



ALABAMA

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Albert Schweitzer Fellowship of Alabama Announces Outstanding Mentor Honorees**

*Dr. Lemeshia Chambers and Dr. Lisa E. Gurley Receive Awards*

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**Birmingham, AL, February 22, 2024** -----The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship (ASF) of Alabama announced today the recipients of its 2024 Outstanding Academic Mentor and Outstanding Community Site Mentor awards. A distinction of the Fellowship is the cross-sector collaboration between academics and the community, as seen in the recognition of outstanding mentors who played critical roles in the success of Schweitzer Fellows. **Dr. Lisa Gurley of Samford University's Moffett and Sanders School of Nursing and Dr. Lemeshia Chambers of UAB's Live HealthSmart Alabama are recognized in honor of their exemplary commitment to their ASF Fellow mentees.**

The Outstanding Mentor award recipients will be honored at ASF's Celebration of Service event on April 13, 2024, alongside the graduating 2023-24 class of ASF Fellows, composed of 21 graduate students from Auburn University, the University of Montevallo, Samford University and UAB.

This year's Outstanding Academic Mentor Award recipient, Dr. Gurley serves as the Post-Master's DNP Coordinator for Samford nursing students. "Dr. Gurley is an excellent example of steadfast dependability, support, and professionalism. Her wisdom, combined with extensive expertise, propels learners to achieve goals that will serve our communities well," notes Dr. Amy Snow, Director of Clinical Services at Samford University's Moffett and Sanders School of Nursing. Dr. Gurley is the academic mentor to Dannelle Paz, a 2023-24 ASF Fellow in Samford's College of Health Sciences.

Paz partnered with Children's Hospital of Alabama Intervention and Prevention Services to increase awareness of child sex trafficking. Dannelle's project developed an online learning module to teach

nurses the signs and symptoms of trafficking, the red flags they should look out for, and the right questions to ask. When nominating Dr. Gurley, Dannelle recounts:

*“Dr. Gurley was the one to introduce me to the ASF application as she knew what I was working on last year. She has been available at every turn for questions I have and when I was overwhelmed...I have been able to call, text, and email and she is immediate in her responses. She has provided great feedback for my writing and clarified what I am trying to accomplish by asking pointed questions. She also encouraged me to speak at the Alabama State Nursing Convention. I met contacts there and was able to connect with the Alabama Board of Nursing president and policy director to start the process for change. None of this would have happened without Dr. Gurley believing in me and pushing me outside my comfort zone to apply for the speaking engagement. “*

This year's Outstanding Community Site Mentor Award recipient, Dr. Lemeshia Chambers serves as the Operations Director for Live HealthSmart Alabama. LHSA is a transformational movement to *make good health simple* for all Alabamians by making changes to the rules, the systems, and the places that prevent people from making healthy choices. Live HealthSmart focuses on improving access to good nutrition, physical activity, and prevention and wellness. Dr. Chambers's role focuses on health equity, growth, and the sustainability of this initiative. Her mentee, 2023-24 ASF Fellow Alanis Stansberry, who is studying nutrition science in UAB's School of Health Professions is creating meal plans and educational material for individuals who shop at the Mobile Market, a mobile food market that provides access to low-cost, healthy foods.

Stansberry reflected on the ways Dr. Chambers introduced her to the people that run the Mobile Market, shared the in's and out's of the Market's operations as well as provided a safe space for her to be heard not just as a student, but a person as well.

*“Dr. Chambers has been heavily involved in the creation and implementation of my project. She was a wealth of knowledge in regard to the operations of the Mobile Market as well as the characteristics of the intervention population. She connected me to the employees and volunteers at the Mobile Market. Dr. Chambers has been the perfect balance of a professional and personal mentor. She is the first mentor that I have had that understands what it is like to be a woman of color in academia. Upon my request, we had conversations about race in the workplace and academia. She has been a safe place for me to ask questions, request counsel, and a space for me to debrief.”*

This year's awards are generously sponsored by UAB's Center for Clinical and Translational Science. Dr. Orlando Guitierrez, Co-Director of CCTS joins us in celebrating our awardees and the intersection of values between CCTS, ASF and the work our Fellows engage in:

*“The Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS) is thrilled to recognize the immense value that Schweitzer Fellowship mentors provide to our scientific community through these two awardees. The CCTS seeks to elevate health equity by reducing the disproportionate burden of chronic diseases and the impact of adverse social determinants of health affecting the region. A critical lever for accomplishing this mission is supporting individuals who are more established in their careers--with expertise and experience to share--to mentor the next generation of translational scientists. This award was a natural way for us to demonstrate our commitment to supporting effective mentorship, particularly in a program that also mirrors other values our Center strives towards, such as community engagement, cross-disciplinary training, cultural diversity, as well as leadership.”*

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**About The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship of Alabama**

The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship (ASF) of Alabama is developing the next generation of healthcare professionals to serve and empower vulnerable people to live healthier lives and create healthier communities in Alabama. Since 2016, ASF of Alabama has trained 125 students who have partnered with over 77 community organizations to provide approximately 26,000 hours of service at a value of more than \$650,000 to Alabama's most vulnerable groups. Nationally, more than 4,000 U.S. Schweitzer Fellows have delivered nearly 750,000 hours of service to individuals and communities in need. Through its intensive one-year Fellowship program and the ongoing work of its 4,000+ Fellow for Life alumni, ASF perpetuates the legacy of physician-humanitarian and Nobel Peace laureate Dr. Albert Schweitzer.