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## U of L students tackle food insecurity on campus

Through the University of Lethbridge's Nourish initiative, student clubs have joined forces to decrease food insecurity on campus during March, which is Nutrition Month. With one in five students facing food scarcity, around 2,000 students sometimes run out of food and cannot afford to buy more.



The COVID-19 pandemic has prevented the University from running some of its regular Nourish programs, including Buy a Student Breakfast and Dinner for Six. This year, the PACT (Philanthropy, Advancement, Community and Traditions) club, the U of L Students' Union (ULSU), the Organization of Residence Students (ORS) and Agility have teamed up for the Swipe Out Hunger campaign.

Started by a group of friends at the University of California, Los Angeles in 2010, Swipe Out Hunger is a non-profit organization that partners with universities and colleges to address hunger and food insecurity among post-secondary students. The U of L is the first Canadian university to partner with the organization.

"I'm very proud of our students for banding together this year to address food insecurity on campus," says Dr. Mike Mahon, U of L president and vice-chancellor. "Under the umbrella of Nourish, we have launched several programs to combat hunger over the years, but this year has been particularly challenging due the pandemic and our students have faced limited employment opportunities to supplement their income. These student clubs have come up with some very creative ways to provide healthy food for our students and I encourage everyone to get involved in Swipe Out Hunger."

"Students used to grab breakfast together or have a snack in the library or meet in Urban Market," says Amy Lambert, a fifth-year student who's a member of the ULSU and PACT. "Food brought joy and connection. You meet and talk and nourish yourself, both mentally and physically. That hasn't been possible this year, but the need is still there. We wanted to partner

with our local community members and Umami has been great within our U of L community, and they teach you about the actual process of nourishing."

On Thursday, March 25, the student clubs have partnered with Umami Shop Canada to offer a basket of ingredients for Pad Thai (two to four servings), along with a Zoom cooking lesson to make the dish. The student clubs have secured funding for 175 baskets for students on a first-come, first-served basis and members will be helping pack the baskets in the days ahead of the cooking class.

They are also extending the offer to purchase a basket to anyone who'd like to participate. The baskets at $24.99 each plus GST can be ordered through Umami. Choose "Virtual Cooking Class" from the top menu and then click on the "Umami Pad Thai UofLxUmami" option to order a kit. Community members also have the option of adding a donation to support Nourish programs.

"Anyone who wants to support our U of L community is welcome to buy a basket," says Lambert. "We are asking community members to place their orders by March 22 at the latest."

In addition, the last two weeks of March will be devoted to increasing awareness of food insecurity on campus. Recipes from Dr. Angeliki Pantazi's nutrition class will be made available online on the Food for Thought website. Students in the class worked with each recipe to add nutrition or lower costs.

This project was made possible because of programs like Agility, which is completely funded by donors, that support creative student-led projects.

"We are extremely grateful to our donors for making it possible for our students to apply their education to real-world projects," says Brandy Old (BA/BEd '17), Agility manager. "They take risks and collaborate in innovative ways to bring real change and awareness to food scarcity."

This news release can be found online at Swipe Out Hunger.


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