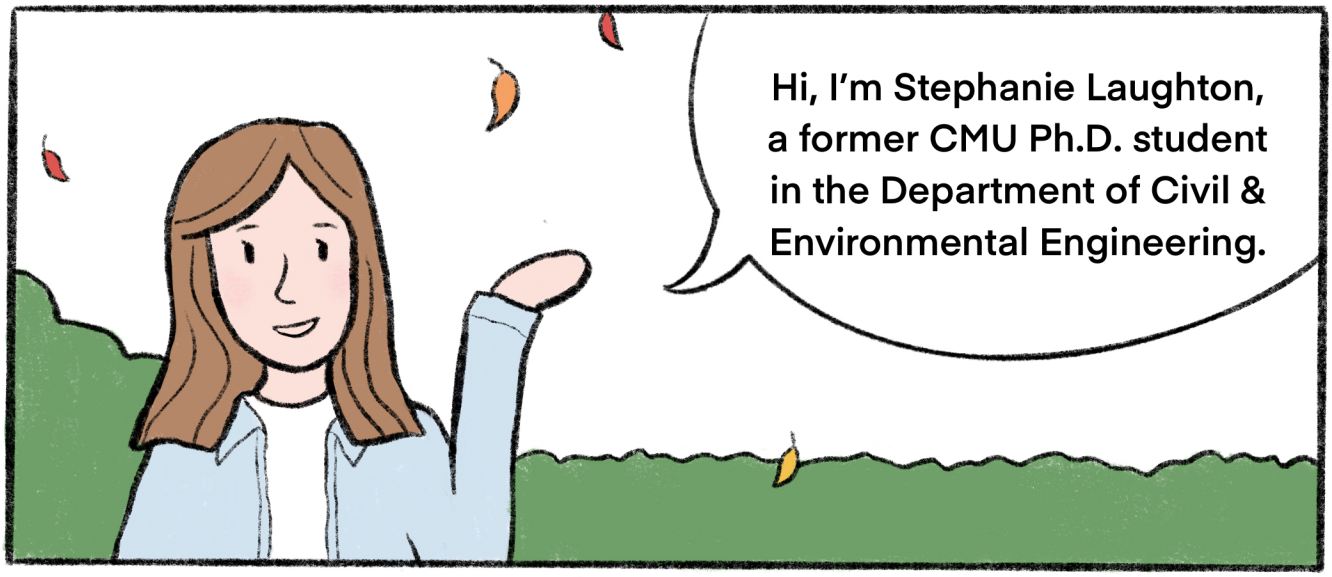
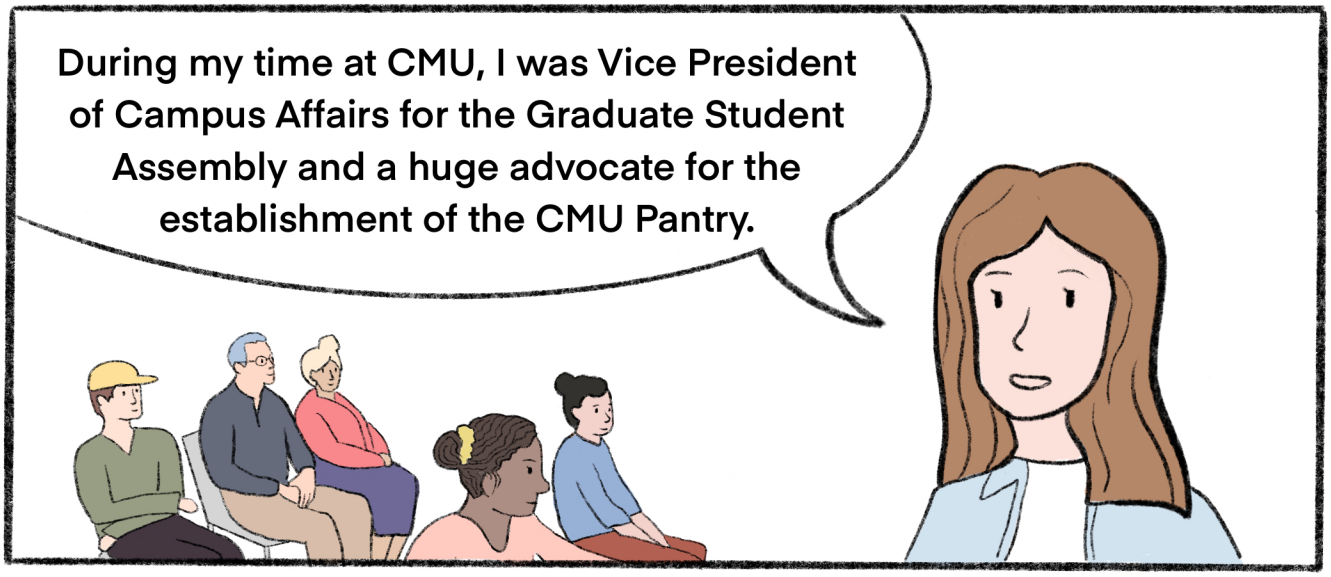
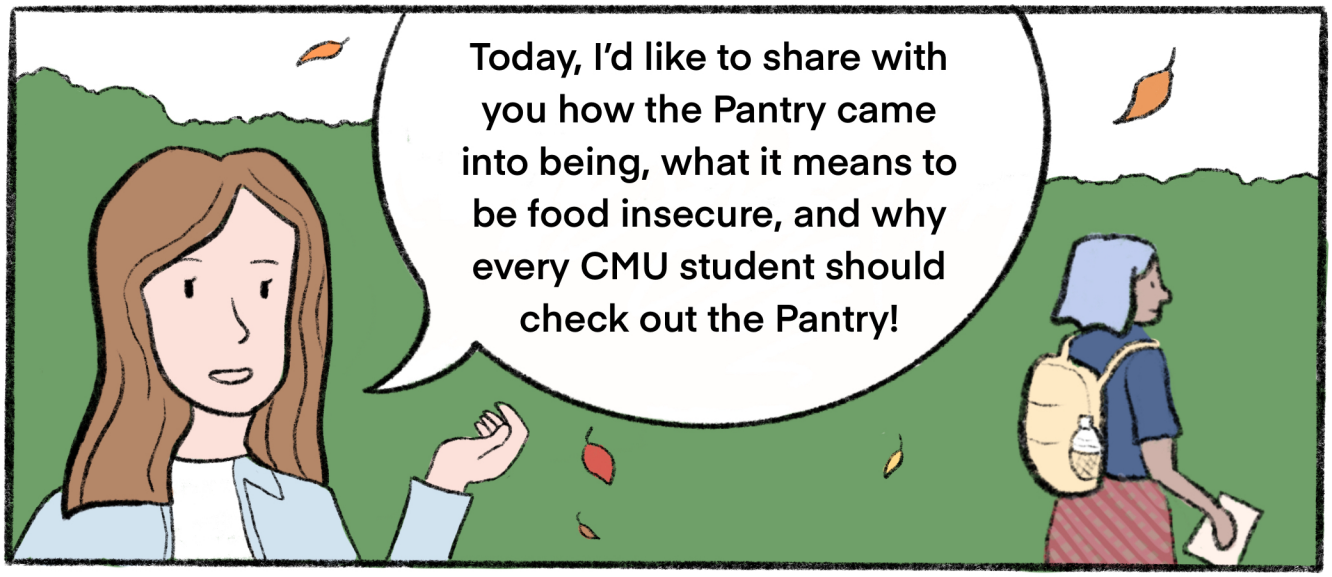
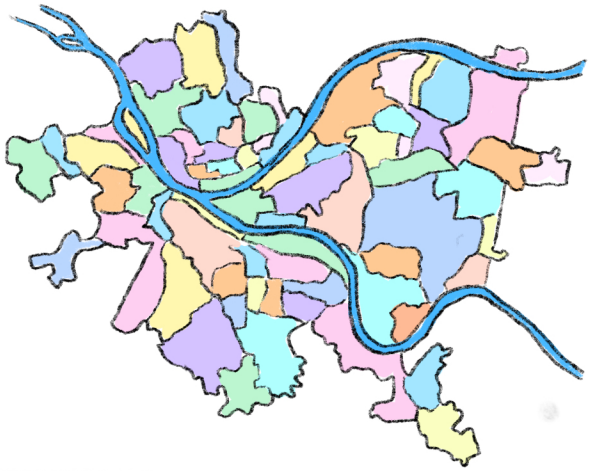

Hi, I'm Stephanie Laughton, a former CMU Ph.D. student in the Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering.


During my time at CMU, I was Vice President of Campus Affairs for the Graduate Student Assembly and a huge advocate for the establishment of the CMU Pantry.

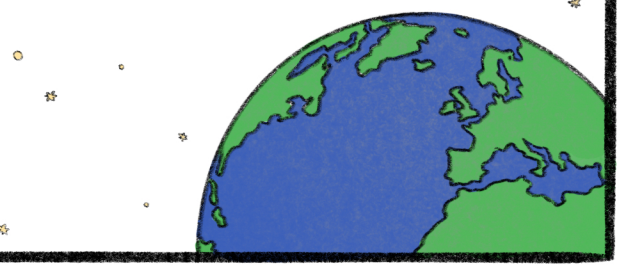

Today, I'd like to share with you how the Pantry came into being, what it means to be food insecure, and why every CMU student should check out the Pantry!

In 2017, The Campus Cupboard Study commissioned by the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank examined food insecurity among students at 11 institutions of higher education in the greater Pittsburgh area, including CMU.



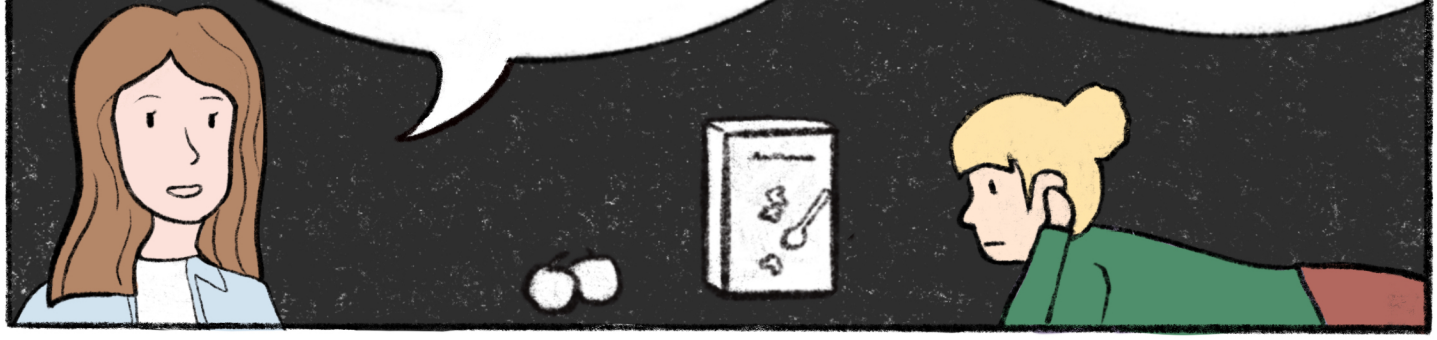
The findings showed that, at CMU, 19% of students experienced moderate (11%) to high (8%) food insecurity; another 19% of students could be classified as 'at-risk' of becoming food insecure.

That meant that almost 40% of all CMU students faced varying degrees of food insecurity, affecting in particular international and master's level students.



No one had expected that at an affluent university like CMU the number of food-insecure students would be so high.

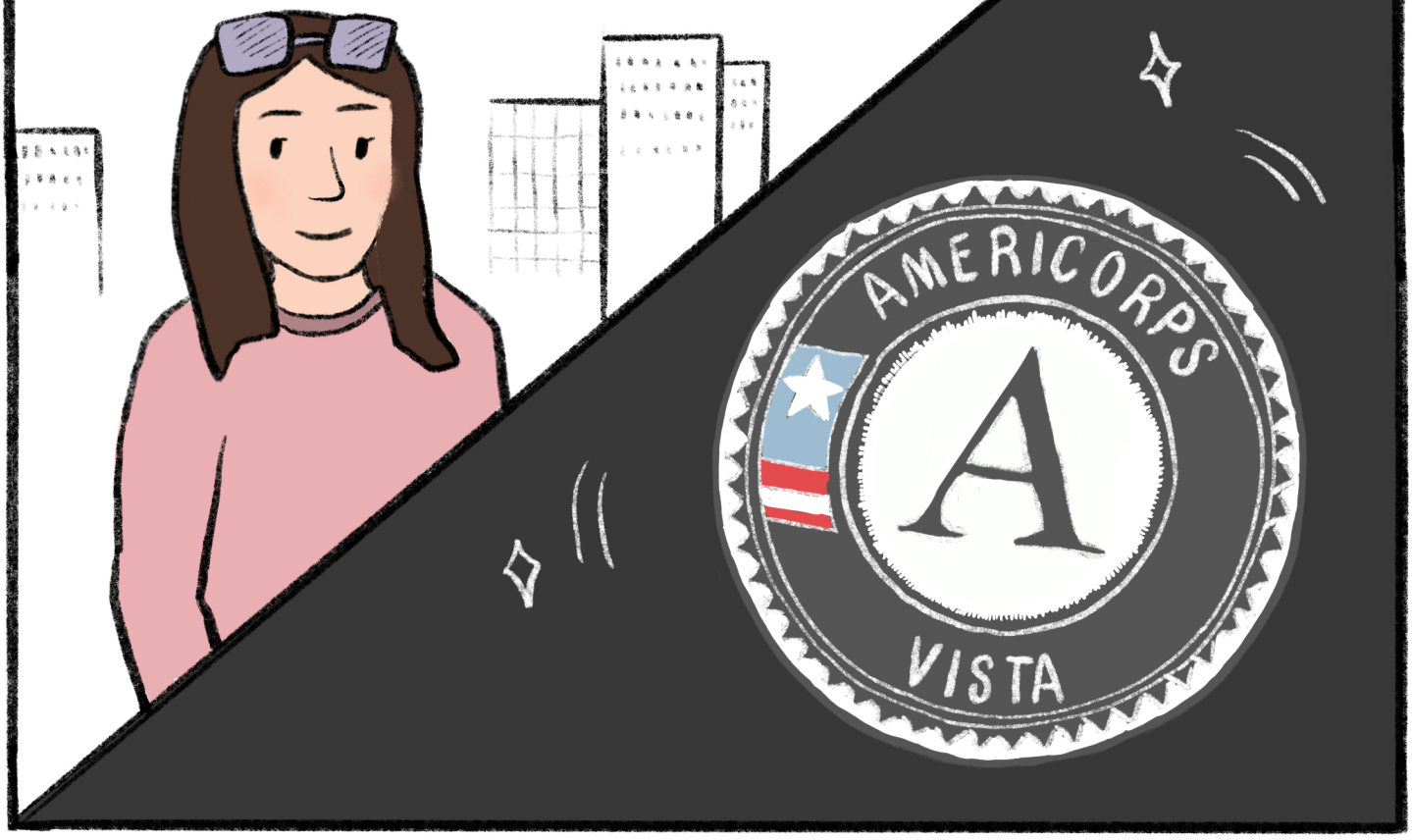
It quickly became apparent that action needed to be taken to remedy the problem.



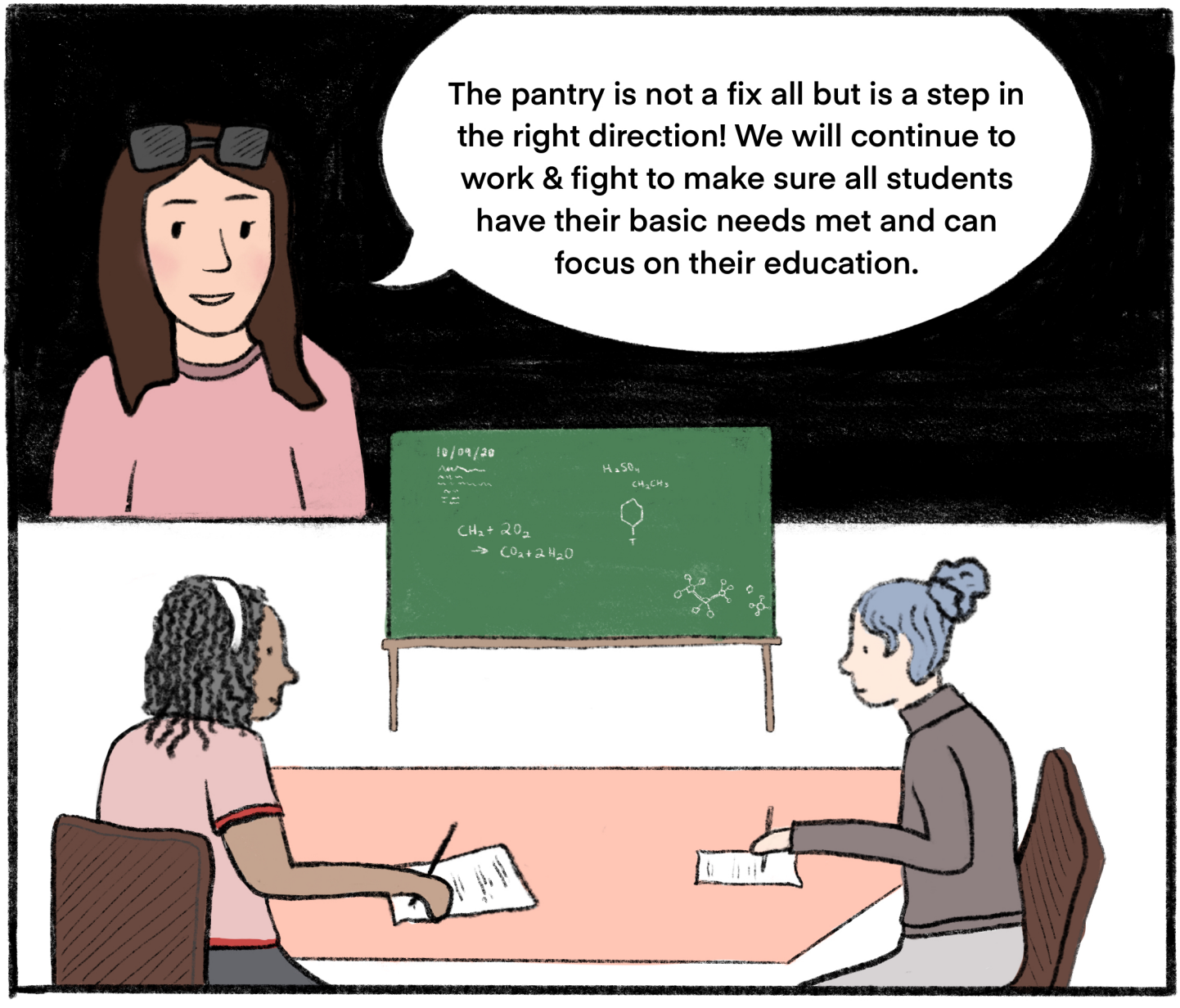
In Fall 2017, the Graduate Student Assembly created the Basic Needs Working Group, a coalition of undergraduate and graduate students.

The group discussed several initiatives that could combat the study's alarming findings. Sarah Pesi was its inaugural chair.

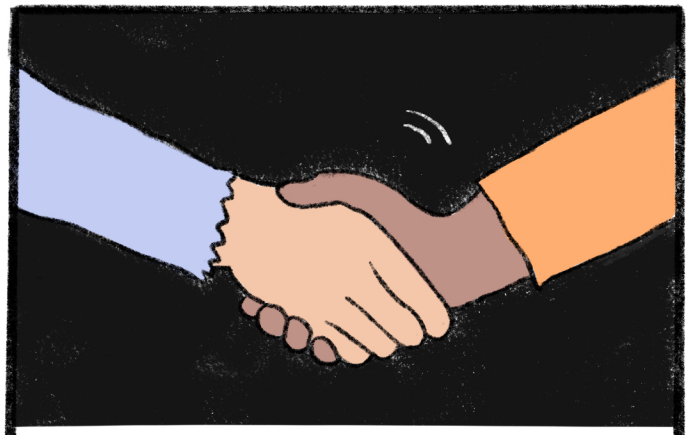
Sarah was a great asset to the group, since she had managed the University of Pittsburgh food pantry as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer and gained quite a bit of experience from her job there.



The Basic Needs Working Group is working tirelessly to address institutional and systemic changes to address all basic needs including food insecurity!


The pantry is not a fix all but is a step in the right direction! We will continue to work & fight to make sure all students have their basic needs met and can focus on their education.
10/09/20
H_2SO_4
CH_2CH_3
$CH_4 + 2O_2 \rightarrow CO_2 + 2H_2O$

That same year, the Food Insecurity Committee was made under Liz Vaughan consisting of staff, faculty and students.



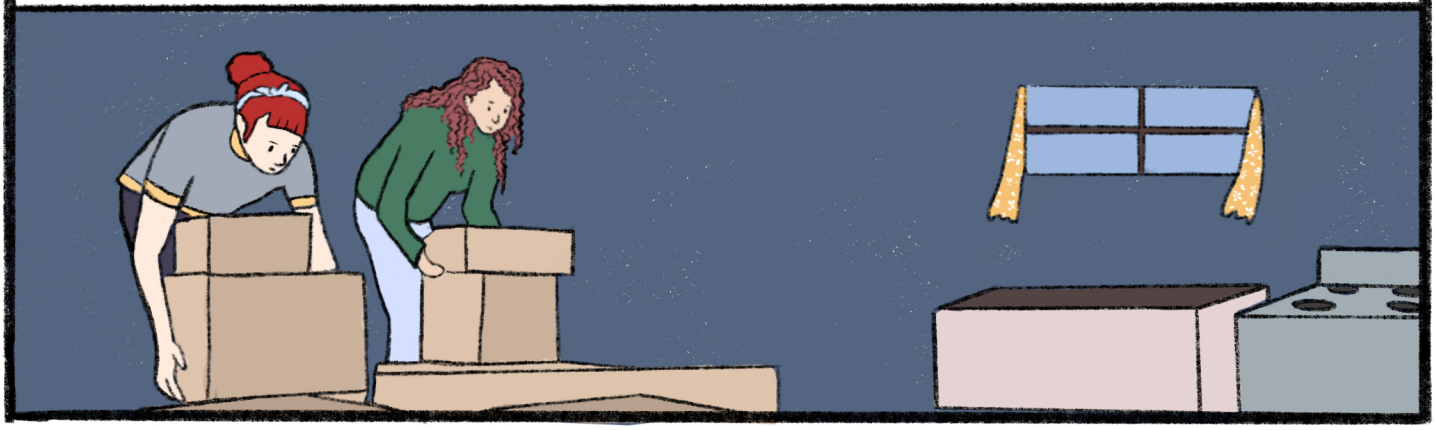
Both groups discussed the dire state at CMU and submitted a joint proposal to the CMU administration.

Among other recommendations, it advocated for the establishment of an on-campus food pantry to reduce food insecurity for the campus community.

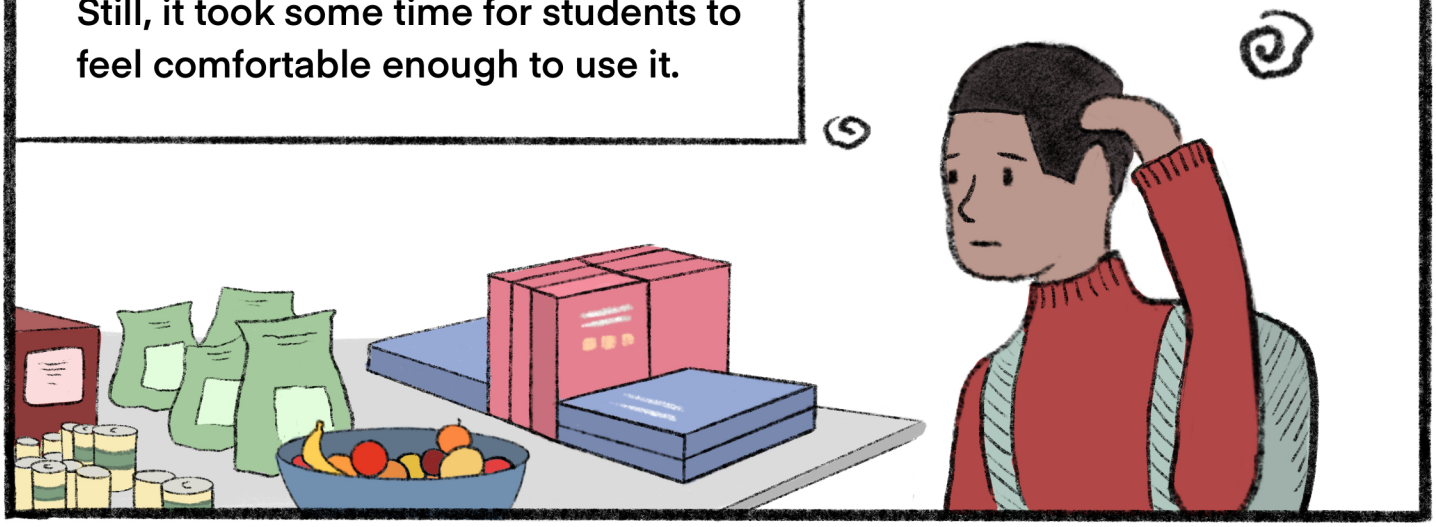
Doing civic engagement work at Carnegie Mellon isn't a job for me. It's a passion, a privilege, and a calling.

Liz Vaughan, Associate Dean of Student Affairs
& Director of Student Leadership, Involvement, and Civic Engagement.

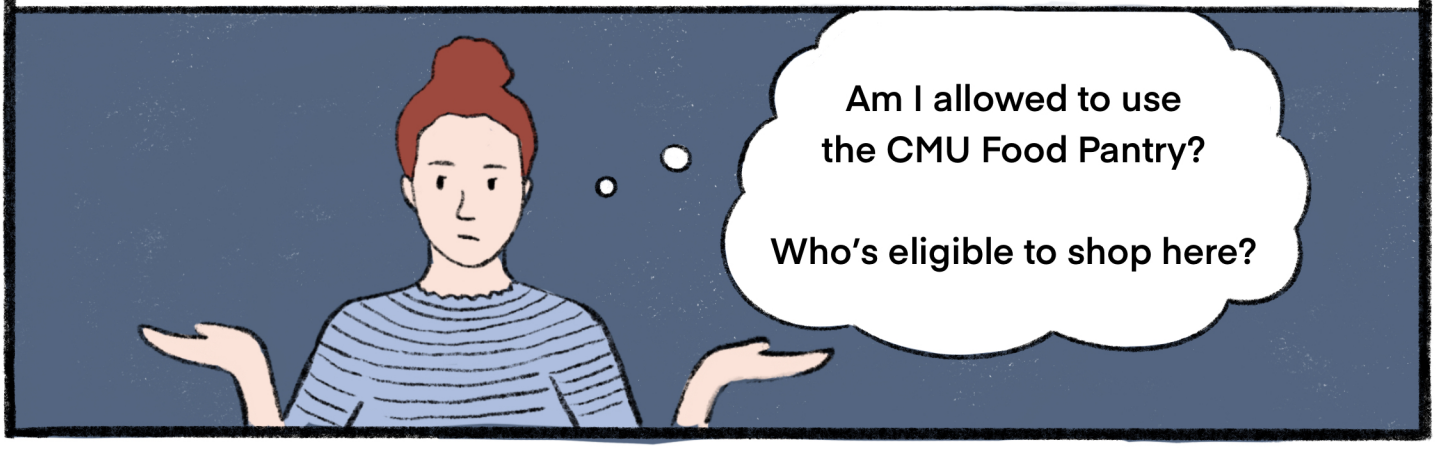
On November 9, 2018, the Pantry opened its doors for the first time on the first floor of the Residence on Fifth in a former industrial kitchen.



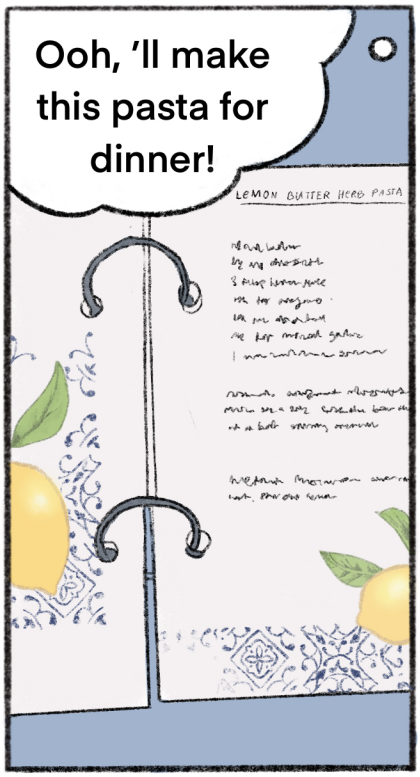
Still, it took some time for students to feel comfortable enough to use it.

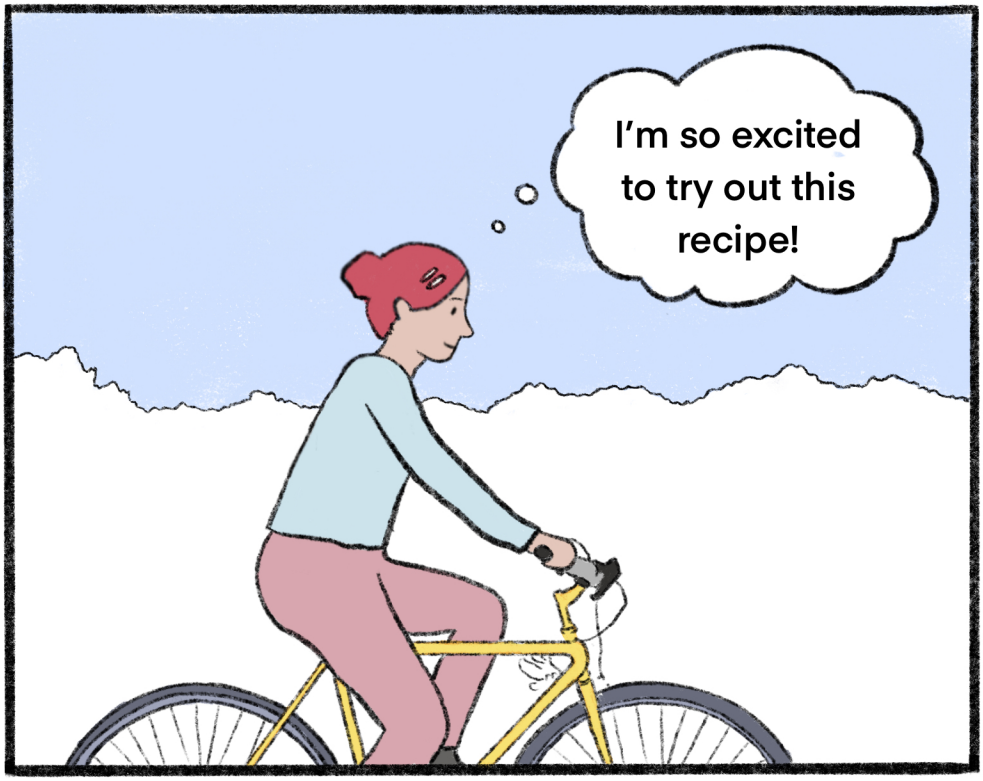


Even though the mission of the CMU Pantry was to combat food insecurity, not everyone was familiar with the term.



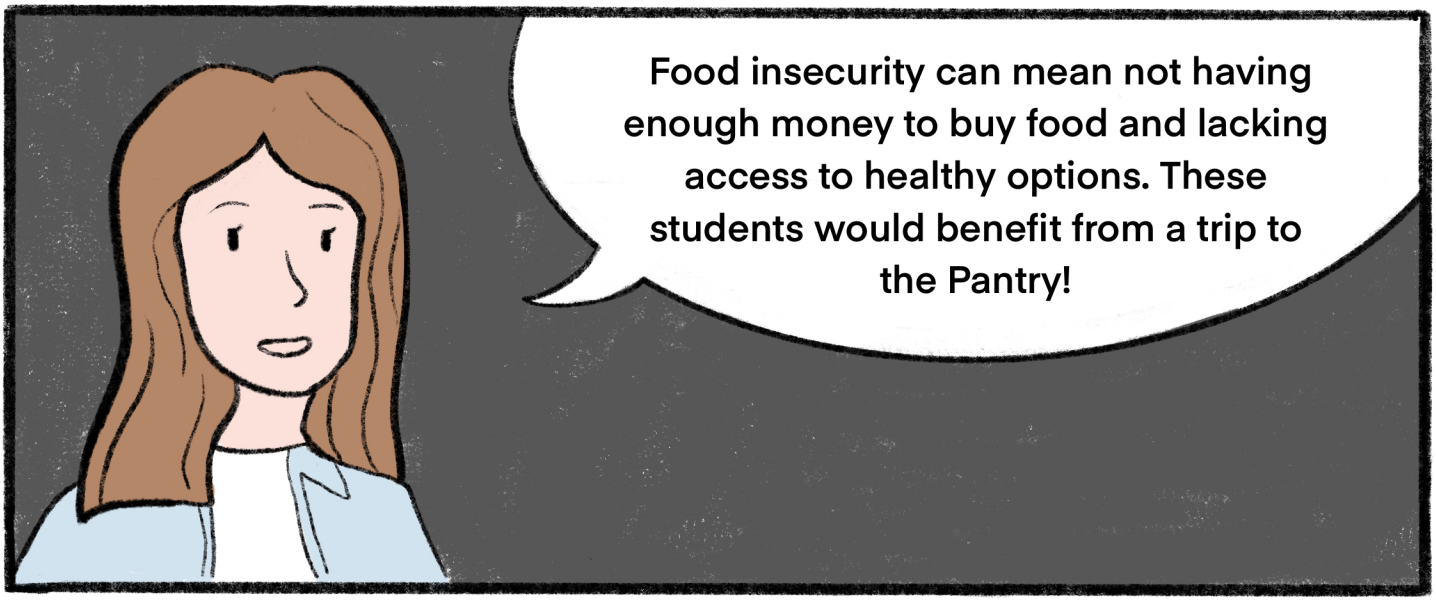
Phew, my final projects and tests are *finally* done...
Ugh, I'm so hungry.
I guess I forgot to buy groceries... What am I gonna do now?

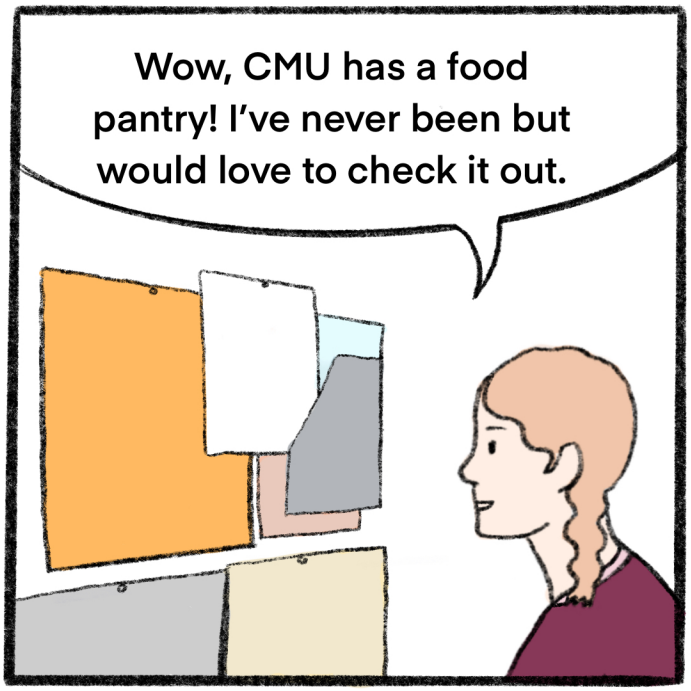

Ooh, 'll make this pasta for dinner!
LEMON BUTTER HERB PASTA


I'm so excited to try out this recipe!

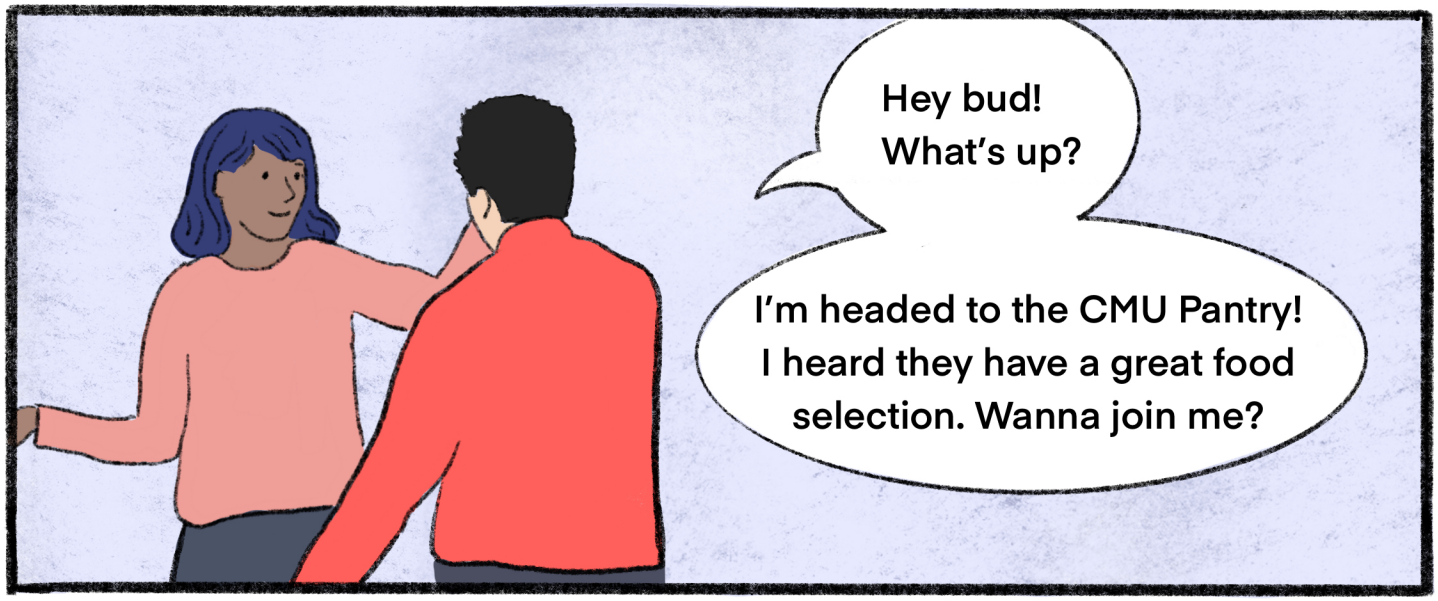
Oh man, these ingredients are expensive... I can't afford them all.

I wish I could make that pasta, but all I can afford right now is instant soup...


Food insecurity can mean not having enough money to buy food and lacking access to healthy options. These students would benefit from a trip to the Pantry!

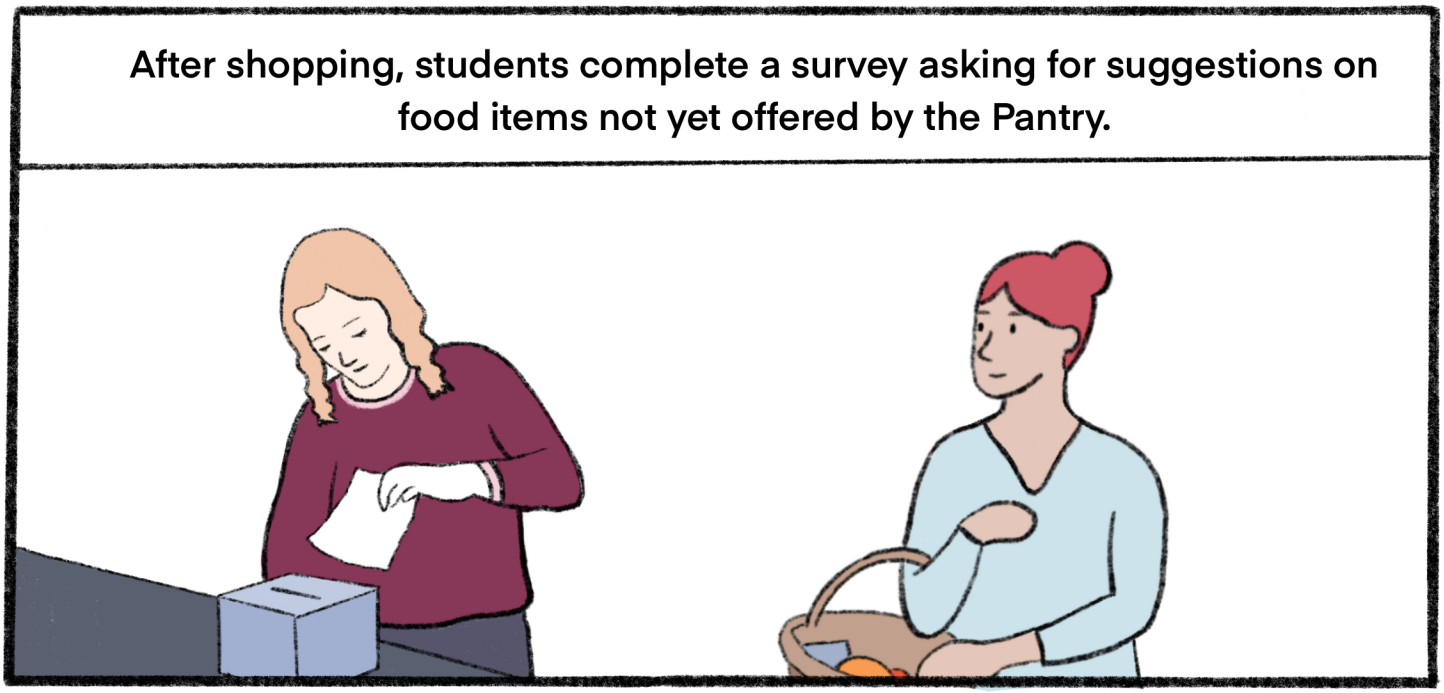

Wow, CMU has a food pantry! I've never been but would love to check it out.

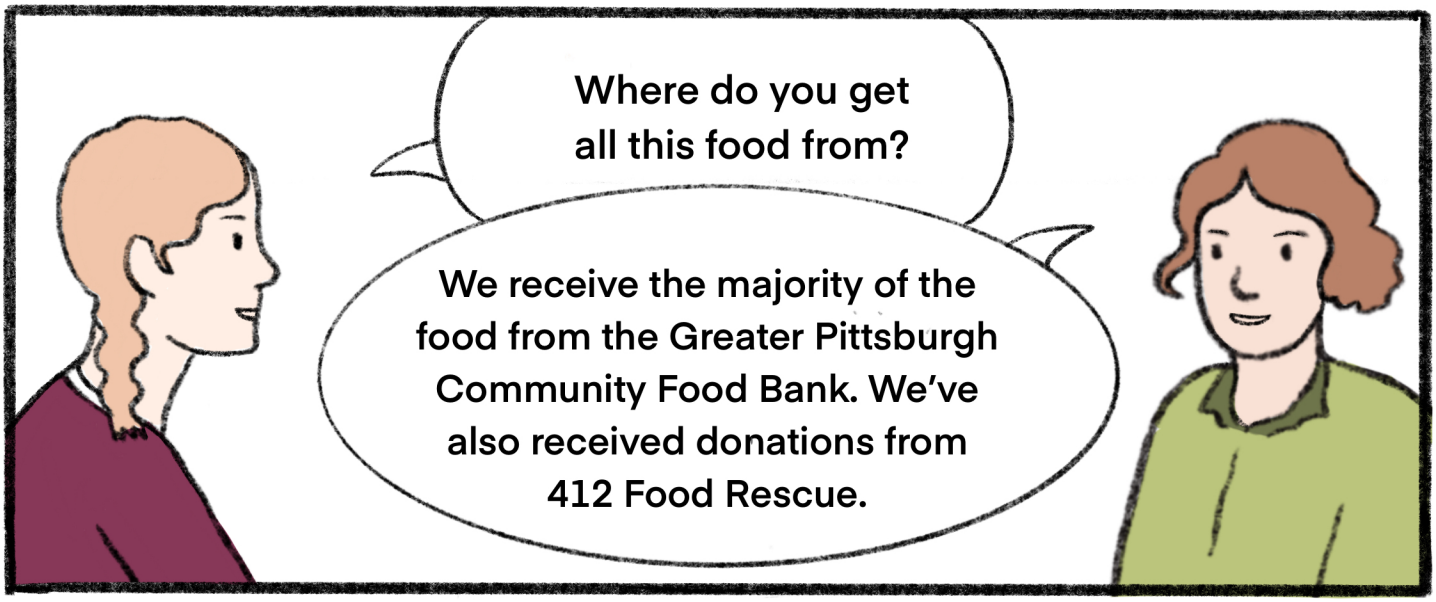
The CMU Food Pantry!
CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY
PANTRY

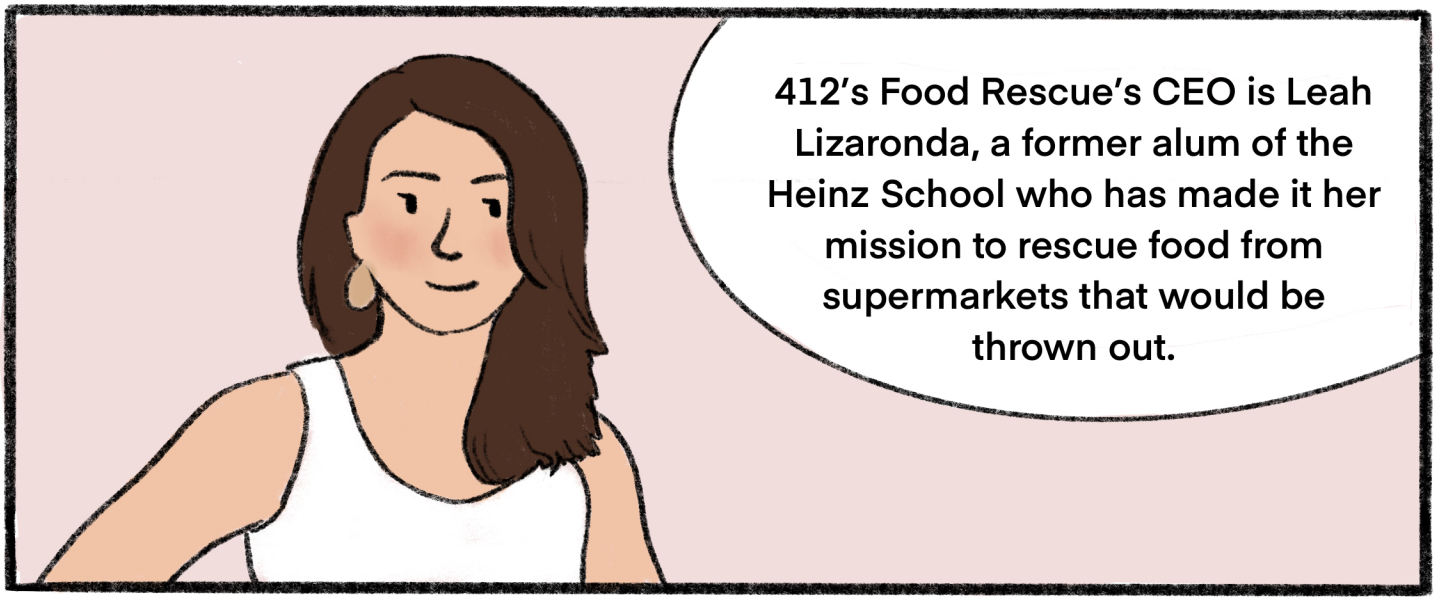

Hey bud! What's up?
I'm headed to the CMU Pantry! I heard they have a great food selection. Wanna join me?

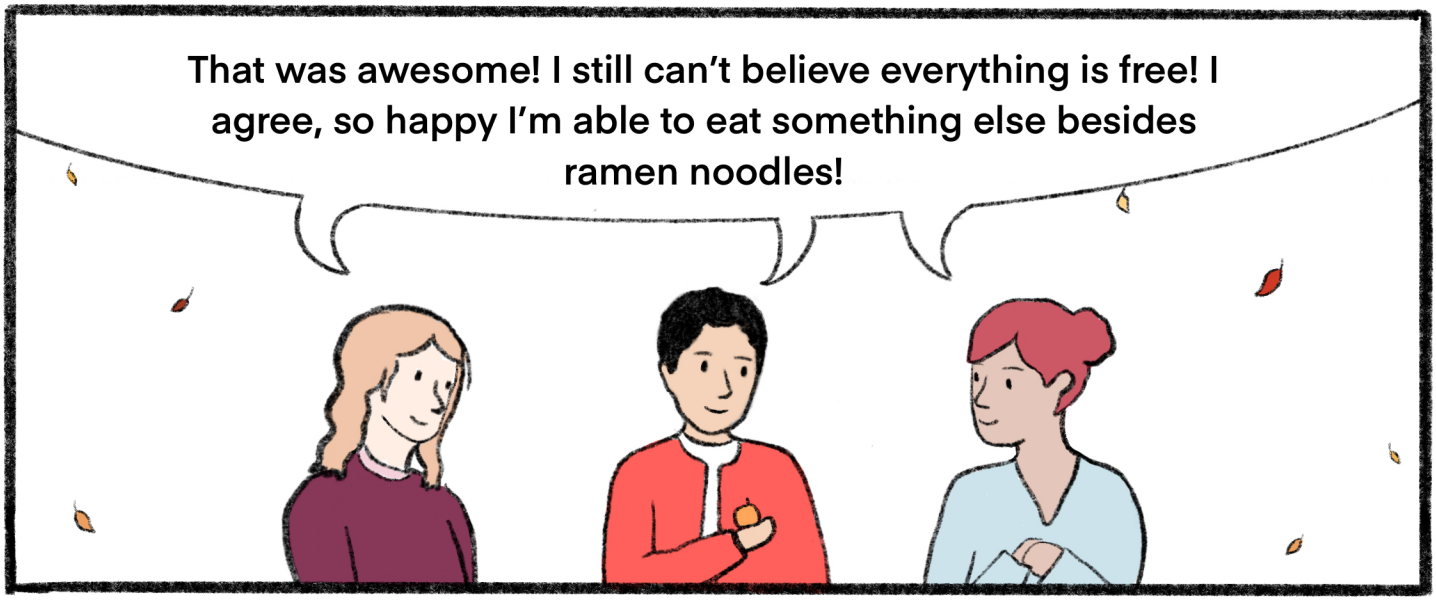
After completing an initial intake form so the Pantry knows who they're serving, the students shop!

How often can you shop here?
Every other week! We're "need blind," which means as long as you're a student at CMU, you're welcome to shop here.

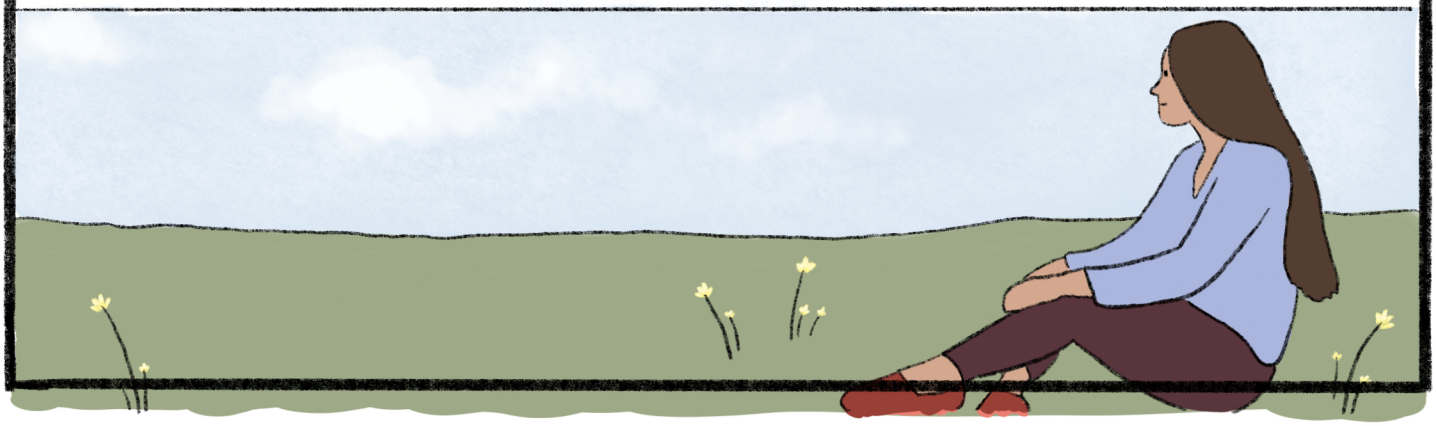

After shopping, students complete a survey asking for suggestions on food items not yet offered by the Pantry.


Where do you get all this food from?
We receive the majority of the food from the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. We've also received donations from 412 Food Rescue.

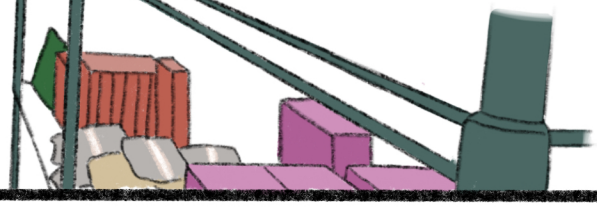

412's Food Rescue's CEO is Leah Lizaronda, a former alum of the Heinz School who has made it her mission to rescue food from supermarkets that would be thrown out.

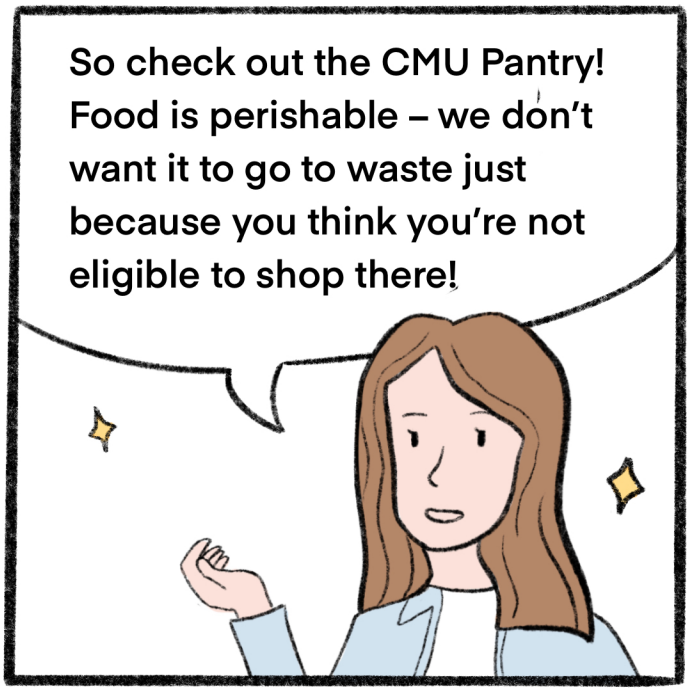

That was awesome! I still can't believe everything is free! I agree, so happy I'm able to eat something else besides ramen noodles!

It'd be great if all universities had food pantries... According to the College and University Food Bank Alliance, about 30% of college students are food insecure.



Luckily, over 640 colleges and universities around the U.S. operate food pantries – and more are being established every year!



With the resources CMU has to offer, no one should go hungry. And it's tough to be a successful student when your stomach is empty!

So check out the CMU Pantry! Food is perishable – we don't want it to go to waste just because you think you're not eligible to shop there!