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An evening side view of Cedars West End. Photo by Jake Brandenstein/YO Magazine.

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A WESTSIDE STORY

By yomag (<https://theyomag.com/index.php/author/yomag/>) / December 17, 2021

by Jake Brandenstein

Paint a picture in your head: you drive through a spacious stretch of concrete; no one is out and about, the streetlights appear to be the only sign of life. Suddenly, an unsuspecting building with a Guinness mural confronts your peripheral vision. Turn around. Pull over. Park. As you enter the large wooden door, your eyes are greeted with a plethora of sights: hips roll, shoulders sway and a loud band is playing — the frontman of the band hangs over the edge of the stage, screaming “I went to jail and I broke it” repeatedly at the top of his lungs. Welcome to Cedars, put the brush down.

A new week has begun and the music is sleeping for the time being. This evening is a tad cold to be hosting raucous, which to an extent I could agree. I park my car next to Alex Martz, a Cedars regular and part-time bartender at the venue. We exchange quick hellos and scuttle our way into the bar before we turn into human popsicles. When we walk in, we are greeted by Billy Danielson, the owner of the bar.

We make our way to the other side of the bar, accompanied by a wall of mirrors and a stylish cream colored couch. It’s been nearly two years since I paid Cedars a visit, so naturally we begin catching up about the past year, music and everything in between while a wooden conquistador’s head watches us from the top of the chest freezer. It was good to be back.

Danielson elaborates on the hiatus that Cedars had taken prior to reopening its doors on Oct. 1, 2021. With the unpredictable miasma that arose from the pandemic, Danielson feels that the temporary closing was the safe thing to do.

“I wasn’t going to facilitate danger to anybody I care about, number one. Like — and believe me — I need the money, but I wasn’t going to do it. I wasn’t going to use you as a sacrificial lamb to play in my place so I could pay my bills, and I didn’t do that. I’m still kind of backing off and doing light stuff — I’m trying to ease back into it because in my opinion, this is not over,” he says.

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Cedars offers a cozy corner and a reflection or two. **Photo by Jake Brandenstein/YO Magazine.**

With the recent reopening, Danielson has been taking precautionary measures to ensure that events can carry on safely, such as requiring people to bring a vaccination card to the door prior to entering.

The conversation turns on a more positive note when we begin talking about some of the shows that have occurred over the years. Martz begins to recount one of his favorite stories: the time that his old punk band Them Bastards played their first show at Cedars. According to Alex, it was quite the first show.

“I remember looking over at Billy, there was beer spilled, there was candles that got knocked over, there was wax that got spilled on the bar... it was insane,” Martz says. “But then I remember at the end of the night, I remember him looking around and being like, ‘That was a hell of a night.’ I could see his demeanor changing a little bit when everything was cleared out. And I remember at the end of the night, he goes, ‘I want you guys to sit down and have a shot with me.’”

According to Martz, Cedars became their home base from then on.

Originally located in downtown Youngstown, Cedars has served as a hangout for musicians, eccentrics, and curious cats alike for over four decades. After the downtown location closed in 2012, Danielson and his partner, Mara Simon, bought the business in 2013. The two went on to reopen and relocate to Steel Street on the west side of Youngstown, changing the full name from Cedars to Cedars West End. The venue continued to pick up right where it initially left off, hosting everything from concerts, bring-your-own record nights, swing nights and much more.

“It has been a fixture in the local music scene. It’s always been a place where musicians, artists, writers and actors could gather and share ideas” says art professor at YSU and local concert-goer Tony Armeni.

Since January 2018, Tony Armeni has hosted Jam Nights at Cedars West End. Jam nights at the West End operate in the same spirit as an open mic night, but with a dash of chaos and uncertainty. During these gatherings, musicians bring their instruments, hop up on stage and create music in the moment with one another, making for an event that is just as expressive as it is eclectic. Whether it becomes a funk freak-out in 5/4 time, free jazz or harsh noise — anything goes.

After attending a few of the Jam Nights since the recent reopening of Cedars, it appears that these events have been doing a good job at catching the attention of newcomers and regulars. I have a chat with Dave Tamulonis, a friend of Armeni and practitioner in the art of jamming, to see what these events are all

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about.

“Jam Night at Cedar’s was started by Dana Sperry at Suzie’s Downtown as the Silence is Golden event through the YSU art department. Students made video art, and a group of improv musicians played a live improvised soundtrack behind the videos. The group of musicians — our professor Tony Armeni, Chauncey Hay and me — decided to continue playing together. I played in a Pink Floyd cover band with Tony and it was then in 2016 that we decided to rebrand and start hosting events as Tony Armeni and Friends,” he says.

According to Tamulonis, Jam Nights were also meant to be an alternative to Suzie’s more traditional jam nights that took place on Thursdays, often showcasing more structured blues and rock jams, whereas Tony’s Jam Nights are more on the open-ended and experimental spectrum.

“I remember one night in particular where by the end of the night, every person in the bar was on stage playing together all at once long after the 2:00 closing of the bar. They’re really a powerful experience for those that enjoy improvising and connecting with others through music,” Tamulonis says.



Dave Tamulonis bangin’ out the tunes. **Photo by Jake Brandenstein/YO Magazine.**

Despite the unpredictable circumstances of 2021, the crew at Cedars is doing their best to stay optimistic. When I ask about what’s in store for the future of Cedars, Danielson says he’s currently focusing on what’s to come in 2022.

“There’s a couple of bigger things that I chose to cancel, and the performer and the agents, they felt comfortable with that as well. It’s not a great time right now for touring bands, you know? So I’m thinking, you’ll probably see some stuff this spring happening. Until then, I’ll book a few things here and there. And I think if I can just keep the business going, keep the lights on, do that little thing.”

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WANT TO REGISTER WITH ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES AT YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY?

STEPS TO TAKE

1. Provide required documentation from physician
2. Schedule your intake appointment
3. Request your accommodation letters
4. Meet with your instructors
5. Renew your accommodation letter every semester/year

AVAILABLE SERVICES*

- Early Registration
- Academic Testing and classroom accommodations
- Limited loan of adaptive equipment
- Sign language (ASL) interpreters
- Advocacy
- Information, referral and awareness services
- Liaison with YSU departments and local agencies
- Housing accommodations
- Note takers for those who qualify

Students are assisted on an individual basis. Available services may include but are not limited to those listed.

SOURCE: YSU Accessibility Services
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STUDENTS NOTICE LAPSES IN ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

By yomag (<https://theyomag.com/index.php/author/yomag/>) / December 17, 2021

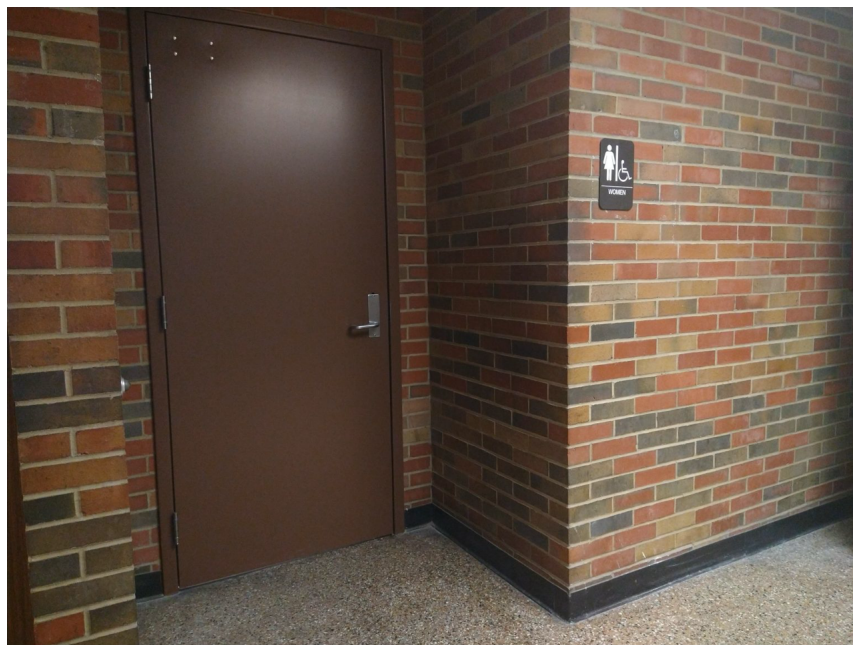
by **C. Aileen Blaine**

Youngstown State University prides itself on its status as a safe, inclusive campus offering resources to students to better their chances of success. But for YSU senior Mac Pomeroy and others with disabilities, a few oversights make all the difference when it comes to having an enjoyable campus experience.

“We have the [cart services], we have disability services, we have buttons installed on campus,” Pomeroy said. “But these things are all severely neglected.”

One of her biggest grievances is the lack of access points into buildings. As someone who uses a cane, heavy doors are often difficult for her to open.

“There’s a lot of disabled students on campus — we really rely on [door operators and cart services],” she said. “It just often feels like with accessibility, they did it, but they didn’t keep up with it.”



This restroom on the first floor of Kilcawley is marked as handicap accessible, but it lacks a door operator that may make it easier for some to enter. Door operators aren’t outlined in ADA regulations. **Photo by C.**

Aileen Blaine / YO Magazine

Even when the doors aren’t a problem, sometimes getting to them in the first place is a logistical challenge.

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“There’s no accessible pick-up and drop-off points for students, and I don’t mean the carts — I mean just getting to campus,” Pomeroy said. “And quite frequently, it’s actually difficult to access the driveways that are available for things because you’re just not supposed to pull into them.”

Though she doesn’t use the resources often, Pomeroy did acknowledge that the academic accommodations are helpful and efficient.

Gina McGranahan, associate director of Academic Success Center Accessibility Services, is also the Title II/Section 504 coordinator for students. One of her main tasks is working with students to ensure that their needs are met both spatially and academically. This includes orchestrating extended test times, alternative test environments and notetakers for students.

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Students are assisted on an individual basis. Available services may include but are not limited to those listed.

SOURCE: YSU Accessibility Services

C. Aileen Blaine/YO Magazine

“I think the thing that keeps students from registering with Accessibility Services is they think it’s like high school and I’m going to go to class and say, ‘Hey, Joe, come with me.’ That doesn’t happen — it’s confidential here,” McGranahan said.

Students have rights and responsibilities under the [Americans with Disabilities Act](https://adata.org/factsheet/ADA-overview) (<https://adata.org/factsheet/ADA-overview>). It is a civil rights law prohibiting discrimination against individuals with disabilities in public spaces such as jobs, schools and transportation, as well as in public and private areas open to the general public. The act, which is broken up into five titles, outlines the specific requirements for various institutions as well as the requisites for both physical and mental disabilities. Title II focuses on nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in state and local government services as they apply to the labor- and workforce-related practices. YSU falls within the title’s scope as a public university.

At YSU and other schools, students are entitled to the following [rights](https://ysu.edu/academic-success-center/accessibility-services/for-students/rights-and-responsibilities) (<https://ysu.edu/academic-success-center/accessibility-services/for-students/rights-and-responsibilities>):

- Equal access to postsecondary education
- Non-discrimination

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- Participation and enjoyment of the school and its activities
- Accessible education
- Appropriate accommodations
- Privacy concerning personal information

However, this doesn't mean that instructors will provide students with easier work or drastically alter course and conduct requirements. Students are responsible for making sure their needs are met as well. They must provide the university with the proper documentation from a doctor or licensed professional.

McGranahan acknowledged that some students may have reservations about contacting her office due to concerns about privacy, but she assures them everything is kept in strict confidence.

"We know here what their disability is, but unless there is a need for somebody to know, it doesn't leave this office," McGranahan said.

Students with documented disabilities can [register \(https://ysu.edu/academic-success-center/accessibility-services/for-students/how-register-disability-services-ysu\)](https://ysu.edu/academic-success-center/accessibility-services/for-students/how-register-disability-services-ysu) with Accessibility Services and are assessed on an individual basis. They may be able to qualify for the following:

- Early registration
- Testing and classroom accommodations
- American Sign Language interpreters
- Information, referral and awareness services
- Collaboration with departments and agencies on and off campus
- Housing accommodations
- Note takers

The university also requires that instructors include the disability accommodation statement in each syllabus in an effort to help students feel more comfortable and likely to self-disclose their needs in a private setting.

YSU makes efforts to ensure that its electronic and information technologies — which include all information provided through the university's website, online learning environment and course management systems — are accessible to students, employees and guests with visitors, according to YSU's ADA compliance webpage.

Stacey Luce, manager of employee benefits, addresses employees' ease of access requests, which can include software, classroom and technology accommodations. Employees are asked to provide official documentation from their doctor regarding their needs.

"I speak with the employee through an interactive process and try to get as much formation of what they're truly looking for," Luce said. "We work through some things that we can do for the employees."

Accommodations include talk-to-text software, larger monitors and remote work opportunities upon assessment.

"As long as there's not an undue hardship on the university, based on their requests we accommodate them on that," Luce said.

A common cause for delay in providing employees their requests is delayed or broken communication with an employee's doctor, according to Luce.

“What might complicate the process for getting someone the resources they need is the physician failing to complete the paperwork timely,” she said. “It’s not working with the employee, it’s not trying to get the equipment timely or trying to get the software timely. The physician is always the holdup.”

For Pomeroy, test time extensions and notetakers don’t detract from the fact that sometimes it’s difficult for her to get where she needs to be. Between opening heavy doors on campus buildings and orchestrating rides with the understaffed cart services, attending classes sometimes mean unforeseen circumstances.

‘One of the worst days of my college experience’

One particular incident sticks prominently in Mac Pomeroy’s mind when she thinks of the shortcomings of accessibility accommodations at Youngstown State University.

“When the problem’s bad enough, I’ve been known to go home,” Pomeroy said. “One time, I was left out with the cart services — they didn’t come pick me up [after about] an hour. I had to call my own dad to come and get me because it was winter. I was stuck outside because — guess what — one of the buttons wasn’t working.”

Due to her mobility issues, Pomeroy finds walking long distances difficult. This coupled with the frigid Ohio winter and frozen doors meant she didn’t see any other option.

“I had to call my dad crying to come and get me,” she said. “It’s not something that should happen. ... It was one of the worst days in my college experience.”

John Hyden, associate vice president for facilities maintenance on campus, said buildings on campus are built to code, though older constructions, such as Jones and Fok halls, have been grandfathered in despite code violations.

The [Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board \(https://www.access-board.gov/\)](https://www.access-board.gov/) is a federal agency that issues guidelines to ensure that buildings and facilities are accessible to those with disabilities. The board operates with the guidelines and standards of the ADA and other laws. Its website offers animations, documents and other resources outlining building codes and requirements. These requirements range from height, length and width specifications for restrooms to ramps and floor materials.

The recently renovated restrooms in Kilcawley Center marked as handicap accessible meet the ADA’s standards. The measurements are as follows:

Location	Width	Length	Door width	Door operators
1st floor (single user)	107 inches	95 inches (at longest point)	35 inches	Yes (in repair)
1st floor stalls	36.5 inches	59.5 inches	31.5 inches	No
2nd floor stalls	36.5 inches	61.5 inches	31.5 inches	No

Many campus buildings offer accommodations to students, faculty and staff that aren’t necessarily outlined in ADA regulations. This includes the door operators on campus.

“We’ve found that it’s better to address the specific needs of the folks that are here. Even if we’re not required to by law, we still will accommodate those in most cases,” Hyden said.



This restroom’s door operator is out of service, but supply chain shortages complicate the repair process.

Photos by C. Aileen Blaine / YO Magazine.

However, it’s hard to say to exactly what extent YSU is responsible for the lack of repairs. Nationwide, supply chain shortages have been popping up for some seemingly unlikely products. Within the Mahoning Valley, businesses ranging from auto body shops to T-shirt printing vendors are struggling to find the parts needed to fulfill customer needs amid the global supply chain shortages, according to coverage from local news outlets such as [WKBN \(https://www.wkbn.com/news/local-news/at-times-its-scary-small-business-struggles-with-supply-shortages/\)](https://www.wkbn.com/news/local-news/at-times-its-scary-small-business-struggles-with-supply-shortages/) and [The Business Journal \(https://businessjournaldaily.com/supply-chain-issues-constrain-valley-retailers-amid-surg-ing-demand/\)](https://businessjournaldaily.com/supply-chain-issues-constrain-valley-retailers-amid-surg-ing-demand/). The impacts are appearing at YSU in the form of the broken door operators sprinkled across campus.

“Right now, we’re waiting for parts,” Hyden said. “You hear in the news every day about supply chain issues. If I need a part for a door operator and I can’t get it, I can’t fix it.”

And sometimes, even if parts are available, it's not always practical to fix an issue due to the campus facilities and maintenance's hours of operation, according to Hyden.

"If I find out a door operator doesn't work in Kilcawley Center at 7 at night, I'm not going to call somebody out in the middle of the night to come fix it," he said. "But first thing in the morning, we're going to get them on it."

The door operators are one of the most frequently reported maintenance requests, according to Hyden. When an elevator goes out of service, it requires the campus facilities to reach out to the maintenance and repair contractors, who are supposed to be on the scene within 30 minutes of a request.

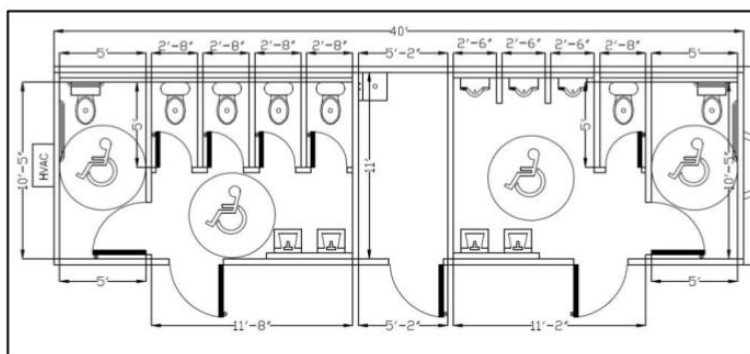
"I just really feel like the university needs to pay more attention to its disabled students, and it needs to pay attention to the accommodations that it offers," Pomeroy said.

Though she doesn't handle physical maintenance accommodations, McGranahan said she reports when she notices infrastructure issues on campus.

One way of improving the conditions on campus is underutilized and unrealized by students, according to Hyden. He said his department is more than willing to work with students to help them in any way it can. The facilities and maintenance department also communicates with the Accessibility Services to ensure student, faculty and staff needs are being met. The department tries to find students with whom it can work with for an extended period of time to gain a better understanding of campus resources in need of improvement.

"I'm not sitting in a wheelchair, so it's easy for me to say. ... So we rely on those who do need those accommodations and take advice from them, whether or not it's part of the ADA — we'll always listen to their suggestions," he said.

ADA REGULATION MEASUREMENTS*



Compartment dimensions

- Corner handicap stalls: 60" x 60", 32" door minimum
- Ambulatory stalls: 60" x 35-37", 32" handicap-prepped door
- Alcove stalls: 60" compartment diameter

*for restrooms marked as handicap accessible

SOURCE: PartitionsAndStalls.com

C. Aileen Blaine/YO Magazine

Those interested in working with the campus facilities and maintenance department to improve infrastructure resources, or to report a problem, can reach out to Hyden at jphyden@ysu.edu (<mailto:jphyden@ysu.edu>) or 330-941-3235.

Students interested in applying for academic accommodations can contact the Accessibility Services office to find out what accommodations are available to them based on their needs, with strict confidentiality, McGranahan said. Students can reach the office at 330-941-2090, and employees can at 330-941-1322.

Employees interested in exploring available resources can contact Luce at seluce@ysu.edu (<mailto:seluce@ysu.edu>) or call 330-941-1322.

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by C. Aileen Blaine

With the recent remodeling of the restrooms in and around Youngstown State University's Kilcawley Center, students may have noticed new additions to the walls of women's, unisex and select men's rooms: menstrual product dispensers.

The dispensers are an attempt to address the need for menstrual hygiene products on campus. With a student population that's 55% female according to 2020 data released by the university, the chance of individuals experiencing what's known as "period poverty" is great.

But the problem is not as much due to a lack of supplies on campus as it is a lack of human resources.

Student Government Association members are taking on a few initiatives to tackle the growing need for these hygiene products in areas of high student traffic, such as Kilcawley Center. One of these measures includes the installation of the new dispensers in the remodeled restrooms.

SGA President Nicholas Koupiaris and executive vice president Gianna Battaglia are the current faces behind the free-product dispensers. The repositories are paid for with leftover funds from SGA and are provided by Aunt Flow, a company working to address menstruating individuals' needs across the country.

"When we were first putting these in, we didn't know exactly how students would react, if they would be very popular or not," Koupiaris said.

Office of Student Experience vice president Joy Polkabila Byers said there have been a variety of measures attempted over the past 17 years.

"Student Government did a great job in the last couple years gathering information about this Aunt Flow program and figuring out how we could do this for students at no cost," Polkabila Byers said. "Evolution-wise, we've really seen growth, it's just come in different waves across campus."

Former SGA administrations pushed for the 50-cent tampons and liners to be included in the food-and-drink vending machines in buildings across campus, especially after a contract with the metal restroom dispenser company Tamabrand ended a few years ago.

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The recently installed Aunt Flow dispensers in Kilcawley Center are meant to replace the old Tamabrand machines after the contract ended several years ago. **Photo by C. Aileen Blaine/YO Magazine.**

The Aunt Flow machines are currently stocked under a campus janitorial agreement, but future discussions are needed to determine who will continue to restock supplies.

“The problem we had was that before — under a previous vending contract — there were dispensers campus-wide, and when that contract ended, so did the support of those dispensers,” John Young, executive director of auxiliary services, said. “Sustainability is a big concern — making sure this is something we’ll continue to support as an initiative.”

Battaglia said expanding the product availability relies not just on supplies and human resources, but also on money.

“As we keep installing these in different buildings and departments, we also have to keep in mind what our budget entails,” she said. “Not only does that entail the cost of the dispenser and putting them in the bathrooms, but also how much money we have to restock.”

According to 2019 [data \(https://cdn.b12.io/client_media/HJ1wIVtI/fa9e6dc8-95f9-11ea-a54f-0242ac110003-Ohio_APS_Period_Poverty_Fact_Sheet_052020.pdf\)](https://cdn.b12.io/client_media/HJ1wIVtI/fa9e6dc8-95f9-11ea-a54f-0242ac110003-Ohio_APS_Period_Poverty_Fact_Sheet_052020.pdf) compiled by the Alliance for Period Supplies, 1 in 5 low-income women report missing work, school or similar commitments due to their lack of access to period supplies. Though menstrual products are not taxed as luxury items in Ohio, many menstruating individuals still find covering the cost for products difficult.

For those living in student housing, the Kilcawley Center dispensers only go so far. Within the last two years, the CVS Pharmacy on Fifth Avenue closed, leaving many on-campus residents without nearby access to products beyond those available in dorms, the campus Barnes & Noble and the vending machines in buildings locked overnight and on weekends. This makes it all the more difficult for those in and around campus to get what they need if they lack transportation.

For now, there's another campus resource for menstruating individuals: the Penguin Pantry.

The pantry, while also a resource for students who may be food insecure, also offers a variety of hygiene and toiletry products, including pads and tampons. Any student is able to use the pantry; they're only asked to fill out an online form for item requests under a first name and last name initial, which can reduce the embarrassment or anxiety some students may feel.

The pantry offers sanitary wipes, tampons, pads and liners that can be picked up at a time and date of the student's choice. They can send someone else to pick up the order if they're nervous or embarrassed.

Though the pantry has an abundance of supplies, a shortage of staff to work at the pantry's physical location in Kilcawley Center limits the hours, which are as follows:

- Monday: 11 a.m.–1:30 p.m., 2–4 p.m.
- Tuesday: 1–4 p.m.
- Wednesday: 10 a.m.–1:30 p.m.
- Thursday: 12–4 p.m.
- Friday: 11 a.m.–1:30 p.m.



The Penguin Pantry in Kilcawley Center has a surplus of menstrual hygiene products free and available to any YSU student, but its limited operating hours are due to a lack of human resources to work the station.

Photo by C. Aileen Blaine/YO Magazine.

“Everywhere’s hiring right now, so it’s kind of difficult to hire a pantry worker right now,” Cline said. “But we’re in the final stages of hiring somebody, which will open up those hours that the pantry can be open.”

Cline observed that the pantry doesn’t get as much use as it could, though factors such as time constraints, embarrassment or lack of awareness may exist.

“It’s an asset to students that they haven’t really seen and utilized, and it’s something that we’re really trying to get up off the ground,” Cline said. “It’s not just canned goods — it’s feminine hygiene products and personal hygiene products in general.”

According to a 2021 [study \(https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-020-01149-5\)](https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-020-01149-5) led by George Mason University’s College of Health and Human services, individuals who experience period poverty every month are more likely to experience moderate or severe depression symptoms than their counterparts. The study looked at data collected from more than 470 women enrolled in undergraduate programs. It found that when many young women can’t afford menstrual hygiene products to meet monthly needs, their mental well-being may be impacted.

Poor menstrual hygiene can also impact physical health. It comes with an increased risk for moderate symptoms such as dermatitis to more severe conditions, including urinary tract infections, reproductive issues and fungal infections, as mentioned in a 2018 [study \(https://journals.lww.com/greenjournal/Fulltext/2019/02000/Unmet_Menstrual_Hygiene_Needs_Among_Low_Income.2.aspx#JCL-P-10\)](https://journals.lww.com/greenjournal/Fulltext/2019/02000/Unmet_Menstrual_Hygiene_Needs_Among_Low_Income.2.aspx#JCL-P-10) led by Dr. Anne Sebert Kuhlmann of St. Louis University.

Efforts to end period poverty aren’t just limited to YSU. Several major cities across the U.S., such as Boston, have begun providing free products in their public middle and high schools, and homeless shelters and prisons in New York City are also joining the call for action.

In 2020, Ohio Senate Bill 26 went into effect, meaning the “pink tax” on menstrual hygiene products was dropped on the basis of discrimination against women. At YSU, SGA plans to expand the Aunt Flow dispensers to restrooms across campus, such as Maag Library and other high-traffic areas. The timeline has yet to be determined, according to Koupiaris.

“We would hope this initiative is as important to the next SGA administration as it is to us,” Battaglia said. “We’ve heard so much positive feedback on so many different platforms from students, and I hope that is enough for them to want to keep it going.”

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