

Day at the Market: a Health Outreach Initiative

These photos and interviews are from the biweekly fair held at the Northeast Market at 2101 E Monument St, Baltimore, MD. On the second and fourth Wednesday of every month, organizations from around Baltimore set up tables in the market to provide awareness about resources ranging from energy programs to insurance to job searching opportunities. Through this article, we wanted to highlight the impressive work being done by all of these organizations and document their experiences at this fair.

Barbara Bates-Hopkins “The Brain of Day at the Market”

Ms. Barbara Bates-Hopkins (or “Ms. Barbara,” as everyone calls her) is the “Brain of Day at the Market.” Every other Wednesday, she helps community groups and Johns Hopkins volunteers set up outreach tables at the Northeast Market. The people behind these tables are here to inform Baltimore community members about programs to help protect their health, save energy, and whatever else they might need. And community members teach at these tables too. Community members tell volunteers, students, and professors what they actually need. This “bidirectional learning” comes from Ms. Barbara’s hard work over the last 14 years—since 2007, she has built tight connections between the people on both sides of the table.



Ms. Barbara Bates-Hopkins, Community Relations Coordinator in the Johns Hopkins Center for Urban Environmental Health. She would like to acknowledge the work of Dr. John Groopman, Dr. Michael Trush, Ms. Pat Tracey, and Dr. Norma Kanarek in the direction of the Center.

Ms. Barbara started Day at the Market in 2007 with the support of her colleagues at Johns Hopkins. She was inspired by her community outreach work with the Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition (HEBCAC), and wanted to raise awareness of community organizations and their resources.

Additionally, Ms. Barbara knew that people may not be comfortable asking questions or seeking help in formal settings. This made Northeast Market a perfect location to create a new program. With these goals in mind, Ms. Barbara helped create Day at the Market, a space for community organizations and Johns Hopkins doctors, professors, and students to “meet people where they are.”

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The key to the program’s success, Ms. Barbara says, is collaboration. She knows everyone’s face and story, and everyone knows her as Ms. Barbara. She points out some people who have helped Day at the Market grow: Glenn Ross, Community Consultant and Urban Environmentalist, drops by for a chat. He is active in a variety of local groups and provides Johns Hopkins SOURCE with important updates and news from the surrounding communities. Meanwhile, Rosie from Rose’s Bakery leads communication for the Northeast Market Merchants’ Association. Her genuine and consistent support “is the glue that makes our collaboration happen.”

This collaboration model has worked so well at the Northeast Market that Ms. Barbara started another program

at Lexington Market. Community organizations and volunteers are set to be at Lexington Market every 3rd Wednesday, and Baltimore Public Market Management has encouraged expansion to even more of the Markets. Meanwhile, Day at the Market keeps growing at Northeast Market.

Over the last 14 years, Day at the Market’s missions have stayed the same. First, the people of Baltimore can teach students and professors how to best work in the community. The event also gives Hopkins a place to address the needs of the community and share their research findings. Most importantly, Day at the Market is reuniting Baltimore’s communities. Though some people have been too scared to even enter various parts of Baltimore, community-building events like Day at the Market “bridge and erase that disconnect.” Ms. Barbara hopes that regular engagement helps everyone learn from and trust each other.

Day at the Market [is] a space... to “meet people where they are.”



Lindsay Diedrich, Dr. Panagis Galiatsatos, Dr. Joann Bodurtha, and Ms. Barbara Bates-Hopkins

Turnaround Tuesday Featured: Jermetra Carroll (JC) and Raekwoa Brandon

Turnaround Tuesday is a “jobs movement” organization that helps people re-enter the workforce and creates jobs in Baltimore. They hold sessions on Tuesday mornings in the church because it is a place to show “dignity and respect,” and are a people-driven organization.



Raekwoa Brandon and the Turnaround Tuesday Day at the Market tablecloth



Turnaround Tuesday business cards and mint bowl

Turnaround Tuesday is a “movement” because they get to know the people they help and stay with employees for 2 years even after connecting people to jobs. Over the past 5 years, they have helped connect over a thousand people with employers.

They have played an instrumental role particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. They continue to connect people to jobs, combating the ongoing challenge of pandemic-driven unemployment.



VALUE Baltimore

Featured: Shirl Parnell, Jamie Stewart, and Kim Thomas

VALUE Baltimore works with the Baltimore City Health Department to encourage people to get the COVID vaccine. They particularly want to increase vaccination rates in elderly homes and other communities facing disparities. That's why Shirl Parnell and other COVID vaccine ambassadors came in to help educate people about the vaccine.



VALUE Baltimore COVID vaccination education pamphlets and giveaway materials

Parnell has worked to debunk a lot of vaccine misinformation during her time as a vaccine ambassador. Many false rumors about the vaccine scare people into not getting it. However, she has found her work meaningful because Parnell sees people come back to the table and register for their vaccines. Parnell and her fellow VALUE ambassadors want to tell everyone this:

“If you want to get over this pandemic and get back to normal, get vaxxed.”



Aetna Better Health Featured: Patricia Wright, Community Development Coordinator

Aetna Better Health of Maryland is a Medicaid health insurance plan offered in the state of Maryland. They directly reach out to the local East Baltimore community to educate residents about how they can qualify for Medicaid, enroll in Medicaid, and navigate their insurance coverage.



Aetna educational pamphlets and giveaway materials

With the COVID-19 pandemic driving unemployment, many community members have lost health insurance, limiting their affordability and accessibility to health care. Aetna Better Health's community outreach holds utmost importance especially during these circumstances. Wright especially enjoys interacting with uninsured community residents since it allows her to offer helpful resources on how to obtain health insurance.



Wright finds meaning in the diversity of her experiences at the Health Fair. With unique interactions at each fair, she can deeply understand and assist address the issues faced by the local community.

Living Legacy Featured: Morgan Phillips and Latrice Price



The Living Legacy Foundation of Maryland is at Day at the Market to educate people about organ donation. Morgan Phillips and Latrice Price have had to combat misinformation about organ donation (like the myth of organ stealing), and also walk people through what organ donation might look like. They encourage potential organ donors to be transparent.

“Tell your family your decision about being an organ donor.”



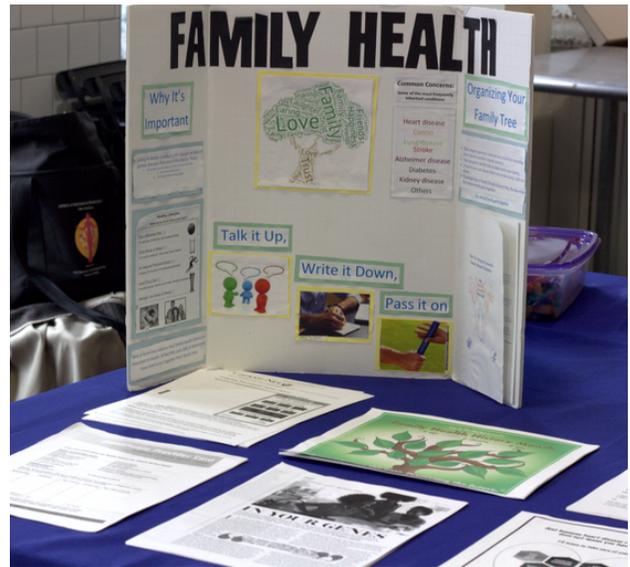
Above: Living Legacy educational pamphlets and giveaway materials

Left: Morgan Phillips and Latrice Price during the interview

Family Health History Table Featured: Yasheel Pandya, Silvia Lin, and Dr. Joann Bodurtha

The Family Health History table raises awareness of family history and empowers community members to act on their own family histories. The volunteers give community members a chance to discuss their family health concerns and direct people to resources about disease screening, testing, and other health resources that align with their needs. They also give people the opportunity to create a “family tree” of their family health history that community members can share with their physicians.

Dr. Bodurtha and the Family Health History volunteers hope to build trust with the community to combat the historical distrust of medical institutions in Baltimore. In addition to challenges in building trust, the table sometimes has trouble piquing the interest of local residents who may be overwhelmed by other priorities.



Above: family health history educational poster and flyers

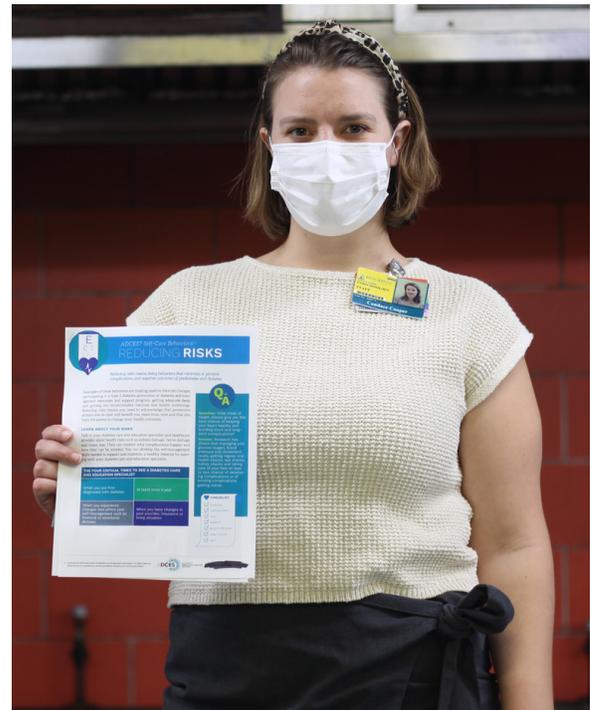
Despite these challenges, volunteers love the vast perspectives of the people they interact with. By sharing stories of struggles with medications, family illnesses, and even health system issues, community members and volunteers participate in a collaborative exchange that strengthens one another’s understanding of family history.



Bloomberg School of Public Health

Featured: Candace Cooper

The Bloomberg School of Public Health (BSPH) plays an important role in providing education to the Baltimore community. During November, which is Diabetes Awareness Month, they have been providing dietary education, answering diet-related questions, and suggesting healthy alternative food choices for day-to-day life.



“It is really important for practitioners to look at root causes of the condition and barriers to care, not just what is surface-level”

Cooper enjoys the diversity offered by the Health Fair. This provides an opportunity to connect with people of different backgrounds and better understand barriers to care in the Baltimore community.

Above: BSPH educational pamphlets and giveaway wheel

Right: BSPH health fair tablecloth



The Johns Hopkins Institute for Clinical & Translational Research/HOPE

Featured: Dr. Cheryl Himmelfarb, Cyd Lacanienta, Donald Young

The Johns Hopkins Institute for Clinical & Translational Research (ICTR) has helped sponsor Day at the Market since 2011, and the two share the same goal –to promote bidirectional learning. But in contrast to Day at the Market’s focus on health and social services, the ICTR’s focus is on making sure scientists understand how to work with the community.



Donald Young at the HOPE survey table

According to Dr. Cheryl Himmelfarb, Deputy Director for the ICTR, “Research informed and guided by the community is more meaningful and impactful [in driving health]... improvements in the community.” That makes the Day at the Market an ideal area for outreach. Northeast Market is one of the six Baltimore Public Markets, which are one of the longest-running public market systems in the United States.¹ It’s a part of Baltimore’s history. However,

the lunch rush can testify that the Market is also a part of daily life. In contrast to how researchers usually interact with the community, Dr. Himmelfarb notes that tabling during Day at the Market helps physicians and researchers become a constant in the community and build trust.



Cyd Lacanienta at the HOPE survey table

These strong relationships have been especially helpful during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the market, Dr. Himmelfarb says that doctors and scientists have been able to share important information on vaccines, testing, and prevention. At the same time, they’re listening to community concerns. In Northeast Market and other city markets, the HOPE research project is surveying unvaccinated Baltimoreans on why they aren’t vaccinated. The results may help scientists understand barriers to covid testing and vaccination, and learn how to better protect the public from COVID-19.

There have been some challenges in starting conversations between researchers and the public. Himmelfarb states that researchers often just want to recruit research participants and get guidance on how

to study the community's issues without actually bringing their results back. That's where ICTR comes in. They train researchers on how to best communicate their results to the community. "Scientists use a lot of acronyms," Himmelfarb states. "[ICTR helps] researchers clarify and simplify messages."



COVID vaccination education pamphlets and free masks

At the HOPE fair table, between interviewing unvaccinated Baltimoreans, Cyd Lacanienta supports the same mission. To both Lacanienta and Himmelfarb, research isn't just a question of what researchers can learn about a community. Research is an opportunity to learn from them and meaningfully give back—to create a "true exchange." That starts by building relationships with community members, like in Day at the Market.

1. Baltimore Public Markets Corporation. About Us. Baltimore Public Markets. <https://baltimoremarkets.org/about/>. Published 2022. Accessed January 17, 2022.

Come to the Northeast Market during Wednesday's lunch rush, and you have half a chance of seeing Day at the Market in action. From the corner of East Monument and North Duncan, you'll see Ms. Barbara and her team right of the entrance. On the left, there are tents over the table outside, where people might be taking blood pressures or giving out surveys. Further inside the market, there are groups who can help you with anything from donating organs to re-entering the workforce.

That's the beauty of Day at the Market. The tables are hosted by community organizations and people from Hopkins on a wide variety of topics, from preventative measures to help getting treatment. The tables help

community members protect their own health.

This initiative means that people at the tables have to listen and learn, as well as educate. Market-goers have a lot to share about their personal story, what they think are problems, and how these problems should be fixed. There's power in these conversations, which are only made possible by building relationships and being present—in this case, being at the Northeast Market every other Wednesday.

For more information or to get involved with Day at the Market, please contact Ms. Barbara Bates-Hopkins at 443-750-2009 or bhopkin1@jhu.edu.