



PENGUIN PANTRY PROVIDES GROCERIES FOR STUDENTS IN NEED

The Penguin Pantry on the second floor of Kilcawley Center allows students to make special requests and note dietary restrictions and allergens. Photo by Kelcey Norris/The Jambar

KELCEY NORRIS

During a time of crisis, two groups at Youngstown State University joined forces to help feed the campus community. The Student Government Association partnered with Student Outreach and Support to create the new and improved Penguin Pantry, located on the second floor of Kilcawley Center.

Justin Shaughnessy, SGA President, said having a food pantry has always been a primary goal for student government. With the help of Student Outreach and Support, the program can really take off.

“Because of this partnership, we’re now able to increase hours that we’re open, increase resources and accessibility for students who might need it,” Shaughnessy said. “Student Support can actually reach out to students and bring them in, give them the resources that they need.”

Shaughnessy said because of the revamp of the SGA food pantry, more YSU students are taking advantage of the program. Before the coronavirus pandemic, the pantry was previously located in a smaller space on the first floor of Kilcawley Center near Jamba Juice.

“Before it was a stop-in and shop kind of place, [and] there was a lot less concern about germs,” he said. “This year a lot of the students like the ease of just having to fill out an application and come grab it. There’s better advertising and more resources, so we’re seeing more students using it.”

Students can request canned food, non-perishables, drinks, toiletries and fresh produce for pick up through an online survey, available on SGA’s website under the resources tab.

“We are entirely donation-based. So, we get all of our food, water, hygiene supplies and stuff from donors,” Shaughnessy said. “We also have a fund at the YSU Foundation where people can donate monetary donations, online or in-person. Then we use that fund to buy shelving, food, paper towels

and different things like that.”

Students are assigned numbers to anonymously pick up their labeled groceries in Kilcawley Center. Student volunteers deliver groceries to any quarantined students on campus.

“If we can keep you at home and you don’t even have to worry about going out to Giant Eagle or Walmart — we can keep you there and bring the food to you, then we can help stop the spread on our campus,” Shaughnessy said.

Nicole Kent-Strollo, director of Student Outreach and Support, said the campus community needs resources now more than ever.

“When COVID-19 happened and all our students were suddenly off campus, including our Student Government Association, things obviously changed,” Kent-Strollo said. “But we also realized we had a lot of students on campus still.”

When businesses closed and people were laid off, students who remained on campus in the spring and summer struggled financially, Kent-Strollo said.

“All of a sudden we had students who were in need of food, but they didn’t have a means to get it,” she said. “With COVID, things like the Walmart shuttle [bus] shut down, so we had lots of situations where students were in need and we had to figure out how to help them.”

Online, students can make special requests for items not currently in the pantry’s inventory and note any dietary restrictions or allergies.

“We had a student who said they really wanted a certain type of spice, because that’s what they’d be buying at the grocery store right now,” Kent-Strollo said. “But now they couldn’t get it and it really reminded them of home.”

Susan Moorer, assistant director of Student Outreach and Support, said students are already using Penguin Pantry this semester.

“You never know when students are experiencing food



The Penguin Pantry’s shelves are stocked with hygiene products, as well as non-perishable food and drinks. For more information, visit Student Government Association’s website. Photo by Kelcey Norris/The Jambar

insecurity. We just had a big food giveaway or distribution last Thursday, and I was amazed at the number of students that actually came out,” Moorer said. “It was wonderful.”

Since she joined the department Aug. 10, Moorer was excited to see how Student Outreach and Support positively impacted students.

“There is a definite need... There’s no fee, of course, and everything is readily available for them. That’s what we’re here for,” Moorer said. “We want to assist our students.”