Blazing a Path to Combat Hunger on a Global Scale
Winter is now upon us, and I’m extremely energized by the scope of work from our faculty, staff and students throughout the first semester. As a college, we’ve begun to dig into some more specific thrust areas that showcase the outstanding impact of our research, academics and Extension efforts. As we strive to remain one of the nation’s preeminent Land-Grant institutions with both eyes open to the future, I believe it’s important for us to reexamine who we are as a college, what we stand for, and what we are hoping to achieve.

I’m particularly excited to roll out this issue of Momentum which will provide a close up of our efforts in food security and combating hunger on a worldwide scale, an area of critical importance for the college. You’ll notice throughout that we’ve approached these stories through the lens of how we are uniquely transforming student experiences in our enduring quest to deliver a wholly immersive experience at the University of Maryland.

The opportunities we provide for our students extend well beyond the classroom. The following pages will introduce you to Professor Debrabata Biswas, who is working with a graduate student to revolutionize poultry production; Amy Cawley, a graduate of our premiere Extension programs who has created a pipeline of farm grown produce to the food insecure; Jo Drake, a student of our Institute of Applied Agriculture in her second career, helping to feed the hungry in Baltimore City; Nick Cloyd, an ENST graduate student who has pioneered the concept of “living umbrellas” as a new way to grow food; and the impressive Priscila Chaverri, whose team is at the forefront of eliminating a crippling coffee plant disease plaguing Costa Rica.

We are excited to share this issue with you and hope you’ll take the time to share feedback, comments and suggestions. Before you dive in, an additional initiative of note is the college’s commitment to preparing the next generation of high school teachers to reach Maryland students at an age when they are making decisions about their future college majors. We are on the precipice of launching an Agricultural Education program in partnership with the University’s College of Education which will create a formal pathway to becoming a dedicated agriculture teacher. Another shining example of how enhancing the student experience is at the core of our work.
When Nick Cloyd lived in Ocean City before starting grad school, his girlfriend called him the Umbrella Police. “I’d see three or four umbrellas blowing around the beach and there I am, grabbing them, because I don’t want to see anyone get hurt,” Cloyd laughs.

Cloyd is still pursuing umbrellas with the idea of doing good, but his incentive is a far cry from the beach mission. For his master’s thesis in the Department of Environmental Science and Technology (ENST), Cloyd is looking at how umbrellas made of living plants can not only make people more comfortable, but might inspire a connection to the environment and ideas for new ways to grow food.

Called “Living Umbrellas,” ten of these green canopies are already providing shade on patios around campus. But, says Cloyd, “The product is so much more than a shade structure. We hope it will foster the excitement to bring the experience of nature into our urban environments. I think this can excite people to understand they can grow plants in a small space to produce their own food, even in urban areas.”

The idea of a Living Umbrella and its first design had already been hatched when Cloyd arrived on campus in 2015 to study with Dr. Dave Tilley, Associate Professor of Ecological Technology and Design. Tilley, who has worked with green walls and roofs, “pulled me into his office my first day to talk about my thesis,” says Cloyd.

“He told me about this idea of a Living Umbrella that popped into his head when he was out west, sitting around a hot pool deck.”

Cloyd jumped onto Tilley’s living umbrella team, along with Jose-Luis Izuras, PhD, and another recent graduate of the master’s program, Tim Williamson. They knew they wanted to apply vertical farming techniques using a self-contained irrigation system. They wanted something practical, a producible patio umbrella that people could easily use. And they wanted to use the design to explore possibilities for enhancing green connections and growing food.

“We started hammering out ideas to get this to work,” says Cloyd. “Will it stand up in the wind? How do we irrigate, is it collapsible?” They also pinpointed one of the market groups most likely to use living umbrellas on their patios. “We targeted urban restaurants that are farm-to-table friendly, that want to create an environment where people are close to their food. We want to try to develop our technology to be part of their gains.”

Funded by a National Science Foundation Innovation Corps grant, which helps researchers take their projects outside the lab, Williamson did in-person interviews with 100 restaurant owners, in Washington, DC, Baltimore, Richmond, Houston and Florida. “The overall acceptance was really great,” Cloyd says. “I think they were excited at how simple but fresh an idea it was, to grow plants in a canopy system that puts plants out in the urban landscape.”

The original Rube Goldberg-type design that had been engineered in the greenhouse was scrapped for a more efficient construction. Working through the University’s Office of Commercialization Technology and with a steel fabrication company in Hollywood, MD, the team developed a promising prototype – a 130-pound base with four soil pots, a solar charger that powers the automatic irrigation system, and a green canopy nine feet overhead.

They’re also experimenting with plants, including food species, to see which ones do well in the elevated setting. Says Cloyd, “Vining species have huge beautiful green leaves. They’re very durable, and do well in weather and different climates.” The campus Living Umbrellas are Mandeville, but, says Cloyd, “We’ve started messing around with grapes, one of the great species we’ve found to inhabit living umbrellas.” Other food possibilities are peppervine, string beans and passion fruit.

There’s still a lot to figure out about the Living Umbrella – bugs, birds, rain, climate, making sure everything works properly – but the team already foresees potential for a lot of benefits. The Living Umbrellas are compact and easy to move around.
Costa Rica emanates a specific sense of wonder and ruggedness unmatched by most popular travel destinations. The natural treasure of Arenal, an active volcano in the northwestern region of the country, is enough to situate you on your hotel patio for hours on end, waiting to catch a glimpse of its full grandeur as clouds dance around its peak. There are the hot springs. And, the coffee.

Arguably, Costa Rica produces the finest coffee in the world, and multinational corporations like Starbucks rely on its over 200 million pounds in yearly export to satisfy the public’s daily demand for a cup of joe. Much of the country’s coffee is produced within coffee cooperatives, which are comprised of broad networks of producers with small farms that are almost always family run. Co-op associates rely on sustainable, yearly production of plants as a means of putting food on the table for their families and face international pressure to contribute to the economic well being of the Central American region. It’s a high stakes, high pressure game in which there is little room for error.

Nature is not without a sense of conflict in this game, as coffee plants or “Rubiaceae” are vulnerable to a variety of pests and diseases, as well as effects from heat and drought. “Coffee rust” is a particularly devastating disease which manifests itself through small, pale yellow spots on the upper surfaces of the leaves. The infection starts low and gradually works its way up the tree. It is the most economically devastating pathogen plaguing the coffee industry and is without a known cure.

Priscila Chaverri, Ph. D., associate professor in the department of plant sciences & landscape architecture has identified a workable solution, which if all goes well, will give coffee plants innate protection from not just coffee rust, but also a broad spectrum of harmful naturally occurring circumstances. A native Costa Rican, Chaverri shares a joint appointment with the University of Costa Rica and spends a large chunk of her academic year teaching Mycology and carrying out in-depth field work. Chaverri and two Ohio State University colleagues just received a $2 million grant from the National Science Foundation to examine endophytic fungi – bacteria or fungi that live harmlessly within plant tissue – as chemical producing agents to fight harmful pathogens within coffee plants.

To briefly explain the science behind this approach, Chaverri is employing a biological control test using one or several living organisms – in this case a consortium of fungi collected from Rubiaceae plants against several important pathogens to determine if the fungi can...
work together in a synergistic capacity. Her goal, and that of her team, is to identify specific chemicals produced by fungi that will be used to fight pathogens within the plant.

“I like this approach of investigating and using chemical warfare within plants,” says Chaverri. “Once the proper chemicals from a broad selection of fungi are identified, we can determine what effects they may have and how they can be used to manipulate the chemical diversity within plants to fight harmful pathogens. We’re really looking to exploit that particular aspect to improve the plant’s immune system and productivity, and bolster overall plant protection.”

Ultimately, Chaverri and her team will take their findings to the field and test the fungi from the Rubiaceae plants in coffee plantations in Costa Rica. “Aside from coffee rust, there are multiple variables impacting plant survival such as other diseases, pests or even drought. Our hope is to identify several combinations of fungi that will contribute to the plant’s overall health.”

Chaverri has had early, in-depth discussions with Coopetarrazú, a coffee co-op situated in San José Province, San Marcos, Costa Rica. Coopetarrazú has roughly 3,400 producers with small farms of about four hectares or less (one hectare = 2.471 acres) that are family-run. In total, the co-op associates have about 24,000 hectares of coffee plantations, mostly comprised of Caturra and Catuai varieties. Both varieties are susceptible to pests, diseases, heat and drought.

The problem is amplified when one takes into account that these varieties are rich in flavor, are adapted to the geographic area and have been mastered by producers. More resistant varieties may exist, but for the producers to replace them implies a complete reset and 3 to 5 years lag time for the new plants to yield. Many producers have opted to switch to other lines of work to avoid a loss in income, which is devastating for their family and the Costa Rican economy.

“Coopetarrazú administration have told me that if the solution our project is proposing can improve crop productivity by as little as 5%, this would represent an additional income of $1.5 million for the co-op producers. My preliminary research shows that this improvement is possible,” she said.

Chaverri recently recruited a Ph. D. student from the University of Costa to assist on the project. Efrain Escudero is energized by the profound results this research could achieve and is spending the majority of his time culturing, purifying and developing methodologies in the lab. His scope of vision for this project is immense, mentioning in an email “evolutionary implications, taxonomic resolutions for complex species and new technologies available for producers to preserve coffee plantations.”

To date, coffee rust has claimed $1 billion in losses and 250,000 jobs in Central America. With UMD’s Priscila Chaverri on the job, the future appears bright.
Working together to feed the hungry

By Nancy Luse

Yet hunger remains a nagging issue. Maryland Food Bank officials say one in eight Marylanders is food insecure. The USDA defines food insecurity as struggling to avoid hunger, facing the threat of hunger or simply, being hungry. The problem continues to rise among children, senior citizens and working families faced with stagnant or minimum wages. Government regulations for assistance are such that 39 percent of food-insecure people in the Food Bank’s service area earn too much to qualify for help, according to officials. Instead, people depend on food banks and other hunger relief organizations to fill the gaps.

This is where the Maryland Food Bank comes into play. Founded in 1979 as the first food bank on the East Coast, it served Baltimore’s needy and, thanks to LEAD Maryland - an agricultural leadership development program run through the College of Agriculture and Natural Resource’s Extension program - fellow and board member, Amy Cawley, Farm to Food Bank coordinator, there is a way to make everything come together — sort of like how multiple ingredients all meld into one fabulous pot of soup.

“Nobody should go without food, especially with all that goes to waste,” Cawley says, adding that “farmers don’t want to grow food and then not see it used.”

Farmers have the crops, whether it’s crates of cabbage that don’t get sold at the farmers’ market or a proliferation of zucchini. The Maryland Food Bank has a process for distributing excess produce to the needy and, thanks to LEAD Maryland - an agricultural leadership development program run through the College of Agriculture and Natural Resource’s Extension program - fellow and board member, Amy Cawley, Farm to Food Bank coordinator, there is a way to make everything come together — sort of like how multiple ingredients all meld into one fabulous pot of soup.

“We received produce from farmers who had too much that was going to waste,” Cawley says. Either it didn’t look good enough for the retail market, or they had harvested a large amount for a customer who then decided it was too much, or farmers simply didn’t have an outlet for all that was in the field.

When Cawley started with the program in 2011 there were only two or three farms donating excess produce. She spent that first year driving around in her pickup to farms, explaining the program’s concept and today there are 68 farms participating with more being recruited.

Some of the credit for the program’s success goes to LEAD Maryland, where Cawley was a fellow starting February, 2013 and graduating in March, 2015. According to the program’s mission, the goal is to “identify and develop leadership to serve agriculture, natural resources and rural communities.” It works through institutes, conferences, retreats and peer education.

As a LEAD fellow she traveled around the state learning about food deserts — places where people have to go outside their neighborhoods for a grocery store since the only options close by are gas stations or convenience stores without fresh, nutritious food. In Dorchester County she learned about harvesting crabs and oysters. Poultry was the main topic in Wicomico County and in trips to Annapolis and Washington, D.C., she and her fellow students met with state and federal law and policy makers.

“It made me a better person,” Cawley says of the experience. “It opened a network of people to me and it made me aware of the issues they face. And it really, really enhanced my leadership skills” to the point her classmates asked her to give the graduation speech. “I got a standing ovation,” she recalls proudly. “I can actually see myself as a leader.”

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The Farmer’s Daughter

Cawley was born into a family of grain farmers on the Eastern Shore. At age 16 she worked in a produce stand, selling the local favorites of corn, tomatoes, melons, peppers and peaches. “When I went out in the fields to harvest for the stand I saw all the food that was left behind. And the farmer would say to me, ‘Amy, you can’t get it all.’ It was so sad to see it plowed back into the ground.”

She went on to graduate from a small South Carolina college, majoring in physical education. She later earned a master’s degree and went to work teaching ninth grade health and physical education at a private girl’s school. “I wanted something different,” she says, opting for a college classroom where she taught nutrition and health. “It was a temporary position, filling in for a teacher on leave, and at the end of her contract Cawley couldn’t find another job. She tried to get through the rough patch with part time, low-wage work.

“It was a very discouraging point in my life. I had a master’s degree and I was earning minimum wage. Yet at the same time she was realizing a valuable lesson. ‘Before I thought that people who didn’t have jobs should get off the couch and take any job, minimum wage or not. But I learned it’s not always that easy.’ Finally it came to the point where I do now with the Maryland Food Bank in appreciating how hard some of our neighbors are working to survive … it makes me appreciate the ability I have to meet a basic human need.”

In addition to receiving the excess harvests, the Farm to Food Bank program also has farmers that commit to growing produce specifically for donation. Additionally, there’s a gleaning project.

Alison Howard, who has an 800-acre organic farm on the Eastern Shore that produces vegetables, grain and poultry, says she’s impressed with the Food Bank volunteers who come in and glean. “It’s hot and it’s physically hard; it’s an act of unselfish kindness” on their part.

Howard is equally impressed with the rest of the program, and especially Cawley. “Amy does a great job understanding the cycles of a farm and is so easy to work with. If I test her at five in the morning and say I have six pallets of cabbage and no market for it, “she hustles because time is of the essence… there’s such good customer service. We don’t even have to be here—they come and get it, they know the drill. That’s good management.”

Certainly a farmer wants compensation for all the hard work involved. “It’s never a good thing when you can’t sell it,” Howard says, but it’s even worse when food goes to waste. “Without Farm to Food Bank the unused produce on her farm would have been composted.

Looking to the future, Cawley says she still continue to build the program one farmer at a time and would like to see an expansion of nutrition and cooking classes—how do you cook egg plant or butternut squash? she poses. She would also like to see more farmer appreciation dinners held, offering a chance to build even better relationships.

“As long as I’m physically able, I will continue my passion of working to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to our food insecure citizens,” she says. “This is the perfect job. I’m helping people with hunger; I’m helping the farmers. It’s just awesome” even though “I never see the faces of everyone I help.” It’s a job that finds her in the morning and say I have six pallets of cabbage and no market for it, “she says. Among the volunteers are jail inmates.

“Mom and Dad said, ‘Amy, pack your bags and come home.’”

Cawley carries that experience with her in her work. “It prepared me for what I do now with the Maryland Food Bank in appreciating how hard some of our neighbors are working to survive … it makes me appreciate the ability I have to meet a basic human need.”

Doing Good One Baltimore Neighborhood at a Time

By Debra Spurrier

Growing up in Baltimore during the 1960s as one of 12 children, Joyce “Joi” Drake never imagined she would one day be driving tractors, tending to crops or harvesting nutritious, locally grown produce in an effort to spread goodness to populations living in food deserts. Yet, as a Sustainable Agriculture Golden ID student at the Institute of Applied Agriculture at the University of Maryland, Joi has found her niche doing good for others while working to end hunger and provide a richer life for senior citizens in central Maryland.

“I am just in love with my life,” says an exuberant Joi. But the road has not been an easy one. Joi dropped out of high school in 10th grade, but went back and obtained her GED in 1973. Gradually, she worked her way through college, obtaining a bachelor’s degree in social science, then a master’s of social work in 2001. For 13 years her passion was social work, devoting herself to making a better life for others — particularly children — until she found herself laid off in 2014.

Strapped with the burden of too much experience and being an older adult looking for work, Joi’s lack of favorable responses to the job applications she submitted nudged her in a different direction in search of a solution. “I told myself not to get discouraged during this period,” Joi explains. “One day I was looking into other resources offered by employment services and decided to research training...
According to the USDA, a food desert is an area that lacks access to fresh fruits, vegetables and other healthful whole foods largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers’ markets and healthy food providers. Food deserts lead to pockets of increased obesity because families rely on local quick marts that provide processed, sugar and fat laden foods as an accessible, low-cost food option.

A food desert in Baltimore City is an area where: 1) The distance to a supermarket or supermarket alternative is more than ¼ mile, 2) The median household income is at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level, 3) Over 30% of households have no vehicle available, and 4) The average Healthy Food Availability Index score for all food stores is low.

opportunities. I found information about green job training through the Institute of Applied Agriculture at the University of Maryland. I spoke with Glori Hyman, attended an open house and fell in love.

The concept of the Golden ID program fit Joi’s situation perfectly – she was at least 60 years of age, a legal resident of Maryland, and not engaged in gainful employment for more than 20 hours a week. This designation allowed Joi to take classes at little to no cost. She soon found herself learning about agriculture mechanics, driving tractors and even inserting her arm in a 1,500-pound cow’s stomach. “I’d never even been on a farm before my time at IAA,” says Joi. “Now my friends say, ‘Joi, you’re no longer a city girl!’”

Joi’s course work experiences are not only transforming her, but they are transforming the lives of the people she meets along the way. This summer Joi served over 900 hours as a mobile market assistant for Real Food Farm, Baltimore City’s largest organic urban farm whose mission is to provide locally grown produce and education to areas recognized as food deserts.

Her mobile market was a converted UPS truck painted bright green, white and blue and retrofitted with an exhibit tray that pulls out to showcase fresh produce and eggs produced at Real Food Farm to Baltimore communities. The mobile market accepts EBT (Independence), Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program vouchers, or WIC fruit and vegetable checks to encourage healthy choices to lower-income neighborhoods.

“Food is like music. It has a way of bringing people together and getting them to talk. I loved making sure people had access to good, wholesome food,” says Joi. “I visited senior communities, immigrant areas and families who had never seen some of the produce items we had for sale. That is where education was important. I had the opportunity to reach out and teach my neighbors how to cook with unfamiliar foods, why it was important to eat healthy and how easy it was to buy local. I found if we can provide food security to this population, they will make healthier food choices for their children and themselves.”

With graduation from the two-year Sustainable Agriculture program approaching in May 2017, Joi is looking forward to focusing her energy and experiences into creating a non-profit gardening and arts program for senior citizens in Baltimore called Seniors Rock Garden Farm and Art Gallery. Through her time at IAA, Joi has worked with faculty to develop her business plan and marketing strategy.

“I am a senior myself and I thoroughly enjoy gardening and the outdoors. Seniors have so much life and energy in them, so much to share, so much knowledge to bring to the table,” explains Joi. “I want to put all the pieces of my life experience together to provide an avenue for seniors to gain activity, social interaction and food security in a safe environment.”

Joi feels doing good is a matter of the heart and her life blood. Through her years of providing social services concentrated in provided resources for children, to her new passion for providing food security for Baltimore neighborhoods and a stimulating environment for seniors, Joi continues to carry a positive message to those around her.

“Out of adversity comes revelation,” Joi shares. “My life has turned a complete 180 degrees and is heading in a direction that brings me so much joy.”

By Emily Yeiser Stepp

When antibiotics were first discovered in the early 20th century, it was one of the most revolutionizing technologies for the human medical field. Not only have antibiotics saved millions of human lives over the decades but they have also been successfully adopted in animal agriculture to treat, control and prevent disease in a therapeutic manner. More recently, antibiotics have also been utilized in animal agriculture in sub-therapeutic ways that aid in increased production efficiency.
While society has reaped the benefits of antibiotic use, both in human and animal health fields, the emergence of antibiotic resistance has become a world-wide concern. Headlines that warn of ‘superbugs’ have heightened the awareness and depicted the reality that there are now bacteria that can out-smart antibiotics, rendering them totally ineffective.

This issue has become such a risk to human and animal health that the Obama administration created the National Action Plan for Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria. The plan outlines enhancing domestic and international capacity to prevent and contain outbreaks of antibiotic-resistant infections; maintain the efficacy of current and new antibiotics; and develop and deploy next-generation diagnostics, antibiotics, vaccines and other therapeutics.

Due to this increased focus on judicious antibiotic use in both humans and animals, innovative alternatives to antibiotics have garnered additional attention. Specifically, within animal agriculture, farmers are looking for products that will retain the efficacy of antibiotics, without sacrificing their animals’ health or production efficiency. In turn, Dr. Debabrata Biswas, assistant professor in the Department of Animal and Avian Science and Center for Food Safety and Security Systems, and one of his graduate students, Serajus Salaheen, have identified a possible antibiotic alternative that could be adopted for use in poultry production systems.

Human medicine has long recognized the benefits of berry fruits due to their anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial and anti-oxidant qualities. “Understanding these beneficial qualities of berries,” Dr. Biswas stated, “we simply applied this same theory by introducing berry by-products, in solution, to broiler chickens, to identify if growth rates and overall health would be comparable to when traditional antibiotics are utilized.”

There were four treatment groups in the study that contained 25 broiler chickens each. The four groups included: a negative control group given tap water; a positive control group given tap water with an industry standard antibiotic; a treatment group with the berry by-product in solution; and a final treatment group, with the berry by-product in solution with a higher concentration provided during the final 72 hours of the study. The chickens were raised for six weeks.

At the conclusion of the study, growth rates and bacterial demographics in the chickens’ gut were analyzed. Dr. Biswas and Salaheen found that the blueberry and blackberry by-products stimulated chicken growth rate of 6% as compared to the negative control group. Comparatively, the chickens provided with the industry standard antibiotic has a 9.5% growth rate and only 1% when the concentration was increased within the final 72 hours of the study.

“While the growth rates in the berry by-product treatment group were not as significant as those with the antibiotic, the berry supplement treatment did result in comparable growth while also reducing the risk of antibiotic resistance,” Biswas concluded. Analysis also revealed that berry by-product decreased the colonization of Campylobacter and Salmonella bacteria. The by-product was able to alter the gut flora of the chicken, which, like traditional antibiotics, provides long term benefits on the overall health of the animal.

Innovative science, such as Dr. Biswas’ research, coupled with continued focus on judicious use of antibiotics, will continue to help animal agriculture play an active role in combating antibiotic resistance. With a collective, one-health approach, ‘doing good’ today to address the antibiotic resistance risk, will ensure antibiotics and future innovations will be able to ‘do good’ far into the future for humans and animals alike.
The annual showcase for 4-H Youth Development found 4-H’ers from across the state displaying project success in a variety of areas. AGNR students helped staff the Birthing Center and were part of the AGNR Dairy and Beef Exhibit throughout the fair. AGNR also played a key role in the U-Learn Farm area – providing hands-on experiences for fair-goers of all ages.

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources was in full force to help celebrate the 135th anniversary of the Maryland State Fair in August!

Mark your calendars for the "11 Best Days of Summer" set next year, August 24 - September 4, 2017!!
The 2nd annual Terp Farm Fall Harvest Festival was held on Friday, September 23, at the Upper Marlboro Facility of the Central Maryland Research and Education Center. Terp Farm is a collaborative project between UMD Dining Services, the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Office of Sustainability. The farm occupies five acres at UMD’s Upper Marlboro agriculture research facility located 15 miles south of College Park. Formerly the campus’ tobacco research farm, the Upper Marlboro site has transformed into a research facility for diverse crops and now hosts the production of vegetables and cut flowers for campus.

Terp Farm places a particular focus on harvesting vegetables for preparation and consumption in UMD dining halls and catering functions. Produce is also donated to food-insecure members of the campus through the Campus Pantry program and nearby communities. From an educational perspective, Terp Farm embodies the University’s land-grant mission as an accessible resource for the student body, providing regular opportunities for hands-on farming, learning and training.

“We were humbled and thrilled by the success of the inaugural festival, and knew we had to make this a yearly event to expose greater numbers of the University community to the amazing things happening at Terp Farm,” said Allison Tjaden, assistant director of new initiatives for Dining Services and manager of Terp Farm. “Terps growing food for other Terps, the built-in educational opportunities for our student body, and the deep history rooted in this research facility make this such a special opportunity for all to experience. Plus, free food, free transportation and games certainly sweeten the deal!”

This fall-themed event featured food made with fresh ingredients grown at Terp Farm, a live performance from the Hayley Fahey Band, farm tours, pumpkin painting and information tables and activities provided by the College of Agriculture & Natural Resources.
Homecoming AGNR Tailgate

AGNR Terps and friends enjoyed pre-game fun and food prior to the Homecoming football team win over Purdue on October 1. Using the Campus Farm as the perfect venue, Terps, young and not-so-young, braved the weather and enjoyed pork barbeque and hamburgers and hot dogs prepared by the Brothers of Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity.
Under threatening skies, nearly 1,000 friends and neighbors attended AGNR’s annual Open House on October 8, at the Central Maryland Research and Education Center near Ellicott City. Visitors had the opportunity to learn how College of AGNR research, academic and Extension programs provide intrinsic benefits in their home community and daily lives. The annual open house provides a key opportunity to visit with representatives from AGNR’s many departments and programs and to experience the College’s reach outside of the classroom and beyond campus to every corner of the state.

Events and exhibits gave visitors a taste of the breadth and depth of ANGR including exploration of the many AGNR majors and programs with academic department representatives and having gardening questions answered by Master Gardeners. Wagon tours of the facility were popular, along with watching baby chicks hatch and touching a full grown chicken. Carroll County 4-H’ers demonstrated their expertise in robotics and Extension faculty shared the advantages to butterfly gardening. AGNR graduate students shared their area of expertise and research with posters that will also be shared at professional meetings.

The different stages of growth for beef and dairy animals were on display and visitors were able to experience the four compartments of a cow’s stomach under the supervision of AGNR staff. Families got a head start on the fall season with pumpkin painting and creating a “grain art” jar using grains grown in Maryland.

Young children completed a passport program to guide them to a variety of the nearly 50 exhibits. Middle and high-school students completed an educational scavenger hunt requiring them to visit with exhibitions a bit longer.
Throughout the fall, Maryland 4-H'ers travel across the U.S. to test their mastery of project skills at national contests. All of the youth, volunteer coaches, parents and supporters who represented Maryland will be recognized at the 2017 4-H Awards Gala in January at the Maryland State Fairgrounds. In the meantime, congratulations to those who took top honors in their project areas.

Immediately following their selection at the Maryland State Fair, winning youth traveled to Indiana to participate in the 66th National Youth Engineering Challenge hosted by Purdue Extension faculty. The event has expanded over the years and offers eight mastery events to meet the change in engineering trends and interests. The 2016 event included bicycle, lawn tractor and large tractor, welding, small engine, electricity, aerospace and robotics. The Maryland Horse Bowl team members from left, are, Coach Jan Rubenstein of Carroll County, Sabrina Dobbins of St. Mary’s County, Arianna Cordrey of Cecil County, Melanie Martin of Carroll County and Tabitha Gregory of Frederick County.

4-H’ers make AGNR proud at national competitions

National winners included:
Aerospace Team - 1st Place - Trevor Babb and Gillian Hutter
Large Tractor Operator - 1st Place - Austin “Dutch” Nickerson
Robotics Team - 1st Place - Ryan Airesman, Jacob Mahovich and Griffith Spies
Bicycle Safety - 2nd Place - Kaitlyn Davey
Small Engine - 2nd Place - Henry Brunnett
Lawn Tractor - 3rd Place - James Thomas

Dr. David S. Ross, ENST emeritus professor and retired Extension agricultural engineer, was team leader and chair of the bicycle event. Dwayne Murphy, UME faculty Extension assistant in Baltimore County, was assistant leader and chair of the welding event and Jamie Morris, Extension specialist 4-H youth development at the State 4-H office, was a chaperone. In early November, 4-H’ers involved with the horse project represented Maryland at the 2016 Eastern National 4-H Horse Roundup held in Louisville, KY. The Maryland Horse Bowl team won the national contest and the Horse Judging team was named reserve champion at the national contest.

And finally, the Maryland 4-H Livestock Skill-a-Thon team took the reserve champion title at the national competition during the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, KY. The Livestock Skill-a-Thon team members in front from left, are, Ray Martin IV of Frederick County, Ashley Hobbs of Montgomery County, Hannah Cimbalych of Carroll County, Lesa Ramsburg of Carroll County, Phoebe Vacek of Anne Arundel County. In back are coaches, Jeanne Herbert, left, and Lauren Mohler, right.

Additional youth traveled to Kentucky to participate in the Horse Communications, Hip-pology, Dairy Bowl, Dairy Judging, Livestock Judging and Poultry Judging. National events related to dairy judging were also held in Harrisburg, PA, and Madison, WI.

Funding for these trips is provided by the Maryland 4-H Foundation and generous donors who support 4-H Youth Development programs in Maryland.

Horse Bowl team members from left, are, Coach Jan Rubenstein of Carroll County, Sabrina Dobbins of St. Mary’s County, Arianna Cordrey of Cecil County, Melanie Martin of Carroll County and Tabitha Gregory of Frederick County.

Horse Judging team members from left, are, Coach Christa Shbolt of Anne Arundel County, Katie Grasser of Carroll County, Hannah Cimbalych of Carroll County, Lesa Ramsburg of Carroll County, Phoebe Vacek of Anne Arundel County.

Team members in photo, in front from left, are, Gillian Hutter, Kaitlyn Davey, Trevor Babb and James Thomas. In back from left, are, Ryan Airesman, Jacob Mahovich, Griffith Spies, Henry Brunnett and Austin “Dutch” Nickerson.
FEARLESS FRESHMAN

Donald De Alwis

"Living on campus...to embrace new horizons and develop new friendships with the unique position not only for my major but also for me personally...I plan to continue this trend..."#UMDtransforms

Becky Jones

"I chose to attend the Institute of Applied Agriculture at UMD because I have always loved working with plants, and I was attracted to the program because of the variety it offers..."#UMDtransforms

Harry Huntley

"I am a mid-size animal who is a part of the poultry science program. I've been a member of the Egg Industry since 2010, and I'm excited to share my journey with others..."#UMDtransforms

Bailey Clark

"Every experience provides me with a new perspective...I am very happy with the opportunity to be part of this wonderful environment..."#UMDtransforms

Faculty receive honors from poultry group

The Poultry Science Association (PSA) recently announced its highest honor, PSA Fellows, for their professional distinction and contributions to the field of poultry science without regard to longevity. Two of the five members selected for this prestigious award are ANSC faculty members, Dr. Tom Porter and Dr. Roselina Angel. They will be formally honored on July 14 at PSA's awards celebration during its 105th annual meeting in New Orleans.

Dr. Tom Porter received his Ph.D. in animal physiology from the University of Minnesota in 1988. He conducted research as a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Anatomy & Cell Biology at the Medical University of South Carolina. In 1993, he joined the Department of Poultry Science at Texas A&M University as an assistant professor, and in 1997, he was recruited to the Department of Animal and Avian Sciences at the University of Maryland, where he was subsequently promoted to associate professor and professor. He served as chair of the Department of Animal and Avian Sciences for eight years (2007-2015). Dr. Porter has served the Poultry Science Association for more than 20 years as associate editor (1995-2004), section editor (2004-2010), and editor-in-chief (2010-2016) of the journal, Poultry Science.

Dr. Porter’s research interests center on molecular and cellular endocrinology in poultry. Early in his career, he demonstrated that the production of steroid hormones in the ovaries of birds requires three different cell types, a situation which is different from that in mammals. One major focus of his research over the past 20 years has been on the mechanisms controlling cellular differentiation within the anterior pituitary gland during chick embryonic development. The overall goal of this research is to improve growth characteristics in broiler chickens through an increased understanding of the regulation of the bird's own growth hormone production. Dr. Porter’s group has developed a working model for the regulation of growth hormone cell differentiation that involves hormones from other endocrine glands as well as nuclear transcription factors and signal transduction cascades. A second major focus in Dr. Porter’s laboratory has included genome-wide analysis of gene expression in the neuroendocrine system. The long-term goal of this research is to increase our understanding of the global patterns of gene expression in the hypothalamus and pituitary gland and to identify the genes and gene networks controlling growth rate, body composition and feed intake in broiler chickens.

Dr. Porter is the author of 82 refereed scientific papers, 21 book chapters or reviews, and 131 abstracts. His publications have been cited more than 1,700 times. He and his collaborators have submitted 35,452 nucleotide sequences to GenBank and five cDNA microarray platforms to GEO (Gene Expression Omnibus). Dr. Porter’s research and teaching accomplishments have been recognized with the Junior Faculty Excellence Award, Alumni Excellence in Instruction Award, and the Dean Gordon Cairns Award for Distinguished Creative Work and Teaching in Agriculture from the University of Maryland and the Research Award and the Embrex Fundamental Science Award from the Poultry Science Association.

Dr. Roselina Angel received her Ph.D. in poultry nutrition from Iowa State University in 1990. She joined Purina Mills, Inc. as a nutritionist in their Specialty Research Group and was promoted to research manager of their Specialty Research Group and Purina Mills Specialty Business Group. Recruited to the University of Maryland as an assistant professor in 1998, Dr. Angel was promoted to associate professor in 2004 and to her current rank of professor in 2015. She was co-editor of the nutrition section of the Journal of Applied Poultry Research from 2009 to 2011 and served four 2-year terms as an associate editor for the Journal of AG-complishments
Poultry Science. Dr. Angel was a member of the Poultry Science Association’s Board of Directors from 2001 to 2004. She has been a member of the program committee for the Poultry Science’s Informal Nutrition Conference since 1998. She has been a panel member for USDA’s National Research Initiative competitive grants program and an ad hoc reviewer for USDA-NRI, the Binational Agricultural Research and Development Fund, and other funding agencies.

At the University of Maryland, Dr. Angel established an internationally recognized research and extension program in the field of poultry nutrition with emphasis on nutritional modifications to reduce nutrient excretion in poultry production. The impetus for this research direction was the 1997 Pfiesteria outbreak on the Pocomoke River. By feeding phosphorus more closely to the requirements and optimization of the use of phytase, and other tools, the poultry industry has decreased the use of inorganic phosphorus in poultry diets by close to 50% and decreased excreted phosphorus per kilogram of broiler produced by more than 65%. Dr. Angel’s recent focus has also been on improvement in dietary amino balance, and the use of protease enzymes to enhance protein utilization and reduce nitrogen excretion. Her research has had a direct measurable impact on water and air quality and the environmental and economic sustainability of the poultry industry.

Dr. Angel has published seven book chapters, 74 articles in refereed journals and more than 120 abstracts. Since coming to Maryland she has given more than 150 invited presentations, more than half of which have been presented overseas. She is a routine contributor to the “Informal Nutrition Conference” a key forum for university and poultry industry nutritionists held at the annual meeting of the Poultry Science Association.

In 2002 she was named to the Committee on Animal Nutrition, at that time the only standing committee of the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences. Dr. Angel has been the recipient of one regional and three national awards including the Medal of Achievement Award from the Delmarva Poultry Industry in 2003, and the National Chicken Council, Broiler Research Award, the American Feed Industries Poultry Nutrition Award, and the Informal Nutrition Conference Teacher, Advisor, and Life Mentor Award, from the Poultry Science Association in 2006, 2007, and 2014, respectively.

Roselina Angel, Ph.D.

Fisheries fellow recognized

Professor Reggie Harrell has been named a 2016 American Fisheries Society Fellow for his leadership, research, teaching and mentoring, resource management and/or conservation, and outreach/interaction with the public. The Fellows program is based on peer recognition for outstanding and/or sustained contributions to the fisheries discipline. Harrell is one of eight newly elected fellows.

“I feel honored to be recognized by my peers as a 2016 AFS Fellow and am proud that my work has had a direct impact on policy, teaching and mentorship of my students, and in my interactions with the public through extension outreach,” said Harrell. “As a Land-grant University, it is UMD’s responsibility to take scientific information and put it into practical application and to improve society while minimizing the impact. The AFS is a valued partner in helping me and my colleagues achieve these goals.”

An ecologist by training, and a fisheries and wildlife biologist by practical aspect, Harrell was initially recruited by the University and the College of Agriculture & Natural Resources to help restore fisheries in the bay. After serving as the associate dean and associate director of research for the college in 2007, he rejoined the ranks of faculty in the department of Environmental Science and Technology where he teaches fisheries, wildlife, ethics and natural resources management. He is a Certified Fisheries Scientist, Fellow of the American Institute of Fisheries Research Biologist (AIFRB) and editor of the North American Journal of Aquaculture.

Bill Bowerman receives alumni achievement award

Bill Bowerman, Professor and Chair of the Department of Environmental Science and Technology, received the Western Michigan University College of Arts and Sciences 2016 Alumni Achievement Award, the honor presented for remarkable contributions to society. As part of the award event, Bowerman presented a seminar entitled “Words of encouragement: how a single encounter with a Professor launched a 32 years flight with eagles.” Bowerman has been studying bald eagle ecology and the effects of environmental pollutants in the Great Lakes region since 1984. Recently, he has collaborated in Sweden, Russia, Uganda and South Africa on projects with white-tailed sea eagles.
For over 30 years, Guy and Lynn Moore have been committed AGNR alumni while operating Larriland Farm, a direct-market, pick-your-own farm in Woodbine, Howard County. Guy has served as president of the Maryland Vegetable Growers Association for over 20 years. Lynn has earned a spot on the Maryland Horticultural Society’s executive committee and serves as its secretary.

Together, they have hosted countless University of Maryland Extension programs on topics ranging from food safety to designing petting farms. Lynn has been a supporter of regional UME educational programs, serving long-standing advisory committees to funnel growers’ needs to U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers at Beltsville Agricultural Research Center and Kearneysville, W.V. These have resulted in collaborative efforts between AGNR and Penn State University.

Guy has served as AGNR’s citizen representative on the Council for Agriculture Research Extension and Teaching. He is a frequent visitor to Capitol Hill.

The University of Maryland is in search of alumni to become UMD Champions, proud and spirited supporters who are committed to helping elevate the reputation of the University by being vocal ambassadors. Champions share messages that advance the University’s mission and goals -- while educating the broader public about timely and important issues.

The program’s goal is to collectively, use positive messages about Maryland to resonate around the world -- and in turn, attract the best and brightest students/faculty, increase private philanthropy and elevate rankings.

UMD Champions will receive bi-monthly, and sometimes exclusive, emails with key messages and points of pride about UMD; share these messages via social media, email or in-person; and enlist other alumni and friends to become Champions.

For more information, check out www.alumni.umd.edu/champions or contact Latricia Boone at lboone1@umd.edu or 301-405-4565.
Joseph C. Cox, formerly of Fowlerville, MI, died September 27, 2016. He was 96. Born in East Lansing and raised in Washington, D.C., he attended Ohio State University, graduated from the University of Maryland with a bachelor’s in agriculture in 1942, and enlisted in the U.S. Army in July 1942. Following his enlistment, Cox graduated from Officer Candidate School as a Second Lieutenant and was assigned to the 71st Evacuation Hospital. In December 1943, as a First Lieutenant and Detachment Commander, he was sent to the South West Pacific Theatre where he served with honors having participated in the New Guinea and Philippine Campaigns, including the amphibious operations at Noemfoor Island, Lingayen Gulf and Legaspi, in addition to the Army of Occupation in Japan.

He was promoted to Captain in April 1945 and awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service. He returned to service in the Philippine Islands from October 1947 until July 1950 where he participated in Operation Rollup, disbanding the Philippine Scouts. He was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army Reserves in 1955 with the rank of Major.

Cox returned to Michigan with his wife and three daughters and, in May 1954, graduated with an LL.B. from University of Detroit School of Law. In 1956, he purchased the law practice of retiring attorney J.B. Munsell in Fowlerville, where he practiced law for more than 50 years. He served as an attorney and was Justice of the Peace for Handy Township. He also served as president of the Livingston County Bar Association and a member of the State Bar of Michigan Grievance Panel and Representative Assembly. Cox served as a governor’s appointee on the Michigan Age of Majority Commission and the Quality Assurance Commission of the Michigan Department of Workers’ Compensation.
Memorable Marylanders

He is survived by sons Joseph, James, Thomas, John, Stephen and William; daughters Judith, Susan and Katharine; 17 grandchildren; and 20 great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by wife, Helen; sisters, Katherine and Martha; a granddaughter and a grandson.

Nancy Elaine Eigenbrode, died November 8, 2016, at Homewood at Crumland Farms. She was the wife of David D. Eigenbrode, Emeritus Extension Supervisor; married for 60 years. She was 82.

Nancy earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in home economics education from the University of Maryland, College Park. She was a home economics teacher for over 25 years, teaching in Frederick, Carroll, Baltimore and Prince George’s counties. After retiring from teaching, she worked at the Department of Defense. Nancy was a member of Calvary United Methodist Church, Church Women United and the University of Maryland Alumni Association. She served as president of the Maryland State Association of University Women, became a member of the University of Maryland Faculty Senate and worked at the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. During the administrations of Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard Nixon, Hawes worked in the personnel office, as a member of the White House staff and as special assistant to the Secretaries of Agriculture and Defense. After leaving the government, Hawes worked as a marketing consultant to private companies. She was active with the American Kidney Foundation or Maryland and the American Diabetes Association.

Ruth (Galley) Stansfield, of Sykesville, formerly of Frederick, died on July 23, 2016. She was the wife of the late Robert E. Stansfield, Jr., a retired Extension agent with University of Maryland Extension. She was 94.

She is survived by Robert E. Stansfield, III and his wife, LeK. Joanne Tucker and her husband Richard, Nancy Doane and her longtime companion John Caron, Betty Taylor and her husband Michael and the late Donald Stansfield. She was the cherished grandmother of 9 and great grandmother of 15, caring sister-in-law of Ora Galley.

Constance Yuvonne Hazzard Pergerson, former University of Maryland Extension Home Economist and County Director in Anne Arundel County, died May 30, 2016. She was 79.

Fondly known as Connie, she was raised in Warrenton, VA, and earned her bachelor’s in nutrition from the former Morgan State College in 1959. She completed her internship at Howard University Hospital and earned her master’s in counseling and vocational rehabilitation at Coppin State College in Baltimore in 1975. She received an advance graduate degree in Extension Education in 1980 from the University of Maryland, College Park.

Following work as a registered dietitian at Johns Hopkins Hospital and University Hospital, she joined the University of Maryland Extension faculty as a home economics agent in 1975. She received the rank of principal agent in 1993 and served as county Extension director until her retirement in 2002.

Connie was active with the Maryland Dietetics Association, serving as president, secretary, nominating committee chair and chair of the Council on Professional Issues. She was active with the Maryland affiliate of the National Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. She received many awards from both organizations. She served on the University of Maryland, College Park Faculty Senate and was recognized by the Anne Arundel County Executive, the University President and her peers for achievements and innovations in nutrition education.

She was a member of the Merimines Club and the Continentals, Inc. of Anne Arundel County as well as the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority for more than 50 years, and served as treasurer of the National Organization of Blacks in Dietetics and Nutrition. She also served as a volunteer with the Anne Arundel County Chapter of the American Kidney Foundation. She served 20 years on the Selective Service Board.

Connie adored her family and doted on her grandchildren. She was a collector of African American memorabilia and art work and supported African American businesses and causes. She also loved plants and gardening.

She married Douglas Pergerson in 1961 who survives her with daughter Adrienne Williams; son, Douglas, Jr., former son-in-law, Stacey Sr.; two grandsons, two great-grandchildren, a stepson, sister, brother, great aunt, goddaughter, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Kidney Foundation or the American Cancer Society.

Memorable Marylanders

Russell L. Hawes, a marketing professor in the Agricultural Extension Service of the University of Maryland, and World War II Veteran, died July 25, 2016, at the Blakehurst Retirement Community in Towson. He was 93.

Hawes was born in East Providence, R.I., and raised in Cumberland, R.I., where he graduated from Cumberland High School. His college studies at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston were interrupted when he entered the Army Air Forces in 1943. Trained as a pilot, he was sent to navigation school and completed training as a bomber navigator. Commissioned a second lieutenant in 1944, he joined the 484th Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force in Cerignola, Italy. As a navigator aboard Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers, he flew nine combat missions over Axis-held territory in Italy, Austria and other Central European countries.

After earning a bachelor’s degree in 1947 and a master’s degree in 1948, both in agricultural economics from the University of Maryland, College Park, he began his career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. During the administrations of Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon, Hawes worked in the executive office, specializing in civil emergency preparedness. He later returned to the Department of Agriculture, working there until retiring in 1985.

He was active in his son’s Cub Scout pack and also in his church, First Lutheran Church in Ellicott City. He was also a member of the Society of Colonial Wars and the Sons of the Revolution. His was married 57 years to the former Shirley Marie Wieland, who died in 2005. He is survived by a son, George W. Hawes of Ruxton and a granddaughter.

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Born in Wilkinsburg, PA, she grew up in Baltimore, graduating from Western High School and Church Home and Hospital School of Nursing. She worked as a registered nurse for the Glenn L. Martin Company, Frederick Memorial Hospital and St. Agnes Hospital in Baltimore, where she retired in 1977.

She was an active member of Bethesda United Methodist Church in Ellicott City for 54 years and devoted herself to the sharing of God’s love both at home and abroad. She was also involved in the Grange, Farm Bureau and the National Association of County Agents.

Along with her husband, she enjoyed her retirement years camping across the USA, traveling through Europe, Asia and Africa; and finding the time to be with family and friends. Ruth loved teaching her grandchildren to play games. She loved to knit, read, swim and entertain.
“The University of Maryland gave me life lessons that shaped me to who I am today. My degree was far more than academic, it was a degree in life.” For Bob Frazee, a native of a small rural county in Western Maryland, coming to the University felt overwhelming at first. He quickly changed his mind when he realized how much he was benefiting from his diverse experience and varying perspectives the University provided him.

Majoring in Agricultural and Extension Education, Bob remembers feeling refuge in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. “There was a sense of community within the college that was welcoming and nurturing. My advisor took me under his wing and the college’s administration was a true advocate for its students,” he said.

Bob was actively involved in the college and served as Agriculture Student Council President. In 1977, he was the recipient of the college’s Outstanding Senior Award for outstanding service and dedicated leadership. His positive experience with the college and his position as a scholarship recipient himself inspired him to pay it forward after graduation.

“I felt that I had always benefited from someone else and that compelled me to give back. Even if it’s modest, I have always felt this need to give,” he said. His philanthropic philosophy was evidenced throughout his career with MidAtlantic Farm Credit as the college and agricultural community benefited greatly. Prior to his retirement as president and chief executive officer in 2016, MidAtlantic Farm Credit made a generous gift to the Campus Farm project which he believes is the “front porch of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. It is a way for the rest of the university to be introduced to great work done by the college.”

Bob has also been generous with his time and leadership skills having represented the University of Maryland, College Park on the national Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET) and serves as a member of the executive committee in order to help expand the land grant mission. Bob continued his commitment to the school’s research, academics, Extension 4-H program through his role as the chairman of the Maryland 4-H Foundation. Bob was on the AGNR Alumni Board of Directors and served as vice president. In 2012, he was recognized as AGNR’s Outstanding Alumnus by the University of Maryland Alumni Association.

In retirement, Bob has agreed to serve on Dean Beyrouty’s Global Leadership Council that will develop the direction and resources so that the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources will become the leader for the country and beyond. “In order to achieve that mission, it’s going to take resources and getting people engaged. Whether it’s someone writing a check or advocating on the behalf of the college for federal funding, everyone can do something.”

Upcoming Ag-citing Events for 2017

**B1G 10 DC Area Reception**
6:30 p.m.
National Press Club
Registration required: gyeiser@umd.edu
301-405-2434

**Maryland Day/AG Day**
Be sure to start your day with the Egg-Citing Breakfast with AGNR Alumni 8:30 a.m. “under the big tent” in the Animal Sciences Courtyard
Registration required: gyeiser@umd.edu 301-405-2434

**Maryland State Fair**
Don’t miss this showcase Aug 24th - September 4th of Maryland 4-H Youth Development! AGNR students will be involved with educational programs at the state fair including the AGNR Dairy and Beef Herd exhibit State Fair Birthright Center and the family friendly U-Learn Farm.
Volunteer opportunities at U-Learn Farm! Contact gyeiser@umd.edu http://www.marylandstatefair.com/