



THE REGIONAL
**COLLEGE
HUNGER**
CONFERENCE 2025

Centering Student Voice to Increase Impact

The Impact Café: Where Student Voices Drive Nutrition Forward



Alethea Bennett,
Student Volunteer,
Bowie State University
she/her/hers



Dawanye Cornish,
Work-Study Student,
Bowie State University
he/him/his



Devin Cash,
AmeriCorps VISTA,
Bowie State University
he/him/his

Session Overview

Today you will hear from three student advocates working to maximize student involvement and create a thriving campus environment with nutritional awareness, advocacy, and continuous improvement. By attending this session, participants will:

- Learn about effective ways to promote and inform university leadership and the campus community of the Nutrition Lounge services through student advocacy.
- Understand ways to foster civic and community engagement to support the success of the Nutrition Lounge.
- Learn successful ways to assess and improve the Nutrition Lounge operations through student feedback.





About the BSU Nutrition Lounge

- **Established:** 2019 with funding from Food Lion Feeds.
- **Purpose:** Provides free healthy foods for the BSU community and a safe space for students to relax, study, and converse.
- **Location:** Lower level of the Thurgood Marshall Library
- **Hours of Operation:** 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday
- **Donations:** Food, beverages, and personal care items are accepted.
- **Staffing:** Student Volunteers, Work-study Students, an AmeriCorps VISTA Member, and Staff Coordinator and Manager.



Centering Student Voice to Increase Impact through Three Student Roles

2019

- Student Volunteers

2022

- AmeriCorps VISTA Member

2025

- Work Study Students



«————» Dawanye Cornish, Work Study Student

Community Builder:

- Builds community by normalizing the use of the lounge and serving as a visible peer representative.
- Reduces stigma by greeting and engaging peers with empathy and understanding.

“As a work-study student in the Nutrition Lounge, I try to create a welcoming environment and safe space where my peers can come, relax, and get what they need without fear of being judged.”

Alethea Bennett, Student Volunteer

Peer Advocate:

- Shares feedback on requested foods, lounge operations, and program ideas.
- Promotes awareness of the lounge through word of mouth and student org networks.

“Volunteering in the Nutrition Lounge isn’t just about stocking shelves, it’s about listening to other students. When I share their feedback with staff, it feels powerful to know our voices shape the resources we rely on.”

«» Devin Cash, AmeriCorps VISTA Member

Advocate & Capacity Builder:

- Amplifies student voices in conversations with university leadership and community partners.
- Builds sustainable systems like volunteer management, and sustains community partnerships.

“As a VISTA member, my role is to amplify student voices beyond the lounge. When students share what they need, I bring that feedback to campus leadership and partners—turning stories into action and change.”

Together, These Roles Create Impact

ROLE	OUTCOME
Work-Study Students strengthen community connection and reduce stigma.	An increased feeling of community in the NL. Students come in and engage with me and others. It's a safe space to gather.
Student Volunteers ensure day-to-day peer input is heard.	Students' preferences and needs are gathered and shared with leadership. Students view them as an advocate.
AmeriCorps VISTA Members provide sustainability and advocacy at the institutional level.	Serves on the University Council and advocates for the needs of students around food insecurity.
Result: Based on student engagement, we have • Revised NL hours. • Updated NL policies on the number of daily items available. • Added work study students. • Increased campus partnerships. • Increased response times to meet NL needs.	

“

Through strategic use of the Federal Work-Study program and an AmeriCorps VISTA grant with Transform Mid-Atlantic, the university has been able to establish paid opportunities for student leaders. We also actively seek financial donations and gift cards to incentivize student volunteers.

Dr. Ina A Ramos, NL Manager

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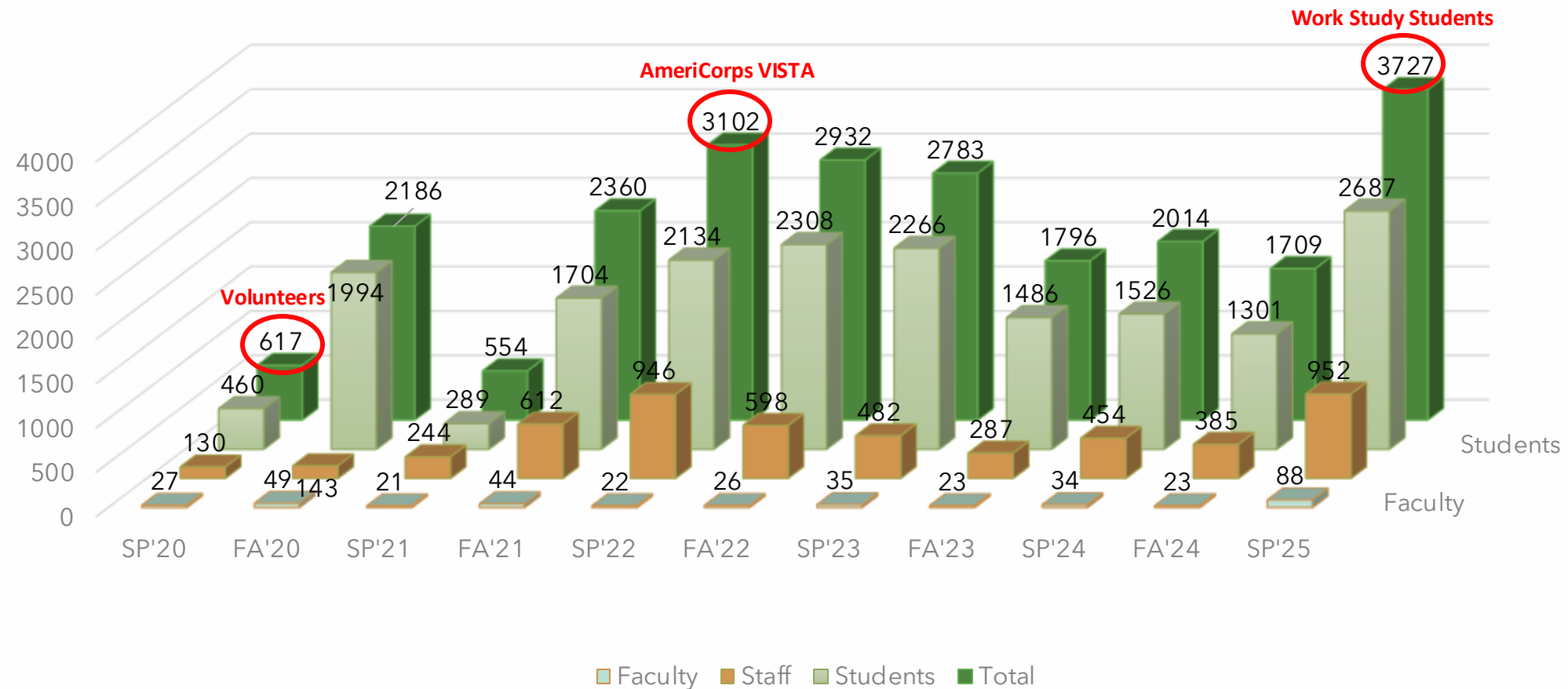


Collective Impact

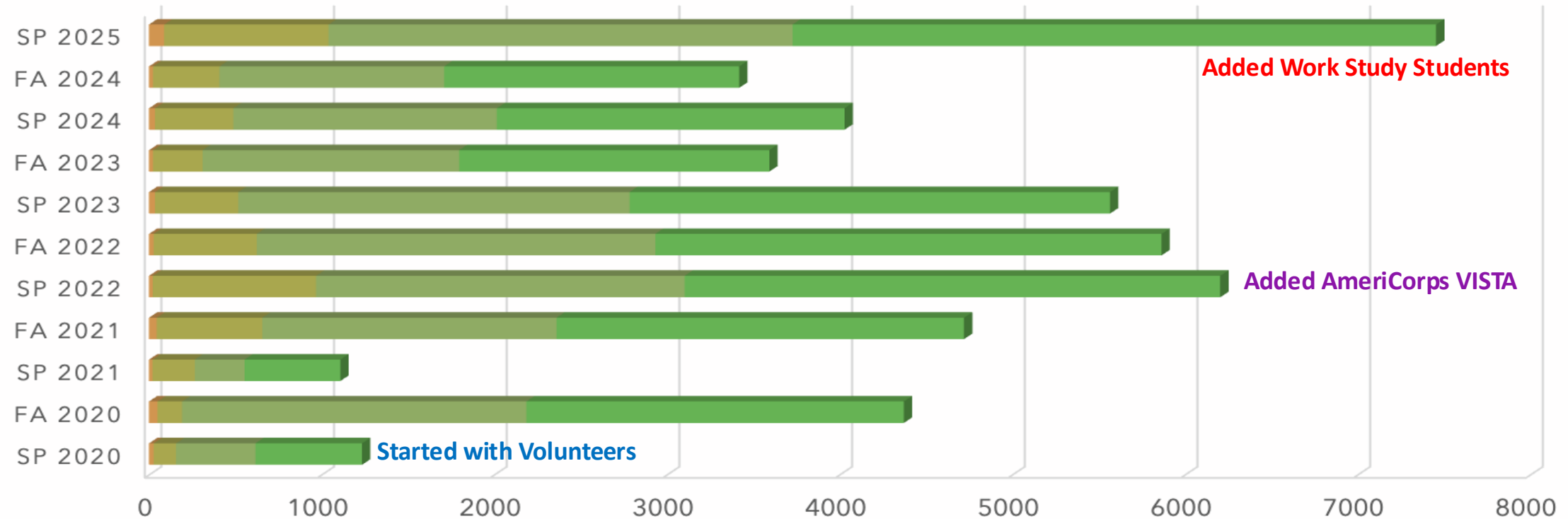


Nutrition Lounge Visits

Statistics by Academic Year



Nutrition Lounge Visits



	SP 2020	FA 2020	SP 2021	FA 2021	SP 2022	FA 2022	SP 2023	FA 2023	SP 2024	FA 2024	SP 2025
Faculty	27	49	21	44	22	26	35	23	34	23	88
Staff	130	143	244	612	946	598	482	287	454	385	952
Students	460	1994	289	1704	2134	2308	2266	1486	1526	1301	2687
TOTAL	617	2186	554	2360	3102	2932	2783	1796	2014	1709	3727



The Spring 24 to Fall 24 return rate (retention rate) was 91% for students who used the Nutrition Lounge versus 80% for students who did NOT use the Nutrition Lounge.





Nutrition Lounge in Action



AY 24-25 Accomplishments

- Increased Volunteer Engagement
- Graduate Student Led Evaluation
- On-Campus and Community Partnerships



On-Campus Partnership



Community Partnerships



Dear Bowie State University Community,

We appreciate your support of the Nutrition Lounge! If you wish to donate food, beverages, or any other resources, email nutritionlounge@bowiestate.edu or visit the QR code.



SCAN ME

Thank you again for your generosity, and stay blessed!

THANK YOU!



Work-study Student Designs



Bowie State University Nutrition Lounge Evaluation Report Spring Semester 2025



Prepared by Joel L. Nelson, Doctoral Student (BSU - PULSE) & Founder of AJKA ECC LLC

Student-Led Evaluation



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Thank you!

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Behind the Shelves at Montgomery College's Wellness Center: Snacks, Empathy, and Student Power



Lizette Rodriguez,
Public Health Sciences Student,
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Vincent L. Briley,
Interim Associate Dean of Student
Affairs,
Montgomery College,
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Session Overview

By attending this session, participants will:

- ❑ Learn how MC addresses food insecurity through a range of accessible services
- ❑ Gain insight into the daily routines and responsibilities of student workers and how their roles contribute to broader program success.
- ❑ Explore strategies for fostering student leadership and participation in food security programs.
- ❑ Take away concrete ideas for creating inclusive, student-centered food assistance models on their own campuses



MC's Strategic Plan

Goal #1:

Enhance connections between Montgomery College and our community



18,835

Credit students enrolled in Fall 2024

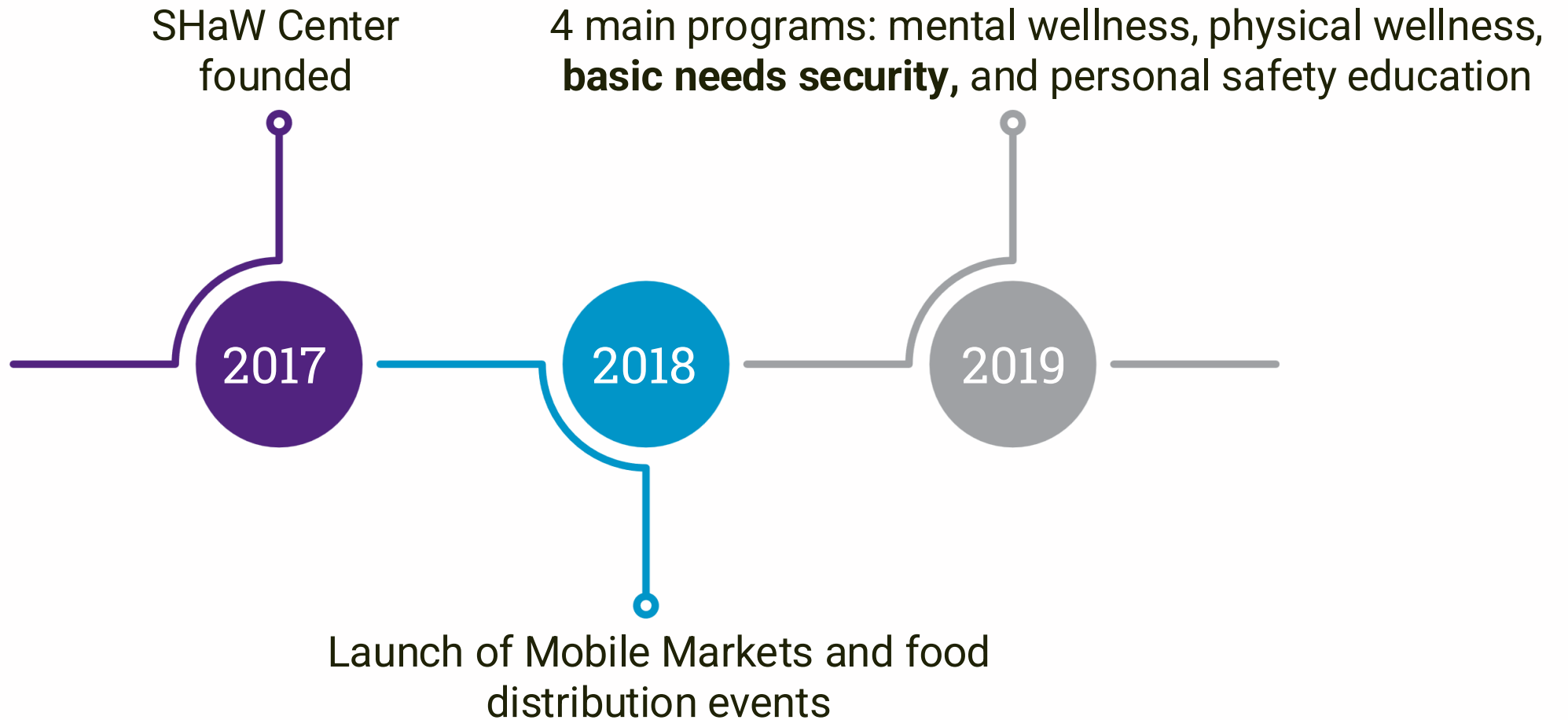
3,718 (19.7%) are first-time-ever-in-college

A survey by the Montgomery County Food Council revealed that **36%** of Montgomery College students faced food insecurity during 2021.

Hope Center (2021)

MC Student Wellness Center

Student Wellness Center for Success
Nourishment for the Mind, Body, and Spirit



SWC's Goal

Aims to provide holistic, person-centered services to promote students' health and wellness by providing information and programming that addresses basic needs, and emotional, physical, spiritual, and social well-being.

Between August 2022 and August 2025, **4,990** students have used the SWC Pantry services

The SWC Pantry has had **2,864** visitors during this Fall semester

What We Offer at SWC

- Food Lockers
- On-Campus Pantries
- Daily Snacks, Hot Drinks
- Mobile Markets
- Panera Bread Tuesdays
- Baby products for student parents
- Mindful Moments and Empowerment Workshops

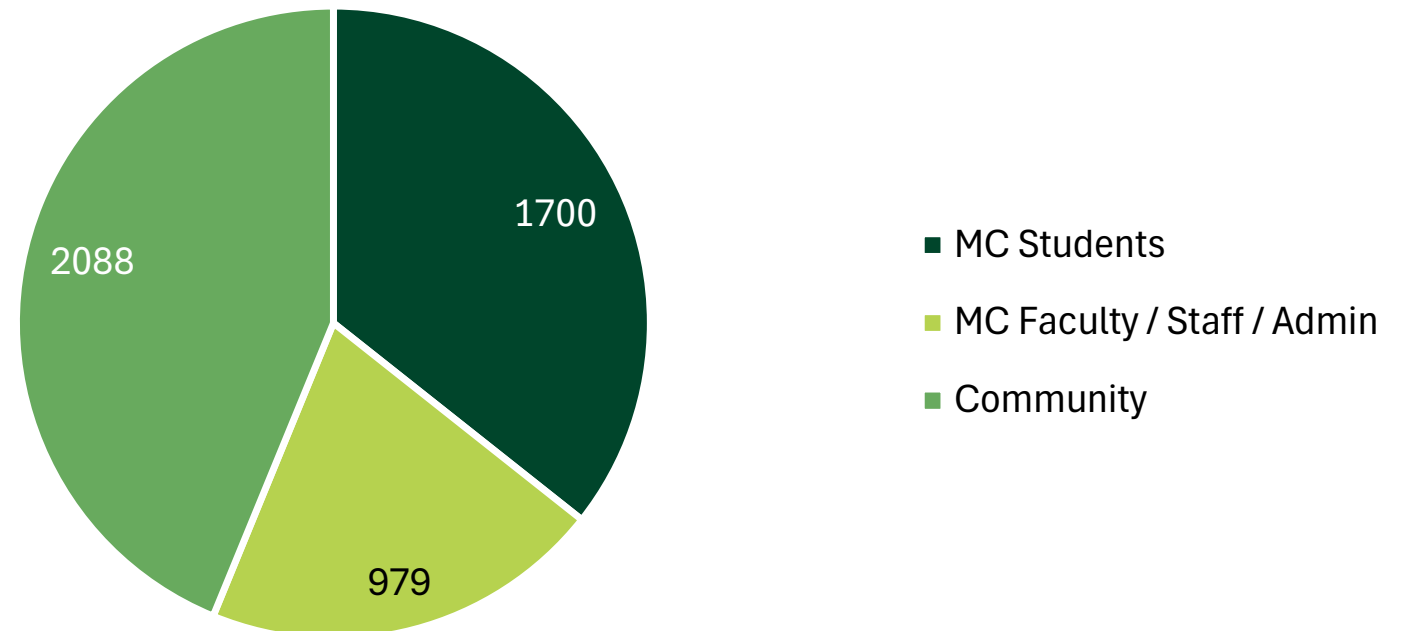


2025 Mobile Markets

4,767 visits to mobile markets by students, staff, and community members

94,337 pounds of food have been distributed across **21** mobile markets in total across MC campuses

Mobile Market Visitors



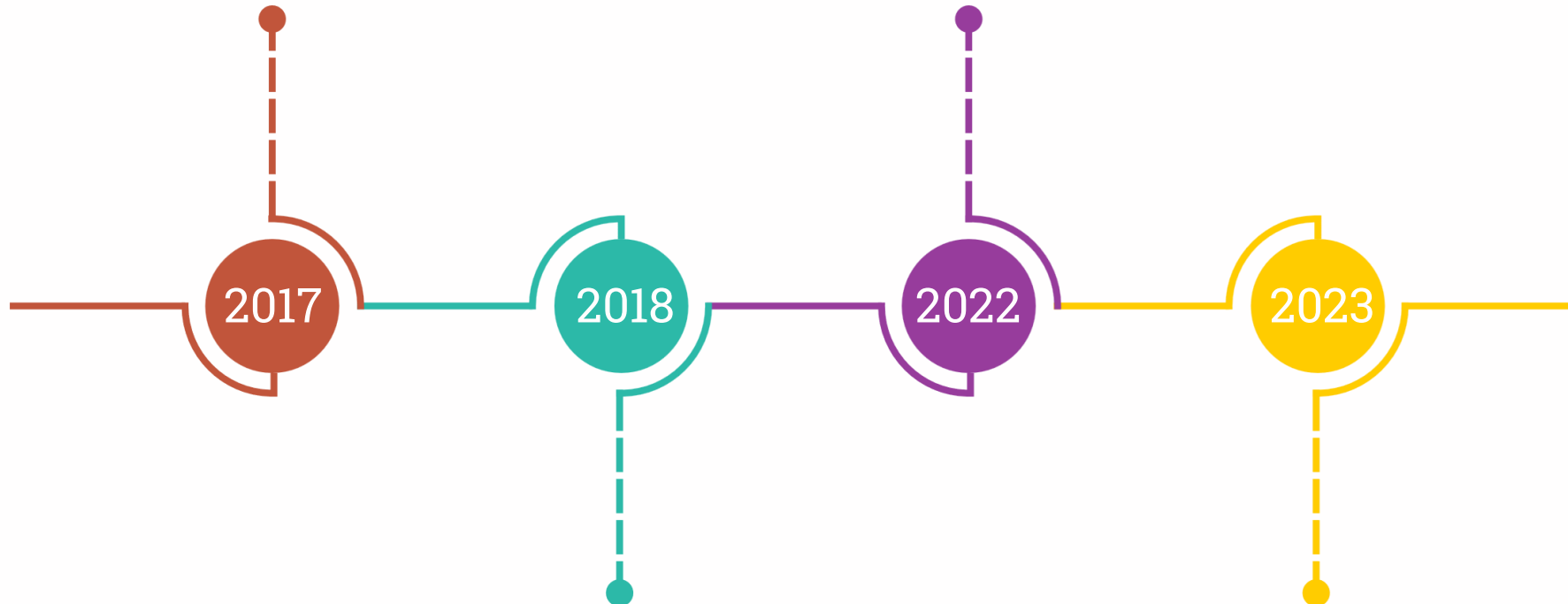
No one
understands
students better
than **students**
themselves



Peer2Peer Program

Peer Navigator program: Students leading and guiding other students toward campus resources

The **Peer Advocates** program was created to provide support to students dealing with stress



Peer Educator and **Peer Mentoring** programs were created

The Peer2Peer programs were converted into **Student Wellness Leaders**

Student Wellness Leaders Impact

- Multicultural and Diverse environment
- Trainings that allow us to connect students to services:
 - Mental Health First Aid
 - Swipe Out Hunger
 - SNAP Benefits
- Linguistic, Social, and Navigational Cultural Capital (Yosso, 2005)



Student Wellness Leaders Impact



Student leadership in food security programs helps to develop skills that extend far beyond the pantry.

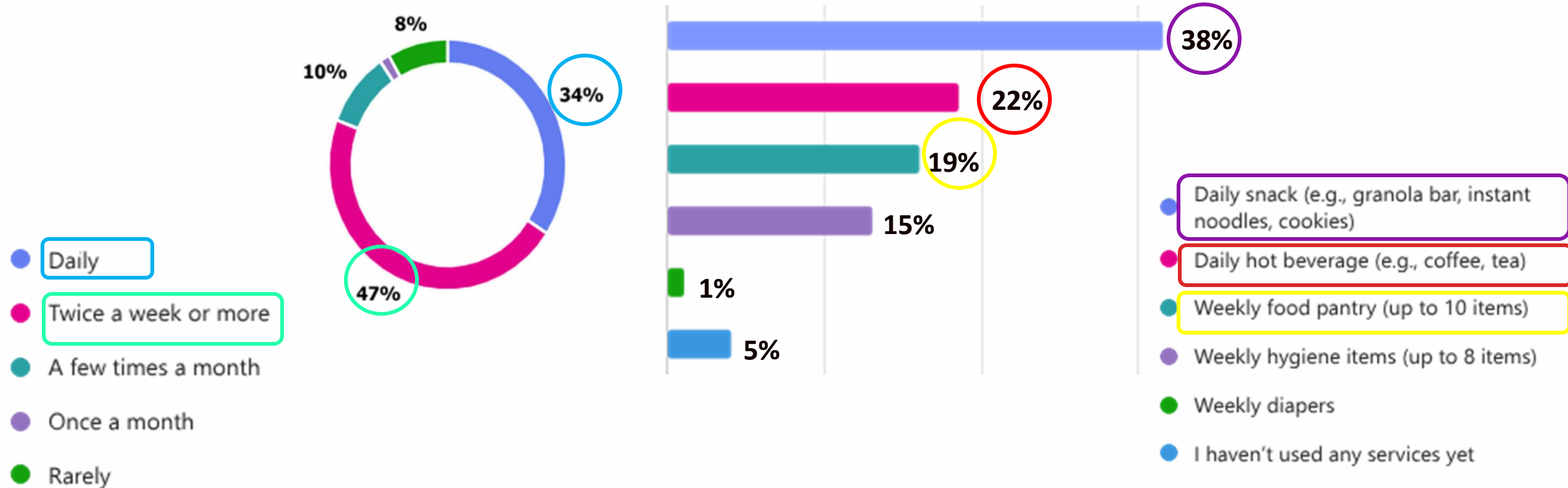
Student workers gain experience in project management, public speaking, advocacy, and problem-solving

We hear what
our peers want,
to grow and
improve our
Pantry



Wellness Center Feedback Survey

We launched multilingual survey to hear directly from students about the Services we offer.



Wellness Center Feedback Survey

Daily snacks

Very satisfied	<u>42.5%</u>
Satisfied	<u>47.9%</u>
Neutral	8.2%
Dissatisfied	1.4%

Food pantry

Very satisfied	<u>38.4%</u>
Satisfied	<u>37%</u>
Neutral	24.7%

Diapers/Baby products

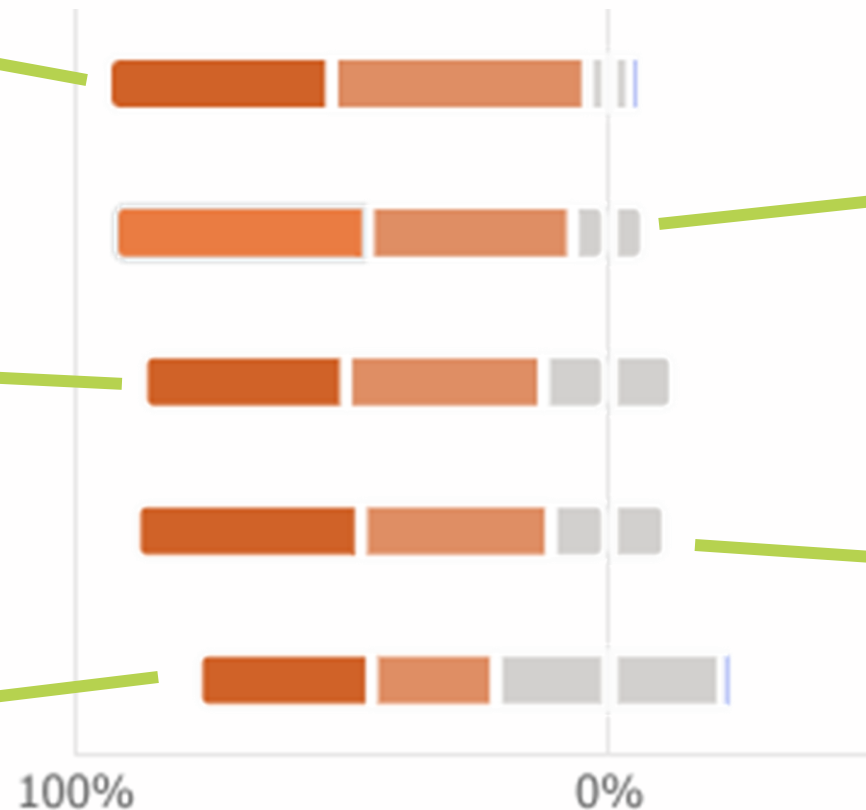
Very satisfied	32.9%
Satisfied	23.3%
Neutral	42.5%
Very dissatisfied	1.4%

Daily hot beverages

Very satisfied	<u>47.9%</u>
Satisfied	<u>38.4%</u>
Neutral	13.7%

Hygiene items

Very satisfied	42.5%
Satisfied	35.6%
Neutral	21.9%



Let's share knowledge and build together!

“ Keep the good work, is a really helpful and warm-hearted place.”

“ I am very grateful for this program. More than once the food pantry has provided me something to eat when I was worried about how to feed myself for the week.”

“ Thank you for the Resources.”



Student Wellness Leaders' experiences, peer relationships, and sense of belonging on campus allow them to bridge gaps that faculty and staff alone often cannot.

Students can lead, innovate, and sustain impactful food security programs.



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Thank you!

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