



Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York

Alleviating hunger ... Together

BackPack Program

Background

The mission of the BackPack Program is to help alleviate child hunger in America by providing hungry children with nutritious and easy-to-prepare food at times when other resources are not available, such as weekends. The program provides bags filled with food that is child-friendly, shelf-stable, and easily-consumed. Bags are discreetly distributed to participating children on Friday afternoons.

Regional Food Bank and the BackPack Program

During the school week, children in need are provided with nutritious breakfasts and lunches through federally funded School Breakfast and Lunch programs. However, during weekends, these children may not be able to access proper nutrition. To help address this problem, the Food Bank first made the commitment to sponsor the BackPack Program in the fall of 2007. We and our partner school districts provide chronically hungry children with bags full of nutritious foods that they can prepare safely at home on weekends, with or without supervision. Currently, the Food Bank sponsors the BackPack Program in the following schools:

ALBANY COUNTY

- Arbor Hill Elementary, Albany
- Brighter Choice School for Boys, Albany
- Brighter Choice School for Girls, Albany
- New Scotland Elementary, Albany
- Sheridan Preparatory Academy, Albany

COLUMBIA COUNTY

- Chatham Elementary School
- Germantown Central School
- Ichabod Crane Elementary School
- John Edwards Primary School, Hudson
- Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School, Hudson
- Taconic Hills Elementary School

OTSEGO COUNTY

- Cooperstown Elementary School

RENSSELAER COUNTY

- Ark Community Charter School, Troy

SARATOGA COUNTY

- Ballard Elementary School, South Glens Falls
- Harrison Avenue Elementary School, South Glens Falls
- Moreau Elementary School, South Glens Falls
- Tanglewood Elementary School, South Glens Falls

SCHENECTADY COUNTY

- Keane Elementary School, Schenectady
- Lincoln Elementary School, Schenectady

SCHOHARIE COUNTY

- Schoharie Elementary School

WARREN COUNTY

- Hadley-Luzerne Central School, Lake Luzerne
- Jackson Heights Elementary School, Glens Falls
- Warrensburg Elementary

Partnership with these school districts and community organizations makes it possible for the Food Bank to send backpacks home with 500 students every weekend throughout the school year.

Feedback from Parents of BackPack Recipients

- “The program was a big help as I was in the hospital, and my husband had also been. It had made for a difficult year. My kids enjoyed the program and really like the food selection. We were more able to meet our household needs by use of the program, and we are now fortunate to be able to move on from the program as our situation has improved. I would recommend the program to others as a way to help out in hard times. Thanks so much. The children learn to give and receive. This helps with building strong communities.”
- “Since my children have been enrolled in the BackPack Program, I’ve never had to worry about running out of food. The things that are important to my children’s health are always available due to the things that are sent home on Friday. I used to run out of food but I can truly say the BackPack Program stopped that completely.”
- “We’re not usually the kind of people to seek out help with things like this and are unable to drive. It’s been wonderful to have kids bring home things. They are excited every week to bring home food for us. We love the fruits and always use everything. It helps so much with groceries. When they started the program, we hadn’t bought weekly groceries in about a month. After bills, there’s not much left for groceries, so it’s a big relief know we can count on this. We’re just above the Food Stamp income. Thanks for thinking of us!”

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Since its inception in 2007, the BackPack program has expanded to 23 schools in 8 counties and is now serving over 500 children per week, providing approximately 90,000 meals per year.

Objectives:

1. Provide nutritious, healthy food to children at-risk of hunger for preparation and consumption at their place of residence.
2. Distribute food discreetly in easily accessible and safe environments.

Sample BackPack Menus

SAMPLE 1

Single Serving Cereal (1 Box)
2 Cereal Bars
Bread (1 Loaf)
3 Entrees

- Beef Stew
- Chef Boyardee
- Mac and Cheese

1 Shelf Stable Milk (Plain)
1 Shelf Stable Milk (Chocolate)
2 Juice Boxes
2 Snack Packs of Cookies
1 Fresh Vegetable
1 Fresh Fruit

SAMPLE 2

Oatmeal (2 Packets)
Graham Crackers
Bread (1 Loaf)
3 Entrees

- Spaghetti Os
- Peanut Butter and Jelly
- Tuna Fish

1 Shelf Stable Milk (Plain)
1 Shelf Stable Milk (Chocolate)
2 Juice Boxes
2 Snack Packs of Cookies
1 Fresh Vegetable
1 Fresh Fruit

The average cost of 1 BackPack for a week is \$5.56

Sponsor 1 child for a full school year for \$167.00

Sponsor a school, providing weekly backpacks to 30 children in need, for \$5,000.