

Food pantries aid struggling students

■ **UNCG, Guilford College assist those who find themselves homeless and hungry.**

By JONNELLE DAVIS
Staff Writer

GREENSBORO — UNCG junior Lindsey McCoun was having financial problems last year and couldn't turn to her parents, who are homeless and live in a shelter.

So McCoun turned to her campus family for help.

McCoun found out about the campus food pantry, where she got two boxes of food that lasted her a month.

"I know the Lord would have provided for me, but

I have no idea how," McCoun said.

The UNCG food pantry, operated by Wesley-Luther Campus Ministries, provides food for struggling students.

Some, like McCoun, have parents who are homeless. Other students are homeless themselves. Still others might have fallen short of money because of unforeseen circumstances.

"We have everything from freshmen to older students to wives of veterans to single mothers with kids to traditional students that just budgeted really badly," said Andrew Mails, director of Wesley-Luther, part of UNCG's Associated Campus Ministries.

For about three years, Mails operated the pantry



Andrew Mails, director of Wesley-Luther Campus Ministries, runs the Spartan Open Pantry. Mails said the pantry distributes donated food items to UNCG students and their families in need.

NELSON KEPLEY
News & Record

informally using a closet in his office.

"We needed a home," Mails said. "We didn't have enough space, and there was no way to really do

distributions from there."

But this semester, Mails partnered with College Place United Methodist Church on Tate Street, which offered the stage of

its fellowship hall as pantry space. The church also donated money for racks to store the food.

"It wasn't really, 'Can we do this?'" said Jason

Harvey, pastor of College Place. "It was, 'How are we going to do this?'"

Faculty and staff members donate much of the food. They hold weekly food drives. Mails and volunteers pick up, sort and restock the pantry.

On a recent Thursday afternoon, they carried boxes of goods into the fellowship hall, where they sorted them onto the appropriate shelves: pastas and soups, canned meats, fruits and beans.

Food pantries are another example of how colleges are stepping up to help students during times of lingering economic uncertainty.

Students and their fami-

Nanotech meeting is coming to Triad

WINSTON-SALEM — For the first time, the Nanotech Commercialization Conference will be held in Winston-Salem.

The conference, which is in its fifth year, is aimed at spurring more research and business collaboration. It will be held April 9-10 at Wake Forest BioTech Place.

It is expected to attract more than 250 people and more than 50 speakers, of which there will be a significant Triad representation.

Nanobiotechnology is the science of developing

Food

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lies in recent years have grappled with rising tuition costs and dwindling financial aid dollars, making it harder for students to achieve their educational goals.

"It's tough right now on everybody," Mails said.

Guilford College opened a food pantry in September after hearing similar tales of struggles from its adult students. The pantry has received donations from faculty and staff members and local farmers, said Chelsey Wilson, a senior at Guilford College who works with the pantry. She said pantry volunteers try to provide students a week's worth of food.

"These are our fellow classmates that we're sitting beside," Wilson said. "Why not help them out?"

At UNCG, the pantry is just one part of what the

WANT TO HELP?

Donations for the UNCG food pantry can be dropped off from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Associated Campus Ministries. The building is on the corner of Stirling Street and Walker Avenue.

Monetary donations can be mailed to Wesley-Luther, ACM Center at UNCG, 500 Stirling St., Greensboro, N.C. 27402. Write "Students in Need Fund" in the memo line.

For more information, call 334-5119 or visit www.wesleyluther.org.

university is doing to address the personal needs of its students. The dean of students office has always worked with students in this way but is taking the job a step further, said Laura Andrews, assistant dean of students.

There is a coordinated effort on campus to identify homeless students and

others who might be falling through the cracks because of personal issues.

"We see students who are, maybe, living out of their cars, who are sleeping at night in their cars somewhere around campus," Andrews said. "They have nowhere else to go."

Others, Andrews said, are barely getting by and need food. Her office refers students to Mails and the pantry.

For those students reluctant to ask for help, Andrews said the dean's office has an online referral form where faculty members and others can alert the office about students they think need help.

McCoun said she didn't hesitate to visit the pantry for food when she needed it.

"They have it to bless others," said McCoun, who has donated food to the pantry twice this semester.

Mails said he hopes the pantry will outlast the

economy's troubles.

"Even when the economy is good, things still happen and people still hurt," he said. "So I hope this is something that good economy, bad economy,

people still take ownership of and make sure is available."

Contact Jonnelle Davis at 373-7080 or jonnelle.davis@news-record.com

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