

Healthy Living

Gettysburg College effort keeps food from going to waste

BY DICK WATSON
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How many times, as kids and teens, have we been told by Mom not to waste food?

Mom knew what she was talking about.

Americans, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, waste 30 million tons of food a year.

In Gettysburg over the past three school years, 20,000 pounds of food that would have been thrown away was saved.

The perfectly good, unused food was rescued by Gettysburg College students who, in turn, prepared and distributed 10,000 meals for those in need.

Campus Kitchen is a national volunteer program currently in use at 27 colleges in 17 states. When the program started at Gettysburg College in 2007, it was — and still is — the first of its kind in Pennsylvania.

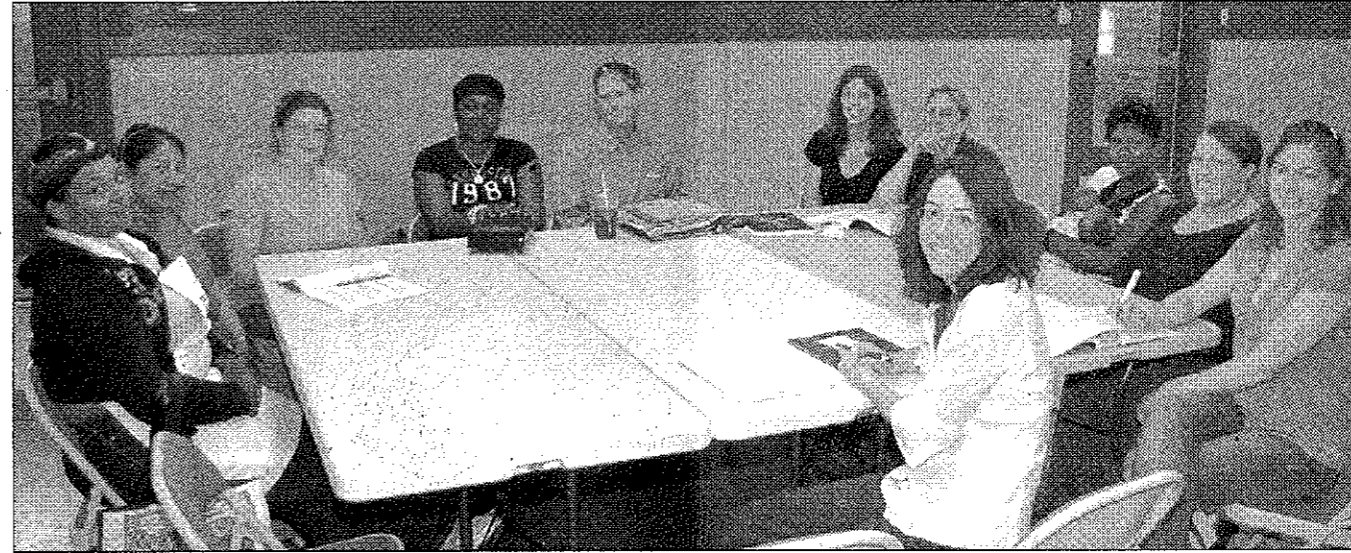
Its beginning is credited to Louisa Polos '08 after spending four days in Washington, D.C., working in a homeless shelter kitchen.

In operation, college volunteers rescue unused food from local donors, such as Kennies Market, the Farmers Market, fruit orchards, Tech Prep Culinary, Biggerstaff Catering at GAHS, Sheetz in Littlestown and others.

Meals are then prepared at the SCCAP kitchen and packaged in nutritious meals that are delivered to local partner agencies.

On a weekly basis, meals are served to children and families at the Wee Care Center.

Inter-generational evenings of food and entertainment with students and senior citizens take place weekly at the Gettysburg Senior Center. And meals are delivered three times a week to individual homes.



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Circle family members, community supporters, Campus Kitchen and Center for Public Service leaders gather at weekly meetings to discuss and identify systemic causes of poverty. Clockwise from left, are Keyonna Walker, Nereida Simon, Patti Marien, Tonya Mincey, Cara Russo, Hanna Kane, Carrie Small, Tammy Felton, Darlene Stancil, Kim Davidson and Circles Coordinator Emily Rice-Townsend.

An impressive list of accomplishments

Over the past three school years, Gettysburg College students who have participated in the Campus Kitchen program have:

- * spent 2,142 volunteer hours making meals for those less fortunate.

- * gleaned 805 pounds of apples during the Family Weekend last year.

- * served nearly 900 meals

per month in 2009, up from 186 in 2008.

- * driven more than 3,100 miles collecting food donations from as many as 30 restaurants, businesses, the college dining room and individuals.

- * collected and donated 46 turkeys for Thanksgiving 2009.

Through LIU#12, meals are also delivered weekly to 20 migrant families. In addition, students and families gather to celebrate bilingual dinners on special holidays.

"Campus Kitchen started three years ago with just one cooking shift a week; fewer than 300 meals were served every month," said Kim Davidson, associate director of the Center for Public Service at the college. "We now have three shifts a week and serve 800 meals a month."

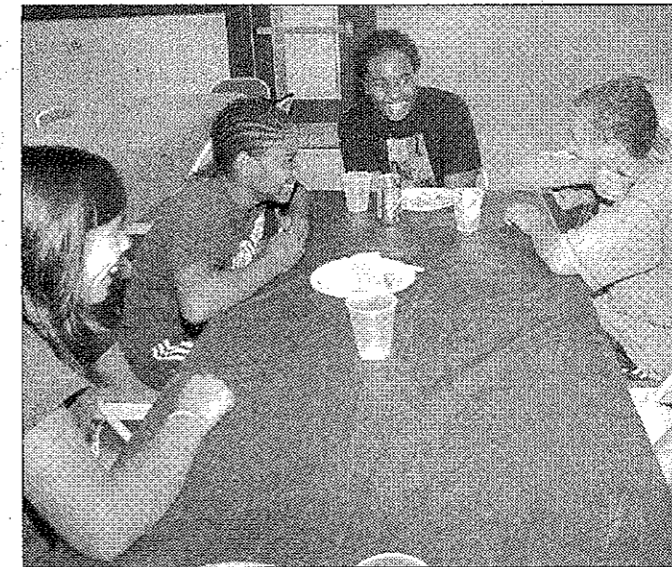
Each one of the shifts is

supervised by a senior coordinator who works about nine hours a week.

When coordinators Megan Crowe, Melissa Arsenic and Cassie Sanford graduated this month, Carter McClintock '12 and Devan Grote '11 took over coordinating the volunteer program full-time for the summer.

Davidson pointed out that access to fresh, healthy food poses a significant challenge for more than 30 percent of families in Adams County.

"Campus Kitchen has had a major impact on the health of



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While their parents meet with community members and Campus Kitchen leaders, teenagers, from left, Monica Ramirez, Daja Mincey, Marcus Mincey and Isaiah Stancil linger after dinner at the Wee Care Center before going off to play.

our community," she said.

As important as the food aspects of the program are, Campus Kitchen volunteers also spend time educating stu-

dents and community members about nutrition. Three programs have been developed.

Green Goodies is a six week

hands-on Lincoln Elementary Afterschool program implemented three times a year. It teaches children about gardening, nutrition and environmental matters.

Virtually Delicious partners with El Centro to help children enhance their computer literacy while learning about nutrition.

Healthy Cooking and Exercise involves families in Adams County Circles Initiatives. Its goal is to engage the community in helping families move out of poverty, children succeed in school and address systemic solutions to poverty.

The program calls upon participating families trying to get out of poverty to set their own goals. They are paired with middle and upper income community members who befriend them and lend support. They also tour grocery stores with a nutritionist and participate in cooking and exercise demonstrations.

Campus Kitchen is one of several programs operated by the Center for Public Service at Gettysburg College. The center's goal is to engage students, community members, faculty and staff to facilitate partnership, education, critical thinking and informed action.

Over the course of a year, 50 percent of the college's students get involved in one or more of the center's programs.

Over the course of their four years at Gettysburg, 75 percent of the graduating seniors have participated in a center program.

Campus Kitchen accepts monetary and food donations. Food contributions may be coordinated by calling 337-6490. Monetary gifts should be sent to Campus Kitchen at Gettysburg College, c/o Center for Public Service, 300 N. Washington St., Campus Box 2456, Gettysburg.