



Allergy Awareness Opens the Semester at UAlbany

“Building awareness of food allergies at the start of each semester is critical for the safety of our students,” said Chris Mongeon, general manager of dining services at UAlbany. “With the Food Allergy Research & Education organization estimating that one in every 13 students has a food-related allergy, it is incumbent on campus dining professionals to be proactive in educating all students on allergy-free options and how to be supportive of those with allergies,” said Mongeon.

That is why UAlbany Dining opened the fall semester with allergy awareness tabling in all of its five resident dining rooms. The goal of the tabling was to raise awareness, educate others and inspire action to support the special diet students on campus. Led by campus dietitian, Donna Duffy, the tabling averaged approximately 30 student visits per night, with about half of those students identifying themselves as having food allergies. At the tabling students had the opportunity to ask questions about how to be tested for a food allergy, what foods to select in the dining rooms and how to intervene if someone is having a reaction. Other students visited the table without asking questions, but were able to look at the engaging displays that included sample EpiPens (with instructions), allergy action planning guidelines, and information on the campus’ allergy-free concept, Simple Servings.

Duffy feels the tabling was successful in increasing awareness of this important topic and plans to repeat this event every semester. “It’s no longer just up to a student with an allergy or celiac to be

knowledgeable,” said Duffy. “We all need to create an environment where friends, roommates and classmates are educated and know what to do if a fellow student needs help.”

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