

## Testimonials for REU CAAR Summer 2017

### **Samsara Counts**

This summer at REUCAAR validated my inclination towards theoretical computer science research and going to graduate school. I loved collaborating with peers and pursuing exciting, unsolved problems, teaching myself as I went. The talks the CS dept. hosted were fascinating and the quality of students and faculty involved in the REU was unparalleled. My advisor was awesome and I enjoyed spending time outside of research with the other REU students. While working at CAAR, I learned a ton of theory itself as well as essential strategies for conducting research. I would highly recommend CAAR to every undergraduate who has considered doing research, attending grad school, or simply loves learning about computer science and computing topics.

### **Prayaag Venkat**

Prior to CAAR REU, I had some interest in attending graduate school. After the REU, I am now very confident that I would like to go to graduate school to study subjects similar to what I worked on over the summer. I believe that this experience has been overwhelmingly positive for me, and I would highly recommend future students who are interested in potentially attending graduate school to participate in this opportunity.

### **Xi Chen**

Xi Chen (Mentor: Samir Khuller. Teammates: Grace Cai. Project: Rideshare) This is my second time participating a research program and it's definitely the best one. I've got a chance to meet so many talented peers and worked with Prof. Khuller and a great high school student Grace Cai. I was afraid that I cannot handle the challenging algorithm problems, but I always got the instructions from my mentor and leaned to read related papers. There is no doubt that I learned many graphic algorithms that are related to my research topic, and I also got a chance to implement an application with our designed algorithm. In addition, the weekly math problems and game days added more fun to this research experience.

### **Quantum Justin Yirka**

The CAAR REU at UMD was the best program I could have spent time at this summer. I'd previously completed research at my university, and this still made a big difference in how I think about my future in research. At my

university, I'm just about the only student interested in theoretical computer science. But at the UMD REU, people actually shared my interests. The group lunches and the unofficial group parties were fun. And, my nerdcred has increased exponentially in the time spent at UMD, given the many, many, many math and computer science jokes. After doing research at my university and at UMD, I'm able to commit to pursuing a Ph.D. with certainty. I also now have more connections and advice than ever to help me with that goal. In particular, UMD was exciting because while the REU helped me to specifically focus on quantum computing, I was also exposed to talks and research from other, unfamiliar areas of theory, prompting me to learn any number of things which may be useful in the future (for details, ask Dr. Gasarch about our 'work' on quantum muffins). tl;dr: You should apply to the UMD CAAR REU.

### **Ziyan Zhong**

REUCAAR is my first research experience in computer science and it is definitely an extremely valuable experience. In this program, I learned a lot by doing research with professor Tom Goldstein and his graduate student on an optimization problem. On the one hand, I learned how to quickly learn things necessary for a research topic and implement the ideas of the latest research papers. On the other hand, I learned how to cooperate with other students in a research team and communicate findings with fellow students. Besides, during this program I got many opportunities to talk with and listen to talk given by many brilliant computer science professors at University of Maryland. These conversations together with my research experience let me make my mind to pursue a PhD in computer science in the future.