America Reads*America Counts (AR*AC) is a partnership between the University of Maryland and the Prince George’s County Public Schools which provides high quality after-school mentoring for elementary school students two to three days a week, helping them with reading, basic math skills, homework, problem solving, critical thinking with reflective writing, and hands-on group activities. AR*AC offers civic engagement opportunities for college students. The elementary students who participated in AR*AC in 2007–08 were predominantly from low-income families and qualified for free or reduced lunches; students who speak English as a second language are also targeted.

AR*AC offers strong civic engagement opportunities for college students. Because of their experiences, a number of the UM mentors have looked more seriously at careers in teaching or non-profit management. Many of the AR*AC mentors are employed through the Federal Work Study program, as employment is part of their financial aid package and is critical to them staying at UM.

Mathematics skills are critical for today’s students to establish a strong educational foundation and begin the path to success. The America Counts after-school program has increased in size in four years from 17 UM student mentors and 65 mentees in two schools to close to 200 mentors and 275 mentees at seven schools. This increase is directly attributable to grant support from the American Honda Foundation and the Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Inc. and increased funding from both UM and the Prince George’s County Schools.

Achievement measured by the nationally normed Maryland School Assessment Performance Indicator Test showed that eighty-two percent of mentees who completed the 2007–2008 program increased their mathematics test scores; forty-nine percent increased their scores by twenty percentage points or higher. The program has been able to document not only increased testing scores for the participating students, but also strong support from teachers and parents.

An added benefit to the program, the elementary school students for the first time “see themselves” attending college like their mentors.

“America Counts makes an incredible difference in the lives of so many children, giving them the chance to gain critical math skills and aspire to be college students. And the powerful experiences our students have teach them to be better citizens, contributing to their communities now and throughout their lives.”

— LINDA M. CLEMENT
Vice President for Student Affairs
Recognized nationally for many of its programs, services and staff, the Division of Student Affairs works collectively to offer students a world-class experience while at Maryland. We strive to provide every student the opportunity to gain skills necessary to contribute to our global society and to explore leadership in all of its various forms. We believe students must graduate with the skills not only necessary to succeed in the work place, but also to live healthy, balanced and civically engaged lives.

**AMERICA COUNTS PRIORITIES**

- Provide funding for project supplies, teaching materials, field trip activities and healthy snacks which are critical to the children’s focus and behavior.
- Provide scholarships for UM students who have financial need, as Federal Work Study funds have significantly decreased.
- Provide funding for transportation for UM students to go to the schools.

**ADDITIONAL CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES**

- **Garden of Reflection and Remembrance**: Inspiring the University and surrounding communities to take the time to contemplate and enjoy the quiet of nature. Used by several classes integrating the labyrinth into the curriculum, and as an outdoor laboratory for classes such as Landscape Architecture.
- **Student Crisis Fund**: Removing financial burden and worry for students who have had major challenges – funds to replace books, assist in times of family emergencies and medical need.
- **Contemporary Art Purchasing Program**: Opening the eyes of students and community members to the varied perspectives and cultures of contemporary artists. Giving students the unique occasion to meet with artists, gallery managers and curators to learn the world of art as a business.
- **Veterans Scholarships**: Providing critical resources to fill the gap between Veterans Administration benefits and the actual cost of an education. Scholarships are often the only way our vets can attend college; many also are providing for families.
- **Alternative Breaks**: Developing critical thinking skills while giving students the opportunity to better understand the impact one citizen’s involvement can have locally and globally. Deep education on issues such as border awareness, the justice system, HIV/AIDS, poverty and education.

We call on all those who value our work – alumni, students, faculty, partners and friends – to come forward, contribute their knowledge, energy and financial resources, and help us improve student lives so that they, in turn will change the world. Join with us to achieve **Great Expectations!**

To discuss a gift or for more information regarding any of these important Campaign Priorities contact:

Division of Student Affairs
Office of Development and External Relations
301.314.4900
www.studentaffairsgiving.umd.edu