

[← All episodes](#)

The UMB Pulse Podcast

Episode 11: Southwest Partnership

December 02, 2021 University of Maryland, Baltimore Season 1 Episode 11



The UMB Pulse Podcast
Episode 11: Southwest Partnership
Audio Player



[Rewind](#) [Speed](#) [Chapters](#)

Chapters

[0:00](#)

[Show Open](#)

[1:06](#)

[Baltimore Holiday Events](#)

[5:12](#)

[CEC Christmas Store](#)

[7:51](#)

[Pulse Check](#)

[8:26](#)

[Tony Scott and Ashley Valis](#)

[9:49](#)

[How UMB & Southwest Partnership Collaborate](#)

[13:50](#)

[Tony's Journey to the Southwest Partnership](#)

[17:53](#)

[Poppleton and Hollins Market Happenings](#)

[23:35](#)

[Supporting Neighborhood Merchants](#)

[26:36](#)

[Groundwork Kitchen](#)

[28:24](#)

[Paul's Place](#)

[29:12](#)

[Volunteering with Nonprofits](#)

[30:25](#)

[B&O Railroad Museum](#)

[30:45](#)

[Union Square Cookie Tour of Historic Homes](#)

[31:41](#)

[Live Near Your Work](#)

[38:21](#)

[Next Time on The UMB Pulse](#)

[Forward](#)

[Info](#)

The UMB Pulse Podcast
Episode 11: Southwest Partnership
Dec 02, 2021 Season 1 Episode 11
University of Maryland, Baltimore

Learn how to spread some holiday cheer in West Baltimore with help from the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and the Southwest Partnership. Tony Scott, executive director of the Southwest Partnership and **Ashley Valis, MSW**, executive director of community engagement and strategic initiatives at UMB and a Southwest Partnership board member are our guests (8:26). Tony and Ashley chat about workforce development programs (17:53), supporting local merchants for the holidays (23:35), helping nonprofits and [volunteering](#) (29:12) And did someone say [cookie tour](#) in Union Square (30:45)?! Your hosts also share other holiday events happening around the city to check out this week (1:06) and a quick Pulse Check (7:51).

[Share](#)
 Share Episode
[Share on Facebook](#) [Share on Twitter](#) [Share on LinkedIn](#) [Download](#)
 Subscribe
[Apple Podcasts](#) [Spotify](#) [More](#)
[Apple Podcasts](#) [Spotify](#) [Google Podcasts](#) [Overcast](#) [Amazon Music](#) [Stitcher](#) [iHeartRadio](#) [TuneIn + Alexa](#) [Podcast Addict](#) [Castro](#) [Castbox](#)
[Podchaser](#) [Pocket Casts](#) [Deezer](#) [Listen Notes](#) [Player FM](#) [Podcast Index](#) [Podfriend](#) [RSS Feed](#)
[Buzzsprout](#)
 Listen on
[Apple Podcasts](#) [Spotify](#) [Google Podcasts](#) [Overcast](#) [Amazon Music](#) [Stitcher](#) +
 Share Episode
[Share on Facebook](#) [Share on Twitter](#) [Share on LinkedIn](#)
[Share Link](#)
[Show Notes](#) [Transcript](#) [Chapter Markers](#)

Learn how to spread some holiday cheer in West Baltimore with help from the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and the Southwest Partnership. Tony Scott, executive director of the Southwest Partnership and **Ashley Valis, MSW**, executive director of community engagement and strategic initiatives at UMB and a Southwest Partnership board member are our guests (8:26). Tony and Ashley chat about workforce development programs (17:53), supporting local merchants for the holidays (23:35), helping nonprofits and [volunteering](#) (29:12) And did someone say [cookie tour](#) in Union Square (30:45)?! Your hosts also share other holiday events happening around the city to check out this week (1:06) and a quick Pulse Check (7:51).

Jena Frick: 0:04

You're listening to the heartbeat of the University of Maryland, Baltimore, the UMB pulse.

Charles Schelle: 0:16

Hello, everyone. This is the December 2 edition of the UMB pulse. I'm Charles Schelle.

Dana Rampolla: 0:21

I'm Dana Rampolla.

Jena Frick: 0:22

And I'm Jenna Frick. Later we will learn about you and bees tie in with the Southwest partnership and how to help community nonprofits during the holidays. Joining us on the program will be southwest partnership executive director Tony Scott and Ashley Valis, who is both a board member at the Southwest partnership and the executive director of community engagement and strategic initiatives here at UMB.

Dana Rampolla: 0:44

We really want to hear your thoughts and ideas of what you'd like to hear in the spring semester, visit you.umd.edu/pulse and fill out the form with your thoughts or make sure to subscribe rate and review on wherever you listen to the UMB pulse. We're basically everywhere Apple, Google, Amazon, Spotify, it's not hard to find us.

Charles Schelle: 1:02

Yeah, definitely let us know and how you want to ship the year and be passed it as Jena mentioned, we're rolling into the holidays. And there are plenty of things to do around campus and the city to get you into the festival spirit this weekend. And I have to say I'm guilty of not attending any of these that I'm going to talk about. So maybe I should make a point of it to go at least one of these maybe. So the first one I want to mention is on Thursday, December 2, the Washington Monument at Mount Vernon place in Washington Place will be lit with a ceremony starting at 5pm. Have any of you been to that one?

Dana Rampolla: 1:36

No, I haven't actually I know where you're talking about.

Charles Schelle: 1:39

Yeah, right up on the hill. And then on Saturday, December 4, the Baltimore lighted boat parade will sail through the Inner Harbor and Fells Point. That

parade will start around 4: 1:48

30pm in Anchorage Marina, which is right across from the Safeway on Boylston Street. I love myself a good boat parade. I know that there was one in Pasadena this past weekend that one of my friends went to buy they had him in Florida. It seemed like for every holiday, it was so great,

Dana Rampolla: 2:05

I guess because it's nice and warm. And short. So

Jena Frick: 2:08

yeah. Also, there's water everywhere in Florida. Whether it's the ocean or a swamp,

Charles Schelle: 2:14

have kind of a large bay here. Yeah, yeah. It's surprising that we don't have more braids.

Dana Rampolla: 2:20

Yeah, we really don't. We did have the dragon dragon races. Is that what they were talking about? Oh, yes, that was a thing for a while. Well, and Charles the 48th annual mayor's Christmas parade is going to kick off at 1pm on Sunday, December 5, that's on West 36th Street in Hamden. So we can go from the water to the streets, and you might as well stick around him in for sunset because that's when the miracle on 34th street lights are back and you can stroll along the 700 block of 34th street through New Year's Eve. Most homes have their lights on between six and 10pm.

Charles Schelle: 2:51

I cannot imagine the electric bill for any of those homes during this time of year.

Jena Frick: 2:56

Well worth it for spreading holiday cheer. Right,

Dana Rampolla: 2:59

right. My latest pre COVID but Hampden memory of the what is that? 34th street lights is my son's best friend got engaged there a couple years ago. Yeah, it was really sweet. And his girlfriend was completely surprised. And we were all there just pretending we were looking at lights and that down in the middle of the street and proposed there was oh, what

Jena Frick: 3:19

a great backdrop for pictures of though Yeah, horrible. Also down at the Inner Harbor. If you want some more holiday cheer, they have the German Christmas Village set up with all these very cool vendors set up. And there's also this, I don't know if it's workable or just for show, but this giant Ferris wheel that's all lit up at night and like flashes, it's really cool looking. And then there's also the annual Inner Harbor ice rink, which is set up so you can rent some skates and go ice skating at the inner harbor

Charles Schelle: 3:49

I've been to the German Christmas Village before it is really cool. And they have tons of stuff that you can buy inside their little tent. It does get crowded on the weekend. So just be prepared. You know, this isn't in the city, but it's worth a drive. It's kind of on my to do list down at the National Harbor. The Gaylord National Harbor they have this entire event where it's like mu Christmas movie sets or holiday movie set.

Jena Frick: 4:12

It's all made out of ice. It's very Yeah, I went I went a few years ago I've been twice the first time I went it was like the the peanuts. So like you walk through all these cool ice sculptures with like Snoopy and Charlie Brown and stuff. And then another year that I went I think it was the Grinch like How the Grinch Stole Christmas. It's very very cool.

Charles Schelle: 4:32

This is actually a little bit different than that they stepped it up a notch. Yeah, it's the like actual like movie set so you'd like actually walking through "Elf" or "Christmas Vacation" right? So it's not the ice. It's not the ice. It's like the like the house from from Christmas Vacation. That's or it's the big snowmen and the norwal from "ELF."

Jena Frick: 4:52

Oh my god! Hi Buddy, hope you find your dad! I think that's my favorite. Oh man, wow. So lots lots and lots of holiday themed stuff to do all around Baltimore, not just here at UMB. But if you are interested in some holiday cheer here at UMB, at the Community Engagement Center, the annual Christmas store is going to be returning. And that's coming next week. So what that is, it's an initiative that the community

engagement center does with the foundry church, we partner with them to set up a Christmas store, all based off of donations of toys and other holiday presents set up. And members of the West Baltimore community can sign up for a slot to come shop and they can buy presents for their kids and loved ones all for like between \$1 and \$5. So a very, very, very deeply discounted great deal. It's it's wonderful and what's what's really great about it and the whole point of this Christmas store is to make the parents the heroes of Christmas so you know they can come to the store actually pick out a present for k is not just kind of getting whatever donations just go come their way. And they get to purchase it with their own money and really be the hero heroes of the holidays, then has

Charles Schelle: 6:07

to be the year to do that to participate if you're able because you know the supply chain crisis so the shelves may be empty.

Dana Rampolla: 6:16

And Jena, what if people want to donate? How can they donate?

Jena Frick: 6:19

Yeah, so people can donate by going to www.foundrybaltimore.com/christmasstore and Foundry is spelled F-o-u-n-d-r-y. You can go on there and you can donate via a Target registry. So you can actually pick out whatever toys get donated. And then volunteers go, probably the beginning of next week, they'll go out and pick up all the toys that were purchased on the registry. They'll have a big huge event setting it up on Thursday, the ninth and then on the 10th and 11th. The store will be open for customers to come on by and get some toys. They do have to sign up though. So it's not just kind of a free for all just because of COVID we want to limit the number of people who are in the store at a time. Yeah, if you're interested in donating toys to the store or even just one a volunteer time to kind of help shoppers pick up their gifts on December 10 or 11th. You can visit the website I mentioned foundrybaltimore.com/christmasstore.

Dana Rampolla: 7:18

That sounds great. And also something that our Communications and Public Affairs Office is doing is a big push for holiday how UMB is spreading holiday cheer and spirit. So pay attention to our social media. If you do something that's interesting with the neuron school or department post about it and hashtag UMB Spread the Cheer. Mm hmm.

Charles Schelle: 7:38

Great. Well, Santa and his elves are going to be busy this year with all these events. And I'm sure Tony and Ashley have some requests for the North Pole later in the show. Before we talk to them, this is your pulse check. COVID-19 test vaccinations and boosters have moved from the convention center to the State Center complex at 300. North Preston Street. Vaccination walk ins are welcomed for those 12 and older children five through 11 years old are being vaccinated by appointment only. Testing can be done either by walking or appointment testing will be available Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 8am to 3:30pm. While vaccination hours are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays 8am to noon, visit our shownotes or chapter markers for a link. And that is your pulse check. There are plenty of ways to support your local merchants and nonprofits during the holidays as well as your neighbors. Here to talk about how you can get involved in the neighborhoods that make up the Southwest Partnership are Tony Scott and Ashley Valis. Tony is the executive director of the Southwest Partnership. And Ashley is the executive director of community engagement in strategic partnerships here at UMB. And a board member of Southwest partnership.

Jena Frick: 8:50

Welcome to the pulse guys. Thank you. Glad to have you here and happy holidays to both of you.

Ashley Valis: 8:55

Thank you. So happy to have Tony in the building.

Tony Scott: 9:01

It's great to be here. It's a beautiful space. Mm hmm. Absolutely.

Jena Frick: 9:04

Brand new. So to get things started, Tony, first tell us what is the Southwest partnership? What is the whole vision and gold behind the Southwest partnership,

Tony Scott: 9:14

So the Southwest Partnership is a coalition of seven neighborhood associations and six anchor institutions like University of Maryland, Baltimore, and we all work together to improve the quality of life here in this area of the city.

Jena Frick: 9:26

And what what are the neighborhoods that the Southwest partnership serves?

Tony Scott: 9:29

So we have seven neighborhoods that we serve,

Charles Schelle: 9:31

It's a good swath. including Poppleton and Hollins Market. Also Franklin Square,

Jena Frick: 9:36

Yeah. And those are all the neighborhoods that the Union Square, Mount Clare and Pigtown. community engagement serves as well. Right, Ashley? Correct. So Ashley, how did you become involved with the Southwest Partnership?

Ashley Valis: 9:50

We actually you know, it came out of an interaction and conversation that the university was having with community members around a methadone treatment clinic that was leaving our campus and going to be placed in the neighborhood that did not go over very well with the community members when they heard about it. And so Dr. Perman, who was our president at the time, met with a group of community leaders who voiced their concerns about that. But also, how can we make sure this type of collaboration can be improved in the future moving forward for every project that UMB is planning that is going to have an impact in the neighborhood. And so it's stemmed from that. But it grew from years of planning. So Brian Stewart event in the office of Community Engagement, and Jane Shaab from the BioPark started with the conversations with the community. I arrived in 2014, and immediately join those conversations. And then the Southwest Partnership was incorporated as a 501 C3 nonprofit organization, a few years after that. So it grew from town and down relationships, right. But now, it is a multimillion dollar Wow. Community development organization with both anchor institutions on the board and community members, which is awesome.

Jena Frick: 11:24

That's fantastic. And I love that, you know, this is a really great example of UMB in the Office of Community Engagement, just living the motto of working hand in hand with the community and actually working with community members to make change and make things better.

Charles Schelle: 11:37

Yes. So you know, when you have examples, like the methadone clinic, and how, what is the security outside going to be like, and what do people do when they're waiting for the bus? And is this bringing new people into our community? Or is the clinic serving our neighbors, because maybe if we knew that we might be more welcoming, because it's serving people that live, you know, across the street from me. And so it was having that dialogue that we missed on that example, that we hope to really never be in that position again. And I think now that we meet regularly with Tony and a board of neighbors, not only UMB, but the medical center, Grace Medical Center, which is formerly Bon Secours, they are actively involved, and the bond score community works. Yeah, you know, and I think just looking around us, like all the presidents that we have in this community, you know, between the BioPark, and then just in our building here that they've recently opened as well, it really looks like then that that conversation has benefited the community and the surrounding areas about what's the most effective use for space or plot of land? How can you help us kind of move forward and revitalize, right?

Unknown: 12:55

Right. this building before Tony was the leader of the Southwest Partnership, Michael Seipp, walked around, he was the former executive director, he walked around with Dr. Perman. And myself and Dawn Rhodes from, you know, our VP for finance and facilities and all of those things who helped make this project happen, walk the neighborhood and said, Well, what are some buildings that are available to us for a project like this, that might not make sense for a private developer, but that we really want to get off the blighted property roll. And so this building, every window was bashed in, and it just was looking terrible. And so to see the community engagement center have put \$10 million into this property is just amazing. And so how else can we continue to build on that type of legacy moving forward with Tony's direction? Absolutely.

Jena Frick: 13:51

And Ashley, so you're, you're involved on the southwest partnership board, you live in this one of the seven neighborhoods that is involved with the Southwest Partnership? Tony, how did you get involved with the Southwest partnership as the new executive director?

Tony Scott: 14:06

Well, I got involved with a Southwest Partnership, because at the time I was renting in Union Union Square, which is one of our neighborhoods, and I was happy I happen to be looking for a new job. I had not left my job. I was working for the city of Baltimore, working in the mayor's office at the time, and really wanting to get involved in community development, not just from the policy level, high level, but really what does grassroots work look like? And so I said, I wonder if there are any organizations around, you know, I had been living back in Union Square for maybe a year or two years. So I wasn't as familiar with what was happening on the ground with local organizations. But I happen to go to church with a board member at the time Lou Packet, who has recently passed away this year. But he identify me knew that I was looking around and said, Had you ever have you ever heard of a Southwest Partnership? And I said, No, Lou told me about it. And so from those conversations, he got me involved. He connected me to Michael Seipp at the time, who was just a joy to be able to learn from and work under, until his retirement last year.

Jena Frick: 15:26

And this has to be really special for you because you're actually from this area, right?

Tony Scott: 15:30

I am. Yes, I am. I have a lot of memories and this area of the city. We used to live here back in the late 80s, early 90s, in Union Square, actually, so I'm back in the neighborhood that I grew up in as a kid. And we used to go to Hollins Market to get our fresh produce every Saturday, because that's what my grandmother wanted. She wanted her kale and her you know, collards and her string beans and her pigs feet and all those things at the market. My grandmother's from, from the south from Southern Virginia. And so when she migrated up here to Baltimore with her six kids living in West Baltimore, she wanted some comfort food and things that reminded her of home and, and so I remember growing up my dad and I would always hop in his truck and go down to Hollins Market and get whatever my my grandma needed. And then take it back to her house, her row house off the Hilton Avenue and we would deveined the collards, and we would snap the peas, you know, and she'd make us a great breakfast. And so anyway, this this part of town has a lot of great memories for me.

Ashley Valis: 16:42

Crazy is my grandmother grew up on South Cary Street, and which is a few blocks from here and met my grandfather when she was working at the 5 and 10 on West Baltimore Street. And he used to ride the streetcar down was Baltimore Street and met her in the southwest partnership neighborhoods. And the rest is history. So I, my husband and I bought a house on Highland Street. My grandfather was like, wow, this is coming full circle.

Charles Schelle: 17:14

You probably know the neighborhood's like the back of your hand, both of you for that matter.

Ashley Valis: 17:19

Yeah. I mean, when you walk your dog, I have three kids, they're at all the playgrounds, you know, I mean, it's you still meet a lot of new people. What I love about this area is it's so diverse. I mean, you have UMB students, UMB faculty and staff, which I know we'll talk about 50 new live near your work. Participants live in the neighborhood. So that's amazing. But people that have lived here for generations, you know, families that are born and raised in this part of Baltimore, so it's just a wonderful place to live. Absolutely.

Charles Schelle: 17:53

Tony and Ashley, even though Southwest Partnership has the seven neighborhoods, and we're really hyperfocus with you and bees kind of presence here in both Hollins Market and in Poppleton. So what are maybe some of the things southwest partnership has done, or maybe we'll do here and these two neighborhoods?

Tony Scott: 18:11

Southwest partnership invests in our neighborhoods and a few different ways. One is investing in people. We have a workforce development program, where we actually refer residents and others in our neighborhoods, to our anchor institutions, such as University of Maryland, Baltimore Medical Center, we have a great anchor referral program, where just this year despite the pandemic, we had 76 intakes these are folks who are looking for jobs applying for jobs, we help them navigate that process. And you know, it's a little down from last year but and the year before mostly because of the pandemic but we've still been pushing forward and trying to meet safely impress them with folks tends to be the best way to really connect and help especially with computer skills and you know, resumes and connecting with online portals. By it's been a great initiative and very well received and UMB has been a great partner in it.

Ashley Valis: 19:13

We also have been working closely in Poppleton with Poe homes and the tenant council the City Housing Authority around redeveloping po homes. It is the oldest public housing yes site in Baltimore City. And so that is something that the Southwest Partnerships been actively engaged with you and b and a whole host of neighbors, they have various committees. So if folks are familiar with what is happening in East Baltimore, where Perkins home, they started raising those buildings just this year, and they're redeveloping all of those properties over there and so that's what we hope is going to happen and Poppleton and Poe homes once that Perkins home East Baltimore project is finished. So if we can make that happen, that would be an amazing accomplishment for not only Poppleton, but the surrounding area, because we all know how desperately that's needed.

Charles Schelle: 20:13

So what's the extent of that work from Southwest partnerships angle, because obviously, that is a project where you need many partners to do many things, especially HUD, namely, one of them.

Tony Scott: 20:25

Well for the Southwest partnership we've been engaged with, with HUD and HABC, the Housing Authority of Baltimore City since the beginning of that process, they actually approached us and you and being other anchors to ask, how do we do this? Well, how do we engage the community? Well, because this is such an important thing to get, right. And so we helped them kind of design through the steering committee thing through community engagement along with that planning process. There were also capital funds that they allocated for kind

of small, high impact projects that could be done, as well. And so we were really engaged throughout that process. And also helping to staff those those work groups, with community members and make sure that, you know, folks knew if they need to be called, we would call them because we know some folks don't do email. And, and so we were heavily engaged in the community engagement aspect of that. And of course, following up and following through with some of those capital projects, even though those funds are coming from the housing authority, they still look to us to help ensure that there are local eyes on the ground, making sure that, you know, things don't hit snags, right.

Ashley Valis: 21:41

And it's really important. I think this underscores the importance of having a infrastructure of community members, which is what the Southwest Partnership is, when the housing authority, and HUD knew that they wanted to redevelop this project, they knew they didn't have the relationships over here to do it well, and to garner a tremendous amount of community input. Because again, while there are 200 Plus families that live in Poe, if you are going to rebuild that entire development, it's going to impact Hollins Market and the rest of Poppleton. And so they came to Southwest Partnership, in particular, to say, Who are the people we need at the table? And we want many people at the table and we you know them, but we don't So will you help us bring this project to life. And if they weren't here, you know, that would make you projects like that take longer, perhaps not have as much community voice. And so I think that really is a good example of why it's so important and why I love that the partnership exists.

Charles Schelle: 22:48

Great, because it I mean, you're essentially either guiding or providing a way to have a voice for community members, they may feel voiceless.

Ashley Valis: 22:58

And we strive to do better on that every day. Because even with this office partnership, and the infrastructure that they have built, there are always residents who can't come to board meetings, or they work in the evenings when the board meets. And so we're not here to say that we have every voice at the table, but at least it's better than if there was not this infrastructure. You know, that would that would be a real mess for large scale redevelopment projects.

Jena Frick: 23:27

Right. And you're also providing an opportunity for people to get that seat at the table, which is just as important, I think. Yeah.

Charles Schelle: 23:35

Now going from giving voice to residence to voice to businesses. So it's the holiday time. Everyone has their pocketbooks and wallets opened up. So how can you support local merchants in these neighborhoods and some of the shops during the holidays?

Tony Scott: 23:52

Many of you know that we have a main street in our boundaries, Pigtown Main Street. They have a Pigtown festival every year well attended, and a great program to support local merchants there. They are actually having a Pigtacular Spectacular Holiday Shopping program where if you patronize at least one of the businesses at least \$10 You can enter yourself into a raffle that they'll have so it goes through December 4 I believe. But it's it's just an example of the wonderful programming they have to incentivize supporting our local merchants. The Southwest Partnership continues to support development along Baltimore street and we just helped on new business open up at 1600 West Baltimore street called Richie's Lounge. So it's a Caribbean Restaurant and Bar and Lounge that we supported with over \$20,000 and facade improved In support, and just it's a wonderful business, I've actually been inside it looks amazing. I'm like, Oh, this could be in DC. It's very well done now. And, and the owner is very open to community projects and events and support. And so this excited to be able to continue to, to help redevelop and build Baltimore Street.

Ashley Valis: 25:22

If you ever need a gift. The Charm City bookstore is on the Pigtown Main Street on Washington Boulevard. And they have fabulous gifts. I mean, not only books, they have...Every birthday party that my kids go to, and I'm always last minute, I run to Charm City Books upstairs, they have an entire children's room. And they have puzzles and games and arts and crafts. And so that's a really hyper local example.

Jena Frick: 25:53

Yeah, somewhat great stocking stuffers!

Ashley Valis: 25:54

You can get all of your people on your list taken care of there. And then across the street, Culinary Architecture, they just expanded their business. And so now they have a lot of gifts that they didn't usually keep in stock. So you can, Kim Lane is the Pigtown Main Street Executive Director. She's extremely supportive of Tony and the partnerships' efforts. So we all really work together closely here. She would be very happy for us to tell you, you can shop and get pig town bucks to support some of the other stores. So definitely, between now and Christmas time, please go visit all of these businesses because they could really use the support especially coming out of COVID. Absolutely.

Charles Schelle: 26:37

And when you need a break from shopping, I mean, there's plenty of places to eat now, too. You mentioned that the new lounge but also you have GroundworkKitchen. And now there's

Jena Frick: 26:45

They are great by the way I was there like a couple of weeks ago. Oh my gosh, I had a turkey club sandwich there and it was amazing. Yeah,

Charles Schelle: 26:53

Their crabcake for our inauguration of President Jarrell was delicious, too. Do you know anything about their story at all?

Ashley Valis: 27:00

It's fabulous. So their story is Paul's Place. Bill McLennan who is retiring. At the end of the year, unfortunately, he had a dream to grow their workforce training program. So it's actually a culinary arts workforce development program. So community members enroll if they're interested in that career pathway. They receive 12 weeks of training, they have a full, amazing state of the art kitchen in the basement of the restaurant. So they do all of their training down there, then they bring them to the back of the house. And then they do a rotation through the front of the house. This is restaurant speak for kitchen versus hostessing as waitress that you know. And so that's how they run the operation with the students who are in the program. And then obviously, all of the proceeds support this wonderful mission of Paul's Place. So it's fabulous. And as Jena said, the food is great. And they have an event space. Again, we've taken senior leaders from UMB over there to say, hey, why don't we start having alumni event here and, you know, really putting our money where our mouth is in terms of investment in supporting these businesses,

Tony Scott: 28:15

Or hiring people as well. So if you know folks who are looking for jobs in the culinary arts

Charles Schelle: 28:20

It's like a little culinary bootcamp. Yeah. Great. And then touch on Paul's Place for a second, what they do incase people aren't familiar with them.

Ashley Valis: 28:28

So Paul's Place, it does a little bit of everything. So if you are in need of a job, they have a workforce training program there. And Ellen, who is fabulous a University of Maryland grad, I will have you know, she went to our social work school, she handles their workforce program, you can get a hot meal at Paul's Place every day. You can do your laundry at Paul's Place, if you need that. There's a computer lab there. So they have a lot of supports for neighbors across the lifespan, who are in need of just some extra help. So it's a fabulous place to volunteer, especially with their lunch program, because I know a lot of people are really excited to give back in that way. And so that's a great option for folks. Right?

Jena Frick: 29:11

That's fantastic. But so we talked about businesses, why don't we talk about nonprofits in the area. So what are some things that maybe nonprofits are doing during the holidays that community members can either participate in or help with?

Ashley Valis: 29:24

So number one, we have our Christmas store coming up we partner with the Foundry Church, which is a church over in the Federal Hill area. This is probably our fifth year now. We turn the basement here into a Christmas toy store. Families do shop and pay for the toys but they're deeply discounted 80% off retail price. And so we always are looking for volunteers for that Camille Givens Patterson is who you would contact. United Way is another large partner is particularly in the Poppleton area. They have a couple of holiday events. Coming up. And so I will just plug that UMB does have a volunteer opportunities webpage that you can get to if you go to the community engagement site on UMB's page and search for volunteer opportunities, it'll take you to a place where you can find everything from how to help with thanksgiving to Christmas, you know, volunteer opportunities, etc.

Charles Schelle: 30:24

And the B&O Roundhouse, I hear they may have something as well,

Ashley Valis: 30:28

They have a brand new model train exhibit that is all Baltimore themed, that is amazing. And they're all decorated for the holidays. They've The Polar Express exhibit. Also, it is a wonderful time. So if you haven't visited the B&ORailroad Museum in December, it is worth the trip.

Tony Scott: 30:45

And I would be remiss if I did not mention the cookie tour,

Ashley Valis: 30:49

I was thinking we had to mention, I'm sorry.

Tony Scott: 30:53

The Union Square cookie tour is an annual event where people open up their historic homes and our Union Square neighborhood. And you get to walk through them and see the cool architecture that Baltimore row houses have. It's and attract people from across the region, people who come up from DC and people across the city who really

Ashley Valis: 31:15

should do Tony as they should go to the B&O exhibit, and then they should go to the cookie tour on the same day with their whole family. And they will have a fabulous holiday. It's either Saturday or Sunday, Sunday, December 12. Okay, and be as a sponsor, so we can all feel good about that. Cookies,

Tony Scott: 31:36

free cookies and beautiful Baltimore architects

Charles Schelle: 31:39

Just provide your own milk, right?

Ashley Valis: 31:42

You're interested in looking at some of the larger homes in the area because you're an employee thinking about live near your work program. This is a great way to do a little snooping around

Jena Frick: 31:55

Backdoor open house.

Ashley Valis: 31:57

People actually list their house after the cookie tour because they use it. You know, in that way it is wow.

Jena Frick: 32:04

Well, I'm glad you mentioned live do your work, because that brings it back to my next question. So Tony, I know that live knew your work and is a big piece of part of what Southwest Partnership does to revitalize the homes and infrastructure in the community. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Tony Scott: 32:18

Absolutely. Yeah. So beyond programs that we have investing in people, we have programs that help rebuild our neighborhood. And so we do, of course, we have commercial support for businesses a facade improvement program help with stabilizing commercial properties, tenant improvement. For businesses moving into the space we're looking to expand. But we also work on the housing front two, we have vacancy in our neighborhoods that are caused nuisance nuisances for residents. And we have strategic areas where we help we either acquire directly or work with developers to acquire and rehab properties for affordable homeownership. And so part of that affordability also links to living to your work, and Vacants to Value program with the city you get 10,000 for downpayment assistance to a fourth, if it's a formerly vacant property, and you're buying it as a homeowner. And so we work with all these different incentives, cobble them together and market them to folks who want to live in our neighborhoods, so that we can help rebuild and revitalize together.

Jena Frick: 33:29

That's great.

Charles Schelle: 33:30

You're doing so much at the Southwest Partnership, as you mentioned today, between housing and workforce development and helping businesses and residents. How can somebody get involved to help you?

Ashley Valis: 33:41

I would say start with coming to our committee meetings. Tony, do you want to run through the different committees that make up

Tony Scott: 33:49

We have seven committees of the Southwest Partnership, and they are all resident led, and not just people who live here, but also folks from the University of Maryland, Baltimore, folks, other stakeholders who, you know, work, play pray in our neighborhoods, they're they're also stakeholders. And so they all come to these volunteer meetings. There are seven different categories, seven different committees. One relates

to housing, commercial development, vibrant streets, public safety, education, education, historic preservation, preservation, and workforce, workforce. There's workforce. Yeah, I think that's whatever you're interested in, you can find a way to plug in and see what's going on in this part of town and find opportunities to get involved and have input.

Ashley Valis: 34:45

And they really are looking for more participation in these committees, obviously, because this has been years of monthly meeting after meeting and so it's great to have fresh perspective calm. And so really, you know, there's obvious Easily lots of ways to just volunteer at events. But if you really want to have an impact, I think, you know, coming to support the committee's and listening to what the community is lifting up as what they want to see. And then taking that back to the university and saying, I heard this at a Southwest partnership Education Committee meeting, we could probably be doing a little bit more to help with that, you know, that's really great,

Tony Scott: 35:25

You got some really great partnerships come out of, you know, students, even, you know, I'm learning about this in school. And, you know, I think we maybe you could do some pro bono assistance to help businesses, for example, or, you know, and so it's been really cool just to have the diversity of thought and skill set, be part of our communities, right.

Charles Schelle: 35:45

And, you know, as a former reporter, these community associations, these community, nonprofits, if you really want to know what's happening in your community first, before it hits the news, you go to these community meetings, because you will find out about what developer is maybe looking around for an opportunity, what businesses thinking about coming to the neighborhood, and how they can, you know, get the community to rally around them, you know, these meetings are really where community starts to happen, really. And speaking of what's happening, what's the best way to keep up with the Southwest partnership for all the news and events that you have going on.

Tony Scott: 36:20

So southwest partnership also has a website where it's SWPBAL.org. Also, you can follow us on Instagram, and on Facebook. So on Instagram, we are SWP as in southwest partnership, underscore, Baltimore. And so you'll see kind of our postings about workforce opportunities about different projects we're working on, etc. And again, that's SWP_Baltimore. And then of course, we're on Facebook, if you just type into the search, Southwest partnership, Baltimore, will come up. And again, that's where we do a lot of posting of events and workshops and other other things throughout the year.

Ashley Valis: 37:03

I tagged them in an Instagram story today, because I needed to get my booster. And it just so happened to the health department's was hosting a clinic itself was Baltimore charter school, right in my neighborhood right around the corner. It was so quick and easy. And I just thought this is fabulous. This is what living five minutes from your office, and then five minutes to your booster shot and being so connected to the community. My life is so efficient today.

Charles Schelle: 37:31

Another reason to follow and do you have a newsletter by chance.

Tony Scott: 37:34

And we also have a newsletter. So if you go to our website and you go under Connect with us, there'll be an opportunity to sign up for our mailing list or our e-newsletter that we send out every month, updates about events, workshops, and just happenings around the partnership.

Ashley Valis: 37:51

That's a great way to really know once a month what's happening in the neighborhood. Yeah, yeah,

Charles Schelle: 37:57

I'll make sure to sign up.

Jena Frick: 37:58

Yeah great! Sign up for the newsletter, follow on social media, come to committee meetings, do it all. Ashley, Tony, thank you guys so much for coming out. And being on the podcast today. It was really awesome. Catching up.

Ashley Valis: 38:09

And buy your house here!

Charles Schelle: 38:13

Well, it's spare change for the holiday markets, right? Yeah, exactly.

Jena Frick: 38:17

All right. Thank you guys for stopping by today. We really appreciate it.

Dana Rampolla: 38:22

For being a science heavy campus, UMB is filled to the brim with artists, performers and theater aficionados. So much so that UMB has its own Council for the Arts and Culture. Oh, and we mentioned the 1807 art and literary journal, but there are even more opportunities to express yourself or enjoy a good performance.

Jena Frick: 38:39

That's right, our December 16 episode we'll talk about how you can support local venues, public arts and museums here at UMB. And so much more. Our guests will be UMBC, Senior Vice President for External Relations, Jennifer Litchman, and executive director of protocol and special events Nancy Gordon.

Charles Schelle: 38:57

And this is the perfect time to remind you to rate review and subscribe before our boss Jennifer visits us on our next episode. Yes, so get their stars let people and thanks for tuning in to the UMB pulse.

Jena Frick: 39:14

The UMB pulse with Charles Schelle, Dana Rampolla and Jena Frick is a UMB Office of Communications and Public Affairs production edited by Charles Schelle, sound engineering by Jena Frick marketing by Dana Rampolla Music by No vibe recorded in the University of Maryland Baltimore community engagement center

[0:00](#)

Show Open

[1:06](#)

Baltimore Holiday Events

[5:12](#)

[CEC Christmas Store](#)

[7:51](#)

Pulse Check

[8:26](#)

[Tony Scott and Ashley Valis](#)

[9:49](#)

How UMB & Southwest Partnership Collaborate

[13:50](#)

Tony's Journey to the Southwest Partnership

[17:53](#)

Poppleton and Hollins Market Happenings

[23:35](#)

Supporting Neighborhood Merchants

[26:36](#)

[Groundwork Kitchen](#)

[28:24](#)

[Paul's Place](#)

[29:12](#)

[Volunteering with Nonprofits](#)

[30:25](#)

[B&O Railroad Museum](#)

[30:45](#)

[Union Square Cookie Tour of Historic Homes](#)

[31:41](#)

[Live Near Your Work](#)

[38:21](#)

Next Time on The UMB Pulse

All content © 2021 University of Maryland, Baltimore.