ready to tackle the new semester.**”

International Student Perspectives

by Mariah Brito and Thomas Passwater

Every member of the McNair family brings their individual background and personality to our community. In this issue, we asked some of the Scholars who have lived abroad to share their perspectives on life, culture and education at Eastern Michigan University.

Deborah Munganga grew up in South Africa. An Intern in EMU McNair, Deborah now she studies International Affairs and works with Dr. Nevena Trajkov. "I was impacted by my grandfather's story. He lives in the Congo, and we were talking on the phone and I asked about his well-being. He told me that he had not eaten all day and I was silenced by his answer. I was upset because there was nothing I could do to help. I knew that I had to major in International Affairs, which will enable me to work with developing countries to help people get their basic needs, such as food and water. In no way am I stereotyping Africa into a place of poverty and hunger, but, unfortunately, there are inequalities in wealth and income in some parts of Africa. Another issue is also that some governments are unstable and the leaders are corrupted. These conditions propel me to focus on helping the people."

Having lived in multiple cultures, Deborah believes that the international perspective is invaluable. She says, "When you live in a different country, you get multiple perspectives on issues that occur and how people deal with them. The comfortable cocoon you live in breaks open, and you are exposed to the reality of the world in which you live."

Nyambura Njee, also an Intern, moved to eastern Michigan from Kenya, and studies Africology and Sociology. Nyambura's experiences directly impact her scholarship and motivate her to excel. "I think that having international experiences allows me to conduct myself as a student and scholar in a more dynamic manner. It makes it much easier for me to find connections between things that people may not have seen as connected, and allows me to synthesize knowledge in a way that I may not have been able to without my international experience."

Nyambura's studies in Sociology and Africology are heavily influenced by her international experiences. She uses what she researches alongside her experiences to make new connections. She

says, "I study mostly social sciences and my research interests are focused on the consequences of colonialism. Because I've lived internationally, I'm able to recognize how we are affected by the impact of colonization globally, nationally, locally, and interpersonally. Developing a 'sociological imagination,' along with incorporating my knowledge and experiences, has wholly impacted my studies, campus activism and activities." Nyambura is currently conducting research with Diane Logwood, A.D.B. (*Continued, page 3*).

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December Events

Team Challenge Symposium

December 4th, 2015, 12:00 PM
Halle Library Auditorium
Ypsilanti, MI

Cinderella: The Ballet

December 4th, 2015, 8:00 PM.
EMU Dance
Pease Auditorium
Ypsilanti, MI

HOLIDAY PARTY POTLUCK

December 12th, 2015 11:00 AM
At Dr. Neff's House
Great food! Great fun!
Rides available!

Rosalyn Maldonado, who moved here from the Dominican Republic and studies Psychology, spoke with us about the differences between studying here and in the Dominican Republic. “I have noticed how much I appreciate education because of the difference between going to college in the Dominican Republic and going to college in the USA. More opportunities are provided to students here, such as scholarships, awards, fellowships, research opportunities, lab volunteering opportunities and EXTRA CREDIT! In the D.R. we do not get the opportunity to build our resumes, or to become better candidates for the work field. I feel very blessed and lucky to be able to come back to the USA to complete my studies and sometimes I can see that other people are not aware of the privileges and the benefits of studying in the USA. Eastern Michigan University has allowed Rosalyn to achieve even more, by becoming involved in organizations such as the Latino Student Association, the NAACP, the EMU Honors College and the McNair Scholars Program. For her this has been life changing: “This experience has made me such a strong, independent woman. I was able to excel academically and in my own personal journey. This experience has also connected me with different cultures that I would not have been exposed to if I had stayed at home. I’ve learned more about myself as well as others.”

“FOR ME THIS HAS BEEN A WONDERFUL JOURNEY WHERE I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MYSELF, AS WELL AS OTHERS.”

New Scholars Watch



Born in New York and raised in Detroit, **Tahsina Shimu** is a McNair Cadet and EMU Honors College member majoring in Biology. Tahsina is working with Dr. Maggie Hanes in an NSF-funded research lab, and also assisted her McNair Team with their proposal exploring the science between violent crime and genetics. Tahsina says that she is excited by the opportunities McNair offers, and adds that her “one true dream is to travel.” Tahsina will take her first Study-Abroad trip, to London and Dublin, this coming February. Two interesting things about this scholar to watch are: “I can do a weird bone trick with my left thumb, and I (secretly) love to sing.” Welcome, Tahsina!



Ivan LeBron, from Detroit, is a Cadet majoring in Public Health and conducting research with Dr. Megan Sterling. Ivan works at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital and has an interest in helping other people. This semester Ivan assisted his McNair Team with their proposal on the social and scientific factors that contribute to the spread of HIV in women of color. His favorite thing about EMU McNair is: “This program wants the best for each and every individual involved and I respect and admire that.” Two things Ivan wants you to know about himself is that he is “a big fan of basketball (high school, college, NBA), and I get involved with soup kitchens and anything that can help the unprivileged.” Welcome, Ivan!



Kala Sherman is a Westland, Michigan native conducting research with Dr. Natalie Dove (a longtime McNair mentor!). A Cadet majoring in Psychology, minoring in Human Nutrition and member of the EMU Honors College, Kala and her McNair Team won the Team Challenge with their proposal exploring the effects of gender specific toys on the complexity of play in children. Her favorite thing about EMU McNair is “how welcoming and friendly everyone has been. I enjoy being able to talk about things that matter with people who are interested.” Kala “loves to work out, and has an obsession with her Yorkie, Cookie (aka cookie monster).” Welcome, Kala!