Testimonials for REU-CAAR 2026

Alex Myrick

I came into REU-CAAR from a background in ML/AI, not knowing much about systems or algorithms. My partner, Peter Chen, and I worked with Prof. *Laxman Dhulipala* on building a library for practically and theoretically efficient, ergonomic parallel processing We recently submitted our work as a Brief Announcement to the *ACM Sym. on Parallelism in Algorithms and Architectures (SPAA) 2027* and have continued to work with the lab on an upcoming graph project this Fall.

REU-CAAR was an amazing experience in terms of the academic content, where we were able to learn areas such as functional programming languages and cache-oblivious algorithms, but also in the social aspects; the game nights were awesome In terms of supervision, *Prof. Dhulipala* gave us immense freedom to investigate the topics we were most interested in, but he and the graduate student we worked with, *Peter Li* were always available to meet whenever we had questions or problems to resolve. I really had a great time at the REU, and it strongly pushed me toward applying to PhD programs in parallel processing this coming year. Also, *Prof. Gasarch's* lectures were extremely memorable (in a good way), and the weekly seminar series gave some nice insights into a variety of fields. I would highly recommend REU-CAAR to anyone considering research as a career path!

Charlie Klawitter

The REU-CAAR program was a unique experience that provided endless opportunities to network, learn, and grow as an academic. I was on the pure mathematics project focused on Ramsey Theory, a topic in combinatorics. I came into the program with some research experience, but conducting research under *Bill Gasarch's* mentorship was a different beast. I learned what real research is and all of the elements that go into it. Outside of doing math, the University of Maryland campus was beautiful, and there was always something to do on weeknights and weekends. Its proximity to Washington, D.C., and Baltimore made it a unique place to spend the summer. I highly recommend it to anyone who is interested in Math or Computer Science and wants to extend their learning beyond the classroom. I grew not only as a student and researcher, but as a person. I will forever be grateful for my time at UMD with my mentor *Bill* and my group members.

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Tane Park

As a high schooler, my exposure to Ramsey theory before the REU-CAAR program was limited to small glimpses from competition math. This program allowed me to see just how deep the field really is, introducing me to incredible results like the Polynomial van der Waerden theorem and Rado's theorem that I didn't even know existed. Beyond the math itself, the highly collaborative environment at REU-CAAR gave me a realistic and inspiring glimpse into what a career in mathematical research actually looks like. I truly enjoyed every moment of the program and am incredibly grateful to the mentors and peers who made this such an unforgettable experience.

Peter Chen

Despite not knowing very much about parallel algorithms coming into REU-CAAR I had a great time working with *Professor Dhulipala* on Parallel Algorithms engineering for Multi-SSD machines. I came to really appreciate how the field blends elements from classical algorithm design with optimizations more on the systems side, and am now interested in possibly working more in this direction throughout my undergrad and in grad school. I also had a great time attending events and talks organized by *Professor Gasarch*, as well as getting to know the other students and learning about their projects which helped make the REU a great experience overall.

Ishan Kumthekar

REU-CAAR gave me excellent insight into how graduate school research works. Our project on *Alternative Computing* wasn't extremely directed and was more exploratory, which, in my opinion, reflects how a lot of graduate research is done. We got to make our own choices when picking applications and technologies. I, for instance, got to explore Ramsey theory and quantum annealing and learned a lot about both fields. *Dr. Gasarch and Dr. Regli*, who were my mentors, also gave us valuable feedback and helped us figure out what to focus on in our exploratory research. Apart from the research, I thoroughly enjoyed the weekly talks from other supervisors as well. You also get to play a lot of board games and eat pizza every other week, which is definitely a plus!

Arnav Bali

My experience in the REU-CAAR program taught me a lot about quantization in attention. Before the summer I knew how to use large models, but I did not really understand what was happening inside them. Quantization was a timely topic to work on, and what I learned has carried into the rest of my undergraduate experience. With the support of Prof. Lin and my mentor Hamidreza, our team worked on quantizing quadtree attention so it could run with lower precision numbers and use less memory. We gathered meaningful results that we were able to present, and the process gave us a deeper understanding of the architecture behind all of our favorite models. Outside of research, the activities and social gatherings let us meet students from the other groups. Hearing about their projects broadened what we learned and made the summer feel like one shared experience instead of separate teams.