



On the Bright Side: Virtual Thank You Cards Spread Cheer

April 29, 2020 | Dana Rampolla

Homemade artwork shows appreciation to UMB and UMMC essential employees working on the front lines during the COVID-19 pandemic

*The COVID-19 crisis has created many challenges, but it also has inspired acts of amazing kindness among members of our UMB community. We want to hear your inspiring stories for our **On the Bright Side** series. Submit your story [here](#).*



The University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) has been asking members of the UMB and neighboring Baltimore communities to contribute **virtual thank you cards** for essential employees at the University of Maryland, Baltimore and its affiliate hospital, the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC). Nurses, doctors, technicians, security guards, police officers, cafeteria workers, plumbers, elevator operators, and so many others are risking exposure to the COVID-19 virus while taking care of the sick, working to develop a vaccine and treatment, and maintaining our buildings and grounds.

To help prevent the spread of germs into the hospital and campus offices, community members have created their cards at home and emailed pictures of the cards to cards@umaryland.edu. One of the several **local TV stations** that picked up on this outreach initiative featured Ashley Valis, MSW, executive director of strategic initiatives and community engagement at UMB. The coverage resulted in an influx of creative cards. Toddlers, school-age children, teens, and adults alike have sent in cards for the campaign, and the cards continue to pour in through the email link.

(View a [photo gallery](#) or a [video montage](#) of the cards.)

“It might seem small to us, but it does mean a lot. We really appreciate the sacrifices people are making right now in our community to take care of the sick and to keep our buildings operational,” Valis says. “Many parents who are responsible for managing their children’s shelter-in-place schooling right now have very little time and few resources for art instruction. I am happy to give my young children a reason to get out their crayons and craft supplies and be creative.”

Submitter Erin Andrews included this note with her virtual card: “Our school, Sidwell Friends School, [forwarded] us this idea and we loved it! Our first-grade son loved it, too! Thanks so much for all that you do in these challenging times!”

The first set of photos has been compiled into a **video**, and plans are underway for a second video as well as a final artistic installation featuring copies of the cards that will honor all of the employees who have been working on-site during this crisis.

If this activity piques your interest, please create a card and submit it today. This is a great activity for children and families to do at home while school and non-essential businesses are shut down. It’s also a great way to show support and love to the heroic workers who are keeping others safe during this uncertain time.

Thanks for your support, and stay healthy!

Front Line Thank You Cards

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