

USU Professor Fights Student Hunger with a Major Gift

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Professor Michael Twohig invites the Aggie community to join him and double the impact.

A Utah State University professor has made a significant donation to the Logan campus food pantry, and now he is inviting others in the Aggie community to join him to make an even bigger impact.

Professor Michael Twohig recently received the D. Wynne Thorne Career Research Award, one of the university's highest faculty honors. The award came with a cash prize of \$7,500, which Twohig decided to donate to the [Student Nutrition Access Center](#) (SNAC).

"I don't feel like I earned this award alone," Twohig said. "This award represents the work of a large team, including Ph.D. students, undergraduates, and faculty. It felt right to give it back to something that directly supports our students."

The SNAC provides one bag of free food to any student with an A-number and a shopping bag each week. The choices include fresh produce, pantry staples from the Utah Food Bank, and unserved food recovered and repackaged from catered events and campus eateries run by USU Dining Services. In addition, volunteers collect unsold food and perishables that would have gone to the landfill from collaborating restaurants in Logan.

Twohig said that SNAC aligns with his values around sustainability and his commitment to student well-being.

"I know my students have used SNAC, and it's such a helpful resource," he said. "Even students with stipends or aid can face tight months. Having access to food can make a real difference."

Twohig knows the importance of people having access to a range of needed resources through his award-winning research as a psychologist in the [Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services](#). He is co-

creator of the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) Research Group with USU Professor Michael Levin, and they collaborate with researchers across the United States and the world to develop, study and disseminate ACT interventions used by therapists worldwide. Twohig's work has been credited with changing how obsessive-compulsive and related disorders are treated. He hopes others in the Aggie community will match his donation to bring the total to \$15,000 for SNAC. The funds will help cover essentials like fresh produce, packaging for recovered meals, and shelf-stable goods.

Recently, SNAC has focused on offering more allergy-friendly options, including gluten-free, dairy-free, and other specialty foods.

"Dr. Twohig's donation will help us keep those items on our shelves and increase the variety of products we are able to offer," said Kaylie Meccariello, SNAC's student director. "Having a greater variety of food will help us reach more students. Our hope is to keep that increased variety of food consistent throughout the entire year."

Meccariello, a dietetics student, added that food insecurity can have a serious impact on student success. SNAC is a project of USU's [Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Sciences](#) and gives students experience working with peers who use the center's resources, helping them prepare for careers in assisting and educating people experiencing food insecurity.

"Facing food insecurity makes studying, socializing, and performing well in school so much harder," she said. "SNAC addresses those issues by giving all students access to free, nutritious food."

Twohig sees this as an opportunity for Aggies to come together in support of a shared cause. He encourages everyone to participate and give, emphasizing that even the smallest donations can add up to meaningful change.

"If you're wondering whether your donation will help, it will," he said. "Whatever amount you can give makes a difference. This is a really good opportunity to support students in a tangible, meaningful way."

[Hear more from Twohig and Meccariello and learn more about SNAC and how to donate.](#)