



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

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Aggie Cupboard Gifts Solidify Legacy

By NCTA News

Supporting college students takes on many forms within the University of Nebraska system, and food security is a growing priority on all campuses. This year, the University of Nebraska Foundation is channeling the funds they typically spend on mailing holiday greetings to support the four campus food pantries.

Here at NCTA, the Aggie Cupboard is located in the student lounge on the third floor of Ag Hall. The seed for this project was planted by Mary Rittenhouse, associate professor of AgriBusiness Management, when she arrived in 2015. Within a year, the location was found, and donations of food, supplies, clothing, and monetary gifts came in. And the Cupboard continues today to support its mission. Aggies helping Aggies. Students are invited to take what they need and leave what they can when they can. It is a private, seamless, transparent process.

Rittenhouse has coached the AgriBusiness Club to develop and maintain the project for over seven years. A comfortable lounge atmosphere with a coffee maker, microwave, and expanded product lines, including clothing, gives students a welcoming environment. It provides students with a quiet place to study, work with other students, and find necessary supplies.

As she prepares to retire after this semester, Mary shares, "This generous gift is greatly appreciated. The Cupboard is grateful to the Foundation for its support. Aggie students work very hard to have a successful college experience. Budgets are stretched, and unexpected expenses add to the stress of finals and preparing for the holidays. The legacy of the Aggie Cupboard is that it is a positive contribution for the students."

Associate Dean Jennifer McConville assures Mary's vision for the Aggie Cupboard will continue after her retirement. In addition to securing additional funds, NCTA has also been asked to join the Nebraska Campus Pantry Coalition. This organization comprises community colleges and 4-year universities (public and private) who meet to discuss pantry operations and build a community for student hunger in Nebraska. McConville hopes this alliance will help us understand our students' ever-changing needs and continue to find resources needed for NCTA's campus.

The Cupboard holds a limited supply of non-perishable food, household, personal items, and school supplies. No applications or identification is necessary as it operates on an honor system. All students are encouraged to utilize the Cupboard—and donations are appreciated in the spirit of the season of giving.

Contact **Mary Rittenhouse** by emailing mrittenhouse2@unl.edu



Associate professor Mary Rittenhouse (L) planted the seed for the Aggie Cupboard to support students with food and basic needs. Student members of the AgBusiness Club (L-R) Heath Roberson, Rheanna Paul, Jasper Hunt, and Morel Jurado are among the many volunteers and donors to ensure its future.

Part of the University of Nebraska system, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is a two-year institution with a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, and related industries. NCTA is known for its affordable tuition, high job-placement rate for its graduates, and student teams' success in competitive activities, including crops judging, ranch horse events, livestock judging, shotgun sports, stock dog trials, and intercollegiate rodeo. The college is consistently ranked as one of the best two-year schools in the nation.

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