Congratulations to our Star of the Month for January 2021, our amazing partners at Henderson-Hopkins School! Since the pandemic began, in addition to moving school online, Henderson-Hopkins has stepped up to provide fresh groceries for 10,000 families! We thank the dedicated faculty and staff at Henderson-Hopkins for their work, and celebrate their incredible commitment and service to our community. We spoke with Annie Weber, Henderson-Hopkins Community School Coordinator about the school’s mission, its food distribution program and how volunteers can get involved.

Could you tell us a little bit about Henderson-Hopkins School? What is the school’s mission, and how have you been working to achieve quality education for students this year?

Henderson-Hopkins is a community elementary/middle school serving 580 students in PreK to 8th grade. Our school resides in East Baltimore and serves largely students who live in the surrounding community and families who are affiliated with Hopkins. We are operated by the Johns Hopkins University School of Education.

The mission of Henderson-Hopkins is to unleash our students’ joy and passion while preparing them for academic success and fulfillment in a rapidly changing world. Under the leadership of Principal Peter Kannam, we have become one of the most improved schools in Baltimore. Our emphasis on supporting the whole child and the whole family, combined with a relentless pursuit of academic excellence, helped Henderson-Hopkins become the most improved school in Baltimore City Public Schools and a top-five school in the district for African American student achievement during school year 2018-2019.

Last year, Henderson-Hopkins was poised for more great results. But with a global pandemic affecting every industry, the physical school closed in March. Because of this, we organized a COVID response around three areas; 1) high quality live online instruction that is as aligned to the existing curriculum as possible, 2) weekly distribution of meals and groceries to families, and 3) public health interventions that leverage Hopkins assets to support families.

Can you tell us more about your community engagement initiatives this year and how SOURCE students have contributed to those efforts?

We know that students’ basic needs must be met in order to experience joy, passion, and academic success in school—whether that is in-person or virtually. During in-person schooling, we were serving over 1,000 meals a day to students. During the school closure, one of our strategic priorities is to make fresh and healthy food easily accessible to families and our East Baltimore community. Because of this, we’ve shifted our community facing initiatives to focus on addressing food insecurity among both our Henderson-Hopkins families and surrounding community. We are proud to say that thus far, we’ve served over 320,000 pounds of food to nearly 10,000 families.

Sydney Sahasrabudhe, Henderson-Hopkins’ SOURCE Service Scholar, has helped recruit graduate students from the School of Nursing and School of Medicine to volunteer at our food distribution program on Fridays. We rely on volunteers to pack bags of food, distribute the food to our walk-up and drive-up lines, and deliver food to our Henderson-Hopkins families. SOURCE students have racked up over 50 volunteer hours with our food program so far! Thank you!

How did food deliveries emerge as the highest priority for your work during the pandemic?

When surveyed at the beginning of the pandemic, a significant number of our Henderson-Hopkins families (continued on the next page)
described food insecurity as a barrier. This is when we knew we had to step up for our community. We were the first school in East Baltimore to set up weekly grocery distribution to our school families and our East Baltimore neighbors. This weekly distribution included delivery service to those families that weren’t able to come up to the school. When 100 families signed up to receive a food delivery the first week, we knew that the need was great.

**How can more students from Hopkins get involved? Any upcoming volunteer opportunities?**

We are always looking for volunteers for our Friday food distribution program! We have opportunities to pack bags of food/distribute food or deliver to families in the Baltimore area on Friday afternoons. If you are interested in getting involved or want to learn more, reach out to Annie Weber, Community School Coordinator, at AEWeber@bcps.k12.md.us.

**What are you looking forward to in 2021?**

We are looking forward to returning to the school building for in-person learning! We miss our students, families and staff so much.

**Thank you for all that you do for our community!**

Photos, clockwise starting at top: 1) Left to Right: Principal Peter Kannam, Tara Hayes (Family Advocate), and Annie Weber (Community School Coordinator) distributing food to our walk-up line off of Ashland Avenue. Photo by Will Kirk, JHU; 2) We’ve transformed our auditorium into our food distribution center. We’ve set up stations where volunteers pack food and the stage is used to organize food deliveries. Photo by Evan Velleman, HH’s School Counselor. 3) Principal Peter Kannam carrying groceries to clients waiting in our walk-up line during one of our first Friday food distributions in spring 2020. Photo by Will Kirk, JHU; 4) J.D. Merrill, Assistant Principal, carrying produce boxes to a car waiting in the drive-up line on a Friday food distribution day. 5) Annie Weber (Community School Coordinator) carrying holiday boxes to a volunteer’s car – loading the car up to make deliveries to Henderson-Hopkins families. Photo by Will Kirk, JHU