Paying Parking Tickets With Peanut Butter

University Communications
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For nearly two weeks in late April and early May, more than 100 citations issued by Parking & Transportation Services were settled with a sticky currency: peanut butter.

As part of a PTS campaign benefiting the Campus Pantry, those who received citations for certain parking and moving violations were able to have the fines waived by donating jars of peanut butter. The campaign, which ran from April 23 to May 2, brought in more than 7,500 ounces of peanut butter — nearly 500 pounds.

The idea behind the effort was inspired by similar programs at other universities, said Benjamin Jimenez, parking appeals officer. The idea, he said, seemed like a good way to help stock the Campus Pantry, which provides free food to students and employees in need.

Campaign organizers decided to collect peanut butter after asking Campus Pantry managers what was most needed, Jimenez said.

Parking scofflaws were given the option of donating peanut butter through the online appeals process. The option was available for four of the most-issued citations. Parking permit violations, violations for exceeding the parking time limit, and meter violations, all $50 fines, could be settled with one 40-ounce jar of peanut butter. Citations for speeding in parking garages, which comes with a $95 fine, could be waived with two 40-ounce jars.

The idea was well-received across campus, Jimenez said, adding that many visitors from outside campus who received routine one-time dismissals for their infractions still chose to make donations. PTS also received donations from people who hadn't been cited at all, and some people donated more than the required amount. In all, 141 people who were cited took advantage of the campaign, Jimenez said, totaling about $7,900 in waived fines.

"They really came through for the Campus Pantry," Jimenez said, adding that pantry managers were "overjoyed" when PTS delivered 223 jars of peanut butter on May 4.

Hoping this campaign sticks around? PTS is considering bringing it back at the end of the fall semester, Jimenez said.

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Links
[1] https://parking.arizona.edu/
[2] https://campuspantry.arizona.edu/