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MELISSA'S PRODUCE & MIXED CHICKS HELP STUDENTS IN NEED AT WLAC GROCERY GIVEAWAY EVENTS



Photo caption: WLAC President James M. Limbaugh, Mixed Chicks Co-Founder and WLAC Alumna Kim Etheredge and WLAC Associated Student Organization President Franly Rivera assist loading care packages into student vehicles at college grocery giveaway event.

West Los Angeles College students in need were able to pick up food staples and fresh produce throughout the Fall semester thanks to generous donations to the WLAC Foundation and Melissa's Produce. Mixed Chicks hair products, co-founded by WLAC alumna Kim Etheredge, also sponsored food packages and donated complimentary products to students who participate in the grocery giveaways.



Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office reported that more than half of their students have trouble affording balanced meals or worry about running out of food and, nearly one in five are either homeless or do not have a stable place to live.

"These hardships have been exasperated by the pandemic," said Dr. James M. Limbaugh, WLAC President. "How do you focus on your studies when you're worried about how you will get your next meal or provide nutritional food for your children? We're doing what we can to assist students through these grocery giveaway events and are so grateful to Melissa's, Mixed Chicks and individual donors."

"Thank you so much, this is very helpful," said one student as a care package was loaded into his trunk. "The pandemic is really hard. This is helpful to me financially. I can survive another day and focus on doing my best in school."

So far, West has provided nearly 600 care packages of staples, fresh vegetables and hair care products. The food events for West students, which will continue through the Spring semester, are organized by the college

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WLAC Grocery Giveaways...continued

Student Services area which also assists students with accessing grants, fee waivers, funds for child care, free laptops, basic health care, clothing and housing referrals.

“The WLAC Pop-Up Pantry days are my favorite days of the month. In the few minutes it takes to get the food items in the car, I get to talk to our students again, ask how classes are going, and even answer their questions about student services. It keeps me connected to my work, said Edna Chavarry event organizer and WLAC Student Services Dean. These Pop-Up Pantries are about putting equity into action: we’re designing these events for the most marginalized in our community.”

“We are excited to be supporting West Los Angeles College students with a gift of healthy and quality produce,” said a statement from Melissa’s. “We work to advance healthy eating by connecting people with the freshest ingredients. We believe good food does more than help people survive; it helps them thrive and succeed. Melissa’s partners with numerous nonprofits and local food banks in the community and has provided over 200,000 meals throughout Los Angeles County to those in need.” Melissa’s Produce will continue to donate their produce to these sustaining events throughout the Spring semester.

For more information on grocery giveaways for WLAC students, visit WLAC.edu/News. To donate to this and other efforts which support student success, visit the WLAC Foundation at WLAC.edu/Foundation.

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