

# HARVEST TIME



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## FROM CHICAGO TO THE SOUTH: HBCU TOUR 2023

TOURS, TRADITIONS, AND HIDDEN TALENTS..

This year's HBCU Spring Break trip went beyond the typical college tour—it was a deep dive into history, culture, and self-discovery.

Our group visited Tennessee State University, Lemoyn Owen College, and Lane College, but the experience was made even more special by alumni who had been on this same trip years ago. These former students didn't just guide the tours—they shared their personal stories of transitioning from life in Chicago to the South. Their insights brought a sense of connection and inspiration that made the trip truly unique for our current students. The fraternities and sororities on each campus played a key role in our journey. They welcomed us with open arms, offering an authentic glimpse into the vibrant traditions and spirit that make HBCUs so special. From step shows to campus traditions, they made sure we saw what campus life is really like. The trip's highlight, however, was our first-ever talent show. Held in the cozy cabin where we stayed, the students took the stage and surprised us with their amazing performances. From singing and dancing to spoken word, they showcased talents we didn't know they had. The talent show not only brought out their creativity but also built stronger bonds within the group. This wasn't just a spring break—it was an unforgettable exploration of HBCU culture, personal growth, and hidden talents, creating memories that will last a lifetime.



## COMED STEM LABS: BUILDING THE FUTURE

COMED MENTORS LEAD THE WAY TO SUCCESS



We were thrilled to partner with ComEd for their annual Black History Month STEM event, marking an exciting first for our program. The ComEd STEM Labs brought 50 African American students together at Chicago North, where they built and coded robots alongside passionate ComEd mentors. Beyond the hands-on activities, students connected with mentors who shared their own STEM journeys, offering real-world inspiration. This event truly helped our students step outside their comfort zones, build confidence, and explore future career possibilities. We're so proud of their growth!

## MLK DAY OF SERVICE INSPIRES DREAMS

STUDENTS SHARE THEIR VISIONS FOR CHANGE



For this year's MLK Day service project, our UB students visited a local school to inspire younger children about their dreams and the impact they want to make in the world. Engaging in heartfelt discussions, they encouraged the little ones to share their hopes for the future. Together, they created crafts and drawings that represented their aspirations. The project filled the room with positivity and joy, making it a truly uplifting experience for everyone involved. As always, our annual event focused on meaningful engagement and left a lasting impression on both the younger students and our volunteers.



## EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES IN MICHIGAN

STUDENTS CONNECT WITH COLLEGES AND CHAMPIONS.

Our recent overnight visit to Grand Valley State University was an unforgettable experience for our students, thanks in part to the support of B. Donta Truss, Vice President for Enrollment Development and Educational Outreach.

During their stay, students had the unique opportunity to live in actual dorms, allowing them to fully immerse themselves in college culture. They participated in various dorm activities, including rearranging their class schedules and collaborating with their classmates to complete tasks. This hands-on experience fostered teamwork and independence, helping them envision what college life could be like. The following day, the excitement ramped up as

they attended a thrilling football game. The atmosphere was electric, featuring a live DJ, upbeat music, a vibrant marching band, and stunning fireworks lighting up the night sky. The energy of the crowd was contagious, and the game itself was a top-tier experience.

This visit was not just about exploring a university; it was about embracing the college lifestyle and discovering what it means to be part of a campus community.

A special thank you to B. Donta Truss for his support and to Grand Valley State University for providing such a remarkable opportunity. We look forward to more experiences like this in the future!

## ALUMNI INSIGHTS ILLUMINATE THE WAY

STUDENTS GAIN CLARITY THROUGH SHARED EXPERIENCES..



Our recent visit to Eastern Illinois University was a huge success, thanks to a remarkable student panel led by our alumni. Their insights added a personal touch, resonating deeply with our students. The panel provided valuable clarity that perfectly complemented the college tour and admission presentation. Students appreciated the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations, inspiring them to envision their own college journeys. Thank you to our alumni for your transparency and for investing time in our students!

## HAWKS MALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

HONORING EXCELLENCE AND COMMITMENT



We are incredibly proud of our students who received awards at the Senior Awards Banquet, highlighting their hard work and dedication. A special shout-out goes to Ryan Butler, who was named the Hawks Male Athlete of the Year. As a UB Ambassador, Ryan not only recruits new students but also encourages his teammates and classmates to excel. His commitment and passion for leadership shine through in everything he does. This fall, Ryan will attend St. Xavier University and play football. Congratulations to all our award winners!

# HANDS-ON SCIENCE AT NOTRE DAME

EXPLORING DNA WITH ENGAGING ACTIVITIES!

Our recent visit to the DNA Learning Center at Notre Dame was an incredible experience for our students. Led by Dr. Amy Stark, who holds a Ph.D. in Human Genetics from the University of Chicago, the workshop focused on DNA Forensics. Dr. Stark, a recognized leader in her field and a 2020 Michiana 40 Under 40 honoree, guided students through an exciting activity where they served as forensic experts in a fictitious crime involving a kidnapped leprechaun.

Students utilized DNA fingerprinting techniques to solve the mystery, immersing themselves in the world of genetics and forensics. With Dr. Stark's expertise in pharmacogenomics and chemotherapy predictors, the workshop provided valuable insights into real-world applications of genetics. The hands-on experience captivated our students, and they successfully identified the culprit within the hour. This visit not only enriched their understanding of genetics but also sparked enthusiasm for future scientific endeavors.



# CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE AT THE SENIOR AWARDS

HONORING ACHIEVEMENTS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Our first-ever Senior Awards Banquet for the Class of 2022 was a resounding success, celebrating the outstanding accomplishments of our students. In preparation for the event, students recorded heartfelt videos reaching out to local companies for donations, and the response was incredible! Both private and corporate sponsors generously supported our cause, purchasing items from our Amazon wish list. Every requested item was fulfilled, showcasing the power of community involvement.

During the banquet, we recognized students not only for their academic achievements, such as applying to colleges and scholarships but also for their exemplary character displayed throughout the year. This event highlighted the importance of perseverance and dedication, encouraging students to stay committed to their education and aspire to graduate.

