

Letters to the UMB Community

UMB Celebrates Disability Awareness

October 03, 2022

To the UMB Community,

October is Disability Awareness Month at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), a time when we focus on and educate ourselves about disability issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of people with disabilities.

During this month, we affirm our commitment and support for our colleagues and friends with disabilities, celebrate their achievements, and continue to collaborate to foster a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse community.

As we celebrate, we also acknowledge the struggles related to education, employment, housing, transportation, and daily self-care that disproportionately impact our friends with disabilities. All of us are directly impacted by the dedication and perseverance of people with disabilities. For example, notable attorney Gayle Hafner, JD, came to Baltimore in 1987 and spent her career advocating for people with disabilities, like her. She was instrumental in making the Clarence M. Mitchell Jr. Courthouse and Courthouse East on Calvert Street accessible to those who were disabled. In her role at the Legal Aid Bureau and later the Maryland Disability Law Center, she led and advocated for people with disabilities in Maryland.

In the field of technology, Farida Bedwei is a principal software engineer for Microsoft and former chief executive officer of Byte The Bits, a digital data company that helps African institutions and organizations tell stories with the data they generate. In addition to her STEM career, she is the author of "Karmzah," the first comic book to have a superheroine with cerebral palsy, a condition with which she herself was diagnosed at the age of 1. Dr. Mary Temple Grandin's experience with autism fueled her professional work in creating systems to counter stress in certain human and animal populations. She is the author of several books, including "The Autistic Brain: Thinking Across the Spectrum" (with Richard Panek, 2013), and more than 60 scientific papers on animal behavior. Dr. Grandin is a leading advocate for autistic communities and is well-known for her work regarding animal welfare, neurology, and philosophy.

We at UMB are proud of the accomplishments and contributions of members of this community and embrace, honor, and acknowledge all of their achievements.

In partnership and collaboration,

Diane Forbes Berthoud, PhD, MA
Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer

Oct. 5: Are You Okay? Assisting Classmates in Distress Training: 2 p.m. | Virtual Event
Learn how to use a quick reference guide and get information on how to recognize symptoms, respond to classmates in need, and refer them for therapy or other immediate help.

Oct. 7: Students with Disabilities Advisory Group (SDAG) Meeting: Noon | Virtual Event
SDAG is a collective of UMB students who self-identify as living with a disability, neurodiverse, or living with a chronic health condition. All are welcome.

Oct. 12: Anxiety Toolbox Workshop Series: 6 p.m. | Virtual Event
The Student Counseling Center offers virtual psycho-educational sessions during the fall semester. The series will meet weekly on Wednesdays for a one-hour skill-based session over a three-week period. Register via [UMBengaged](#).

Nov. 1: Educational Support and Disability Services (ESDS) Open House: Noon
| Virtual Event

Join us monthly to ask questions, connect with other students, and learn more about ESDS. By participating in this program, you are disclosing that you are a student with a disability and/or registered with ESDS, or are simply interested in learning more about the office. The staff looks forward to getting to know you at this event! Register [here](#).

For information about accessibility or to report accessibility barriers, please go to the ESDS website, call 410-706-5889, or email disabilityservices@umaryland.edu.