



# UMB News

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## UMB Partners with Arabbers to Distribute Food in Community

**May 6, 2020** | *By [Jena Frick](#)*

“We’ve got bread here! Free chicken!” shouted Anthony Savoy, as he walked through West Baltimore alongside his red-and-yellow horse-drawn cart. The bells on the horse’s bridle jingled with every step, letting the neighborhood know that even during a global pandemic, the arabbers were still hard at work.

Arabbers are street vendors who sell fruits and vegetables from colorful carts pulled by horses, and they’ve been an institution in Baltimore since the late 1800s. Savoy has worked as an arabber for over 50 years, delivering fresh food to Baltimore neighborhoods with limited access to grocery stores.

On April 29, instead of delivering fruits and vegetables, Savoy delivered packages of bread and a thousand pounds of frozen chicken.

*(View a photo gallery below.)*

“We need to do this job, and we always try to give back to the neighborhoods,” Savoy said. “Now that we’re all dealing with this COVID-19 pandemic, we’re trying to do our best to spread out in the neighborhoods and get people what they need.”

The bread that Savoy was carrying in his cart was donated by Baltimore’s H&S Bakery, and the chicken part of a 2,000-pound donation from Holly Poultry to the University of Maryland, Baltimore’s (UMB) Community Engagement Center (CEC).

“UMB’s Office of Community Engagement is really passionate about making sure that all of our community members are doing well,” said Madison Haas, UMB’s economic inclusion coordinator. “We’re only as good as our community, so we really want to make sure that everyone is fed and that everyone has enough food in their fridge.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s difficult and at times unsafe for many community members in West Baltimore to get to a grocery store. This enormous donation of chicken provides much-needed support for neighbors during this unprecedented situation.

UMB’s CEC decided to team up with the Southwest Baltimore Arabber Preservation Society to distribute the chicken directly to members of the community.

“We wanted everything to be really accessible to the community,” Haas said. “The arabbers are really trusted in Southwest Baltimore, so partnering with them on this effort was a great way to make sure that our neighbors can get what they need right where they are.”



*The arabbers make stops throughout the neighborhood to distribute food to West Baltimore residents.*

The 2,000 pounds of chicken is expected to feed about 500 families in West Baltimore. Owners of the local business Neopol Savory Smokery offered their freezer space to store the large donation until it could be delivered directly to West Baltimore residents.

“This is a blessing,” said Paulette Carroll, a resident of the Poppleton neighborhood in West Baltimore. “It feels like so many communities are being forgotten. No one is really coming out into the community, but seeing people who want to help physically here in the neighborhood is just wonderful.”

The arabbers delivered the bread and frozen chicken over the course of two days. Savoy said that he was happy to be doing such a great service. Even though their faces were

hidden behind face coverings, community members were all smiling when they saw his cart coming down the street.

“They love it! Especially the kids — they love to see the horse and wagon coming,” Savoy said. “We appreciate just being able to help somebody and give back to the community.”

The UMB CEC plans to continue working with the Southwest Baltimore Arabber Historical Society to deliver future food donations — including more than 1,300 loaves of bread from H&S Bakery — throughout the West Baltimore neighborhoods.

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