

FRIENDS Spotlight: An Agent for Change

FRIENDS of BOMLA Founding Board Chair Lyria Howland was recently recognized for her notable contributions to diversity and inclusion in communications as well as her dedication to leadership development for young people.

At BOMLA, the notion of service and giving back is built into our hallways. Similarly, FRIENDS founding Board Member Lyria Howland has intersected her professional work with her passion for advocating for young people.

Recently, Howland was awarded the Change Agency Award from the Marcus Graham Project because of her contribution to increased diversity in the media industry. Before retiring from her full-time role as a public relations practitioner, she had received numerous other awards for community service, excellence in multicultural communication and leadership.

As a public relations professional, Howland developed her clients' reputations and relationships through strategies that resonated with diverse audiences. By building diversity and inclusion into the work she prepared for clients, she was able to increase their access, recognition and credibility.

Despite the significance of these awards, they are not the focus of her work. These accolades highlight the years of dedication to increased inclusion and awareness for diverse people and issues – but Howland said none of it could have been possible without her community of support

“Throughout my career, I have been blessed to have experienced professionals support my development,” she said. “Their support and wise counsel continues to guide my personal and professional endeavors. Now, it is my responsibility to pay it forward.”

In December, she will receive the 2018 A. Maceo Smith Community Service Award for Youth Involvement from the African American Museum.

A. Maceo Smith was a civil rights leader who fought for issues including voting rights for people of color in Texas. Receiving this award is important for Howland not only because of Smith's accomplishments, but also because of his modern-day legacy.

“The A. Maceo Smith Award has special significance for me as the Founding Chair of the FRIENDS of BOMLA because our school proudly carries the A. Maceo Smith name.”

Congratulations, Lyria! We are so lucky to have you and appreciate all that you've done and continue to do for FRIENDS.

Donation Update: The Power of Giving

This year, BOMLA raised nearly \$40,000 through North Texas Giving Day efforts, and we cannot thank our supporters enough. FRIENDS donations continue to make success stories commonplace for BOMLA students and alumni. Read more about how the BOMLA experience opens new doors to success.

Imagine visiting Oprah Winfrey's Instagram page and seeing a video of your son presenting the media-mogul with a rose as a thank-you for a scholarship. For John Thompson and his son Zachary, this was a [reality](#) made possible through FRIENDS donations.

In his first semester at Morehouse College, Thompson made the Dean's List. His father, John Thompson, attributes this and other academic achievements to BOMLA's academic rigor and culture. Thompson's academic success, matched with his other achievements, has made him an impressive candidate for numerous professional and academic opportunities.

"Because of skills like self-confidence, essay writing and interview etiquette that were introduced to him at BOMLA, Zach is now an Oprah Winfrey scholar," said John.

The strong sense of brotherhood and camaraderie on BOMLA's campus have also prepared him for college. For John, the excitement he sees his son share with other students proves the value in those relationships developed on campus.

This sentiment is shared by Tandi Smith, the mother of recent BOMLA graduate Caleb Smith. She believes that the community has aptly developed and prepared her son for college.

"Caleb gained a greater sense of self-worth and confidence," said Tandi. "It truly is an amazing transformation to watch a young boy become a young man."

Both Tandi and John agree: BOMLA's secret sauce is a unique culture and intentional programs that create opportunities that extend beyond a student's neighborhood or socioeconomic status.

All of this is made possible through donations, which support students both psychically and emotionally.

"Those donations provide hope to these young men," said Tandi. "It lets them know that there are individuals out there who want to see them succeed and make the world to be a better place for everyone."

The generous gifts we receive year-round ensure that there are countless success stories similar to Zachary and Caleb. We are so thankful to the community that supports our students.

If you would like to gift the power of opportunity, contact kezia@bomlafriends.com or [donate online](#) today!

Photo: Zachary 1

Photo: Caleb 1 or Caleb 2

Lessons Lived: From Serving the Country to Leading the Next Generation

Veterans Day is an opportunity for us to honor the lives and work of those that have sacrificed and served. BOMLA is thankful to all of the active and retired graduates, staff, board members and FRIENDS.

Veteran's Day is a key time to reflect on and honor the military veterans that have served in the United States Armed Forces, especially those who have walked our campus halls.

At BOMLA, numerous teachers, board members and even former students identify as veterans or active armed forces personnel and serve as impeccable role models for our current students.

FRIENDS Board Member Damian Sanders and English Language Arts teacher Sakennia Reed are just a few of the esteemed service people that support our students.

Sanders attended the United States Naval Academy and was commissioned as an Officer in the United States Navy. Despite his longstanding passion for science and helping others, Sanders didn't always know he wanted to serve in the Navy.

"As a child, I was always interested in airplanes and space vehicles; as such, my ultimate dream was to become a NASA astronaut," said Sanders.

It was not until he learned more about naval aviation and being an officer that he considered attending the Naval Academy. In this way, he was able to have the experiences he dreamt of as a child while serving his country.

Reed had different motives. She wanted to improve herself by becoming more disciplined and emotionally strong. She also wanted more post-graduate opportunities available to military veterans.

Although their reason for enlisting is different, these BOMLA team members both have fond memories from their time serving.

"My most memorable experience was leading a search and rescue mission for a vessel lost at sea which resulted in the rescue of the vessel's operator," Sanders said. "Knowing that my aircrew and I were able to save a person's life is an experience that I will always cherish."

For Reed, her most valuable moment was when she was qualifying with her weapon, an M16 A2 rifle.

"You have to shoot 23 out of 40 targets to qualify and proceed to the next round in basic training and I consistently hit 22 targets five times in a row," said Reed.

After receiving rigorous coaching from her drill sergeant and others to no avail, her drill sergeant cleared the firing range and encouraged her to try again.

“My next round was a 32 out of 40,” said Reed.

Although their roles have since changed, both Reed and Sanders agree the invaluable lessons learned are long-lasting and transferrable.

“The importance of teamwork and working with a diverse group of people are two lessons learned from my time in the Navy,” said Sanders. “I apply them to working with not only the FRIENDS Board, but also the BOMLA faculty and staff, and most importantly the BOMLA students and their families.”

“A lesson that I learned in the service that I apply as a teacher is selfless service,” said Reed. “Serving others brings true joy to my life.”

FRIENDS of BOMLA would like to personally thank Sanders, Reed and others for [MOU1] their service this Veteran’s Day.

Something's Different: BOMLA Participates in DISD's Principal for a Day

BOMLA recently participated in DISD's Principal for a Day program. Read more about who our guest principal was and what the day entailed.

Even though it wasn't opposite day, Oct. 10 sure felt like it! BOMLA hosted Maureen Tarantello as our principal for Dallas Independent School District's (DISD) annual Principal for a Day project.

In collaboration with the Dallas Regional Chamber and Capital One Bank, DISD hosts Principal for a Day (PFAD) as an opportunity for community leaders to become acquainted with different schools in the district. This project also signifies the commitment that DFW organizations have to improving the quality of public education.

Tarantello serves as Willis Towers Watson's U.S. West region lead and is responsible for managing and increasing the company's business and client relationships in that area.

During her day as principal, she spent time with students and participated in community meetings with teachers and administrators. Attending those meetings introduced her to the amount of work that is required to plan effective lessons and the compassion and dedication that BOMLA staff has for students.

Although she enjoyed learning more about the educational structure, there were other aspects of her day at BOMLA that she appreciated.

"My favorite part was the Lyceum," said Tarantello. "I was impressed with the order, respect, sense of community and questions from scholars."

She knows that her experience with BOMLA did not end with the project and is excited to participate in Career Day with a colleague who is an actuary.

Thank you for joining us on DISD's Principal for a Day, Maureen!

BOMLA in the Community: Dallas Premiere of HBO's The Apollo

On Sunday, Nov 3, The BOMLA Jazz Band performed at the Dallas premiere of the HBO documentary The Apollo, hosted by the Embrey Family Foundation and community partners.

BOMLA students continue to make impressions with industry leaders, like film producer Lisa Cortes who toured campus after the Dallas Screening of her latest documentary. At the start of November, a group of students from the BOMLA Jazz Band performed at the Dallas premiere of HBO's newest documentary, The Apollo, before the film aired nationwide.

Hosted by The Embrey Family Foundation and community partners Dallas Film, Ignite Arts and the Denton Black Film Festival, the screening gave Dallas audiences and BOMLA students, faculty and FRIENDS a first-look at the documentary that explores archival footage, music, comedy and dance performances, as well as the rich and sometimes harrowing history of the significant Harlem theater.

A very special thank-you to everyone who attended the screening and showed support through donations to FRIENDS. If you missed the film, The Apollo is now available for streaming on HBO and HBO Go.