

# UMB Brings Sustainability to the Community

*February 28, 2022* | By [Jena Frick](#)

Reduce, reuse, and recycle were the main topics of discussion at the [University of Maryland, Baltimore's](#) (UMB) [Police Athletic/Activities League](#) (PAL) Program. Thanks to a partnership with one of UMB's newest departments, the [Office of Sustainability](#), the PAL kids got to participate in several hands-on activities while learning about conservation and protecting the environment.

UMB announced the creation of the Office of Sustainability in June 2021. The office works within Facilities and Operations with the goal of creating a more sustainable UMB by implementing programs that focus on reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and reducing waste. In one program, the office is working with the [UMB Police Department's](#) PAL Program to teach the next generation about the importance of sustainability.



*Anna Borgerding, UMB's director of operational excellence and sustainability, helps Desmond Washington, a student at James McHenry Elementary School, create a planter out of a recycled water bottle.*

"It's wonderful that the UMB [Community Engagement Center](#) gave us an opportunity to partner with the PAL Program," said **Anna Borgerding, MA**, director of operational excellence and sustainability. "Being able to work with students at a young age is so beneficial in their learning and understanding of the world and how it works. They're going to be growing up to propose new sustainable solutions, so hopefully they carry what they learn here with them."

Borgerding and her team put together three activities to teach the PAL children about sustainable solutions over a three-week span starting Jan. 26. During that period, the PAL kids made tote bags out of recycled T-shirts, created artwork out of paper scraps, and repurposed recycled water bottles into self-watering succulent planters. During each activity, the children learned how to reduce, reuse, and recycle at home and why it's so important for the environment.

"My favorite part was learning all about recycling," said Desmond Washington, an 8-year-old James McHenry Elementary School student. "We learned that some things that you think could be recycled actually can't be because they're mixed with other materials, and that's cross-contamination."

Desmond, who is a regular PAL participant, says he went home and told his family all about how they can recycle, which was the impact Borgerding was hoping to get out of the activities.

"We are educating students about sustainability, the environment, and how it benefits all of us," Borgerding said. "It's really important for them to start learning that sustainable solutions meet the needs of everyone. We're here to show them how they can incorporate those solutions every day."

Borgerding plans to continue this partnership with the PAL Program and expand it to benefit more community members in West Baltimore as well as students, faculty, and staff at UMB. The office plans to roll out sustainability initiatives that support the University's commitment to reduce and mitigate climate change and to engage students, faculty, and staff in programs aimed at waste reduction and reimagining our path forward.