

Penguins feeding Penguins



Cuisine professor Earl Frederick, student Michael Scheidt, and Baking professor Alison Dolder help distribute food to Clark College students through the Penguin Pantry's monthly curbside pickup. *Clark College/Susan Parrish*

Since the global pandemic began, Penguin Pantry—the college's on-campus food bank for students—has doubled the amount of food it distributes monthly. It typically has distributed one box of shelf-stable food and a loaf of bread donated by community partners. Now Clark College is partnering with its own instructional programs to increase the food support it provides to students.

In October, Clark's Cuisine and Professional Baking programs began donating food made in their lab classes to Penguin Pantry. This new partnership is a win-win for everyone. Students and their families are receiving nutritious, from-

scratch meals. Culinary students are getting hands-on experience at a time when the pandemic has closed the campus restaurant, food service, and bakery.

“We’re giving it away, since we still need the practice and our restaurant is still closed,” said Daryl Oest, Culinary support technician.

In the inaugural partnership event on October 27, Penguin Pantry distributed 108 food boxes to Clark students and their families during a seamless curbside pickup system in the Red Lot 3 roundabout. Each box contained a breakfast, lunch, and lasagna dinner.

Cuisine faculty member Robert Earl Frederick and his first-year students baked pans and pans of lasagna to provide 120 meals. Professional Baking department head Alison Dolder and baking students baked full-size pies. Additionally, students received a large box of nonperishable food and a loaf of bread.

Michael Scheidt, 20, a first-year cuisine student, maneuvered a wheeled cart laden with brown paper grocery bags containing a breakfast, lunch and dinner toward the curb outside Penguin Union Building.

“It feels really good to give back to the community,” he said. “We’ve all had hard times.”



Clark College Director of Student Life Sarah Gruhler gets ready to distribute food at a curbside pickup. *Clark College/Susan Parrish*

During remote operations, Penguin Pantry has set aside one day a month to distribute food boxes. Students sign up in advance to secure a time slot to pick up the food in the parking lot. Those with dietary restrictions can request vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, dairy-free, or pescatarian items.

A student who drove up to the curb was assisted by Sharon Toliver, Security & Safety Services; Samantha Lelo, Student Life Program Support Supervisor; and Lauren Boys, ASCC Civics and Sustainability Director. They checked the student's name against a list and loaded food into the trunk. Sarah Gruhler, Director of Student Life, supervised the distribution and ensured all ran smoothly.

Afterward Gruhler said, "The distribution went very smoothly. The students were so excited about the additional food. We've

already had 22 returning students sign up for November's distribution."

Frederick added, "We are all looking forward to continuing this partnership in the long run."

And in fact, while October's distribution event was impressive, it was just a dress rehearsal for the big event: Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving dinner

November's Penguin Pantry curbside distribution during Thanksgiving week will be a full, cooked Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings.

"We have plans for Thanksgiving to make sure our students are well taken care of during this tough time," said Oest.

Frederick anticipates roasting 20 turkeys to prepare 150 Thanksgiving meals for students and their families. Dolder says baking students will contribute pies—not only tradition pumpkin, but also apple, marionberry, cherry, and pecan—as well as dinner rolls and a morning treat.

Dolder estimates it will take her baking students two weeks of class hours to make individual pies to feed 150 people. The job will be broken down into smaller tasks: making and freezing the dough, making the pie filling, rolling out pie crusts, and shaping them into disposable pie tins. Eventually, the pies will be assembled, baked, and then frozen again. When students pick up their Thanksgiving food boxes, their pies—and the entire cooked Thanksgiving dinner—will be frozen.

"It's easier for us to serve frozen pies," Dolder says. "And we have a ton of freezer space."

Frederick adds, "It's safer to distribute frozen food."

With COVID, a greater need

Last spring, COVID prevented the on-campus Penguin Pantry from opening for walk-in visitors. Beginning in May, the Penguin Pantry began a monthly curbside food distribution following COVID safety protocols. In May, the pantry distributed 1,125 pounds of food to 165 people in 40 households.

As the pandemic has continued and many students and their families have lost their jobs in the subsequent recession, the number of students requesting food assistance continues to grow steadily. In September the pantry distributed 2,500 pounds to 305 students and their families. That's more than double the amount from May.

Month	People	Households	Pounds of Food
May	165	40	1125
June	177	38	1058
July	207	56	1430
August	263	79	1962
September	305	107	2568

As a partner with Clark County Food Bank, Penguin Pantry must carefully track its numbers and report them to the food bank.

The college has reached out to students to make sure students know about this resource—sharing information about it in online classes, on social media, and through a new text-message service the college has invested in.

“We’ve definitely seen an increase in the number of students requesting food,” says Gruhler. “Since we’ve been able to text students, there’s greater awareness of Penguin Pantry.”

Culinary school during COVID



Cuisine faculty and students prepare lasagne dinners to be given to students through the Penguin Pantry. *Clark College/Kelly Love*

Cuisine and baking students have continued their studies during the pandemic. They are able to meet in the kitchens for in-person lab classes using face coverings, social distancing, and daily temperature checks—all of which is becoming part of their career preparation. Their industry is changing rapidly because of COVID-19 restrictions.

“The industry will change,” said Oest. “We can’t see the crystal ball yet but whether it’s startups, more corporate food service, smaller restaurants, there will be food services moving forward. There will still be the need. These students have learned best safe practices for the post-COVID workplace.”

How to help

Penguin Pantry will distribute Thanksgiving dinner to students on Tuesday, November 24. If you'd like to donate toward Penguin Pantry, a \$30 donation will provide a family of four with a homemade Thanksgiving dinner and dessert.

Ways to donate and helpful links:

- Online: Give online with Clark College Foundation's online giving form and choose 'Penguin Pantry' from the drop-down menu under "Select an Area of Support." In the comments box, note "Thanksgiving dinner."
- By mail: Mail your check/money order to: Clark College, Attn: Cashier's Office (PUB 153), 1933 Ft. Vancouver Way. Make the check out to "Clark College" and write "Penguin Pantry" in the comments area.
- Via phone: Call 360-992-2571 on Tuesday or Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- Visit www.clark.edu/cc/penguin-pantry to learn more about how to donate to or receive support from the Penguin Pantry.