To,
The Retriever Essentials Student Leaders

“If our hopes of building a better and safer world are to become more than wishful thinking, we will need the engagement of volunteers more than ever.” — Kofi Annan
"My experience at Retriever Essentials was stellar and a perfect end to my undergraduate career. Being a recipient of their services throughout my time at UMBC, it was refreshing to have an active leadership role, directly influencing and contributing to the nurturing of students just like me." - Jada, Retriever Essentials Spring 2020 Intern
“Retriever Essentials has taught me that you can always help someone. Sharing a message, a canned good, time, support, anything, is worthy. This experience has made me perceive life more delicately as I witness students coming into the pantry creating their own food bags. You truly never know the struggles that someone is experiencing, and how your service helps them by simply being there. Being able to support a community of students who are in need of nutrition and other necessities is a very gracious, thoughtful, and moving feeling. I’m excited for the continuous expansion and purpose of Retriever Essentials, and I’m thankful for this humbling experience.” – Deaira, Retriever Essentials Student Leader
"Retriever Essentials has inspired me to not only be aware of what things are, but to also remain rooted in a vision of how things could be. The current prevalence of food insecurity at UMBC often goes unnoticed, except by those who directly experience and endure its significant impacts. Retriever Essentials is the 'could be' - it is the catalyst, the advocate, and the active doer of positive change in our community. Working with this remarkable organization has remolded my understanding of compassion and what it truly means to value community engagement." – Amanda, Retriever Essentials Student Leader
"At UMBC, and many other campuses, food insecurity is an issue that is unintentionally overlooked by many in the community, including us, the students. Luckily, we “have the opportunity to make a difference in the world”, once said President Freeman Hrabowski. I do not regret my decision of joining this team because I have seen first-hand the seed this organization has sown. The seed is continuing to sprout, grow, and blossom into something bigger than it once was. I have the privilege of impacting this growth. I hope one day you can too." – Fehintola, Retriever Essentials Student Leader
"In times where we seem to be divided by almost all things, it brings me joy to know that serving and caring for the community is a uniting factor. Retriever Essentials is a place where you can take the differences and experiences of others and use it to enact change. It embodies the fundamental principle that every thought, voice and opinion regardless of how big or small it is, should be heard." – Dera, Retriever Essentials Student Leader
"Through Retriever Essentials, I became aware of the extent of food insecurity amongst members in our UMBC community. This program has given me the opportunity to raise awareness about this issue and a platform to reach out to those who are faced with this insecurity." - Lami, Retriever Essentials Student Leader
"Retriever Essentials has provided me the opportunity to help fight food insecurity on campus. Witnessing the impact of the pantry in improving student's lives is rewarding. I am proud to work with the Retriever Essentials team to ensure that no student has to worry about where their next meal is coming from." – Sabtain, Retriever Essentials Student Leader
"I want to send a heartfelt thank you to our student leaders who keep improving and striving for greatness. They compassionately and diligently manage the operations of pantry to ensure that all students, faculty and staff get the food they need and deserve. They innovatively develop strategies and marketing ideas to reach more people. They successfully fulfill the role as the ambassadors for addressing and eliminating food insecurities amongst our UMBC community. The Retriever Essentials student leaders are living examples of what it means to strive to "Be Your Best Self." I’m hopeful and excited for what these student leaders will accomplish in their bright future." - Deveraux Smith, Director, Retriever Essentials

"Sane leadership is the unshakable faith in people's capacity to be generous, creative and kind." Margaret Wheatley. Addressing food insecurity on the campus of UMBC is Retriever Essentials' mission. Your leadership, time, and talents made a difference as need increased and the program expanded. By providing food security, you changed the lives of people--feeding them and enabling them to succeed academically. You also supported a culture of care and respect for others within the institution. For this, and for the hope that resonates from the good work you have done, I offer my gratitude and thanks." - The Rev. Dr. Katrina Grusell, Episcopal Chaplain at UMBC
"Thank you to our Retriever Essentials Student Leaders for helping to move Retriever Essentials forward as we go into our 4th year. This past year has been one of incredibly positive progress while learning to pivot our services during a pandemic with little advance planning. Your strength, flexibility and willingness to help others on our campus is deeply appreciated by all." - Julie Rosenthal, Program Management Specialist, Asian Studies Program, Global Studies and Judaic Studies

"Thank you all so much for all of the time and heart you have put into Retriever Essentials and the UMBC Community. When we were all together at the opening of Pantry back in February I was truly in awe of how far this initiative has come and it could not have been accomplished without your hard work, dedication and commitment. The UMBC community and world are lucky to have you all leading us into the future. - Eloise Grose, Assistant Director, Applied Learning & Community Engagement, The Shriver Center

"I thank all of you for being an amazing team. Thank you for raising critical questions, taking courageous initiatives, and making great things possible for Retriever Essentials. Your keen thinking and generous spirit are inspiring. I am proud of all of you and certain that wherever you will go, you will continue to serve and grow with the power of your character." - Fariha Khalid, CCMA AmeriCorps VISTA, Program Coordinator, Retriever Essentials

From,
The Retriever Essentials Advisory Board