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CAPSGW Education and Travel Grant

I am writing to express my gratitude for the opportunity to attend the 70th annual American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry conference in New York City this year through the support of the CAPSGW Education and Travel Grant. This opportunity represented a significant opportunity for professional growth and development for me.

As a first-year child and adolescent psychiatry fellow at MedStar Georgetown, I am committed to addressing the mental health needs of children, adolescents, and their families through collaborations with providers in school-based mental health programs, primary care settings, and community-based settings. My commitments have found a nurturing space within AACAP, particularly through the AACAP school committee, which aligns with my personal and academic interests.

I had the opportunity to delve deep into racial and social issues affecting our youth during the conference. The seminars on "Racism as Trauma" and "ADHD: Understanding and Addressing Racial and Ethnic Disparities" have further equipped me with insights and tools to champion health equity and advocate for African-American youth more effectively. My experience during the Media Theatre on "Katrina Babies" was both enlightening and solidifying of the urgency of mental health support post-natural disasters. The Media Theatre session on "Katrina Babies" profoundly resonated with me, given my family's beginnings originating in New Orleans, Louisiana. It served as a stark reminder of the unspoken traumas that natural and unnatural disasters inflict, particularly on young people, that often go unnoticed amid chaos. The current ongoing conflict in Israel and Palestine mirrors this need for addressing trauma, albeit in a different context.

The excitement I expressed about attending the school committee meeting came to fruition. It was an enriching experience when I joined the now-retired Georgetown University faculty Dr. Bostic, a leading figure in school-based mental health. This, coupled with the subsequent school-based mental health discussions, further solidified my aspiration to bridge the gap between AACAP's objectives and the evolving needs of current fellows in our field.

Lastly, the ability to connect with mentors and peers was refreshing. Reconnecting with Drs. Sarah Vinson, Johnathan Shephard, and Akeem Marsh was enriching, and the medical student and resident mixers provided avenues for both imparting knowledge and gaining insights. I also met with mentors interested in my growth as a scholar and psychiatrist who provided me with invaluable feedback on my training goals.

Given the financial costs that attending professional conferences can incur, I am deeply appreciative of the CAPSGW Education and Travel Grant that I received. My attendance at the AACAP conference, thanks to this grant, was a valuable investment, reaping benefits not only for me but also for the broader child and adolescent psychiatry community. I sincerely hope you consider my experiences and insights as a testament to the significant impact of the CAPSGW Education and Travel Grant.