



Sustainability

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Illuminating UNH Dining's sustainable practices to reduce food waste and eliminate food insecurity throughout our community

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 02, 2022

by Cassie Hollasch '22 | *English, Writing and Business Administration*

Rochelle L'Italien is a member of the Nutrition and Sustainability committee here at



UNH and has been integral to fighting food insecurity. A major goal has been to reallocate UNH's excess food so that the University wastes as little as possible. In April 2021, UNH collaborated with [Gather](#) (a local non-profit food pantry) to address the issue of excess food.

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Unfortunately, there are many factors that contribute to the overproduction of food in the dining hall, such as weather affecting student attendance, unexpected leftovers from one meal to the next, etc.

The [Food Repurposing](#) project is a collaboration, including [COLSA](#) (College of Life Sciences & Agriculture), [ANFS](#) (Agriculture, Nutrition, and Food Systems), [Hospitality Services](#) and Gather. Rochelle emphasizes that this collaboration, “represents a unique and timely opportunity to advance the mission of UNH, embrace and advance University priorities while simultaneously leveraging the expertise and outreach capacity of the Gather food pantry.”

The project takes advantage of underutilized kitchen space in Barton Hall. Volunteers from COLSA, Dining Services and Gather meet weekly to prepare meals with help from creative Gather head chef, Emily Gaddis. Most of the food is rescued from local grocery stores, the dining halls, UNH catering, and campus gardens. The repurposed meals are put in compostable containers and transported to Gather's Portsmouth location and then distributed to their mobile market. During the program's pilot phase, launched in April 2021, the team produced 200-300 meals per week.

In another innovative project, UNH has recently opened a food pantry called [Cats' Cupboard](#) for UNH students in need and a portion of these repurposed meals will be a part of the offerings along with other canned and dry goods. The food pantry is located in the MUB, room 140A and is open on Tuesdays 5-8pm and Fridays 10am-5pm, no appointments needed. Emma Owens (French, Sociology) '24 has been working diligently on ensuring the food pantry runs smoothly as one of their Student Supervisors. She states, “I look forward to working with more volunteers and students alike on campus as we continue to grow as a service!”

To find out more about UNH Dining's sustainable efforts, check out their [website](#).

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