

### **UHMS Success Story**

#### ***A 16 Year-Old Girl's Journey to Find Her Path and Graduate at the Top of Her Class***

*I've worked with many female teens, but one particular success story comes to mind – a 16 year old girl being treated for grief and anxiety. When I began working with her, she had an aggressive attitude and was not interested in establishing, much less achieving her goals.*

*I knew it was important to make a connection with her... It's a matter of trust. They have to feel that you are there for them and what they stand for. Without trust, you cannot get them to engage with you. Without trust, you will not be able to help them move in the right direction.*

*I started by showing her that I cared about her interests and studies. We worked on self-esteem and body image issues as well as explored her goals and aspirations. I also encouraged her to discover local museums and other community sites to help her see all of the resources in her own backyard. Once she saw how other people lived, she was ready to reach for her own dreams.*

*We used journals, practices sheets and personal homework assignments to expand her horizons and build her skills. I collaborated with her school's assistant principal and helped her family obtain necessary resources. I also accompanied her to employment seminars and advocated on her behalf. All of these techniques, along with counseling have helped her to accomplish great things.*

*Now she has a sense of direction and an attitude of gratitude. She is a proud high school graduate. Noted as an outstanding model student, she graduated in the top 10 of her class!*

*\* Brenda T is a Community Support Worker, community activist and columnist for a local DC paper.*