

# Food pantry now open

HOLYOKE – The United Way of Pioneer Valley and Holyoke Community College celebrated the opening of the Holyoke Community Cupboard, a downtown food pantry that will allow residents to pick up free frozen and refrigerated foods in addition to the usual dry goods and shelf-stable items.

The Holyoke Community Cupboard is located on the basement level of the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St., the scene of a Nov. 2 ribbon-cutting and grand opening event.

“This is a really special occasion,” said HCC President George Timmons. “It’s important, and we want to do our part to try to be good community partners and help the city of Holyoke meet this need, and so we want to do that by providing healthy choices and healthy food and making it easy to access.”

The new food pantry, part of the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts’ network, will serve Holyoke residents as well as those from neighboring towns. It is open Thursdays from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m.

“We’re incredibly thankful for the collaboration,” said Megan Moynihan, chief executive officer of the United Way of Pioneer Valley. “Thank you

so much for opening your arms to the United Way. We saw that there was a gap in services and that it was very important to get a food pantry into Holyoke. Capacity wise, we couldn’t do it alone.”

Among those present and taking part in the ribbon-cutting were state Rep. Patricia Duffy, Andrew Morehouse, executive director of the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, and Jordan Hart, executive director of the Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce.

This is the third pantry operated by UWPV after the agency opened sites in Springfield and Chicopee.

“We hope to use this collaboration as a means of finding innovative solutions to food security and to collectively support other initiatives,” said Lee Drewitz, UWPV director of program operations. “This includes offering food demonstrations using food pantry staples and educating the community about the Emergency Food Pantry system.”

HCC also operates a food pantry on campus as part of its Thrive Student Resource Center, which was founded in 2015 with assistance from the United Way of Pioneer Valley.