

MIZZOU

The magazine of
the Mizzou Alumni Association

[Home](#) » [Fall 2010](#) » [Around the Columns](#) » [Students donate food by swiping meal cards](#)

Around the Columns

Students donate food by swiping meal cards

Alex Holley had a light-bulb moment back in December 2008. The senior broadcast journalism major was home in Irving, Texas, for winter break, and her parents were grilling her about why she wasn't eating all of the weekly allotment of meals they'd paid for. If she wasn't going to use them, they said, maybe she could find something useful to do with the food.



Alex Holley of Irving, Texas, created SWIPES, a program through which students use their prepaid meal plans to donate food to local charities. Photo by Nicholas Benner

Holley got to thinking:

Students carry a sort of debit card and swipe it through a card reader to pay for food in dining halls; any swipes left over at the end of the week are gone forever. She figured there must be other students who don't eat all the meals, so why not donate those unused swipes to charity. And presto, the SWIPES program was born.

Working through the Missouri Students Association (MSA), Holley and other students raised awareness of the new program with T-shirts and signs. Five times since March 2009, she and other volunteers set up tables outside dining halls. As students pass by, the volunteers ask if they'd like to donate. If so, the students head inside, purchase nonperishable foods and bring them back. The volunteers have filled 182 big boxes with donations for delivery to local charities, including Ronald McDonald House, Granny's House and Rainbow House.

The SWIPES program has netted as much as \$3,000 of food during one event and about \$10,000 overall to date.

More 2010 Around the Columns »

 [Follow us on Twitter](#)  [Join us on Facebook](#)  [Subscribe to our feed](#)

Published by MIZZOU magazine, 109 Reynolds Alumni Center, Columbia, MO 65211 | Phone: 573-882-5916
| E-mail: Mizzou@missouri.edu

Opinions expressed in this site do not necessarily reflect the official position of MU or the Mizzou Alumni Association.

Copyright © 2021 — Curators of the [University of Missouri](#). All rights reserved. [DMCA](#) and other [copyright information](#).

An [equal opportunity/affirmative action](#) institution.

Last updated: Feb. 15, 2013