

WCU Resource Pantry Opens Its Doors



In late September, the Resource Pantry Advisory Council toured the pantry's new home in the Lawrence Center.

A small suite on the top floor of the Lawrence Center is now stocked with nonperishable food, notebooks and other school supplies, toiletries, dress clothes, winter coats, even pantyhose and socks. This is the WCU Resource Pantry, a partnership between the offices of Financial Aid and Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs that addresses the issues of food insecurity and limited resources faced by some WCU students.

There are at least 30 students on campus who don't have homes to return to during school breaks, instead relying on friends, distant relatives, WCU Residence Life or the WCU Foundation to provide housing. There are many other students who do have permanent homes but often find their budgets stretched thin due to a family emergency or because they're in-between paychecks.

These are the students that the WCU Resource Pantry began to serve in the fall semester, during a "soft launch" in which clients were served on an appointment basis. The pantry will be open regularly scheduled hours during the spring semester, said pantry co-founder Tori Nuccio, assistant director of financial aid. Jamie Williams, who was assistant director of service-learning and volunteer programs until a recent relocation, also was instrumental in launching the pantry.

The Resource Pantry had humble beginnings – under Nuccio's desk. "For several years, I had a box under my desk with shampoo, soap, healthy snacks, notebooks and pens – ready to go when the occasion arose," said Nuccio. "Often we will see a short-term need that can mean the difference between student success and failure," she added. "For example, a student might need a flash drive for a class project that's due tomorrow but they don't have the money to buy a drive until they get paid next Friday."

The box under Nuccio's desk expanded, and after more donations came in, including winter coats and interview suits, the pantry inventory was moved to temporary quarters in Commonwealth Hall last year. The new, permanent home of the WCU Resource Pantry opened in late September.

The Resource Pantry will work with several departments across campus to host financial literacy, life skills, and professional development workshops for students using the pantry. The Resource Pantry has received support from University Student Housing, the Chester County Food Bank,

Education Navigation, Act in Faith of Greater West Chester, and the Pennsylvania State Chapter of PEO.

If you know a student who would benefit from the Resource Pantry, contact resourcepantry@wcupa.edu. An intake appointment will help determine the student's needs and how the pantry can best assist. And contact this email address if you or your department would like to donate to the Resource Pantry.

“We are very appreciative of the support we have already received from the University community,” said Nuccio. “By contacting us first, we can avoid a situation where we receive, for example, many notebooks but no flash drives or pens. Our storage space is fairly limited so what is most needed and appreciated are gift cards and donations of cash.”

Monetary donations to the WCU Resource Pantry are tax-deductible.