

THE BACKPACK PROGRAM



At the Regional Food Bank of NENY



**Regional
Food Bank**
OF NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK

PROGRAM GOALS AND MISSION

The Backpack Program is designed to meet the needs of hungry children on weekends when other food resources are not available. The program provides bags filled with food that is child-friendly, shelf-stable, and easily-consumed. Bags are packed each week by school staff and discreetly distributed to participating children every Friday afternoon.

PROGRAM IMPACT

- Backpack partners with 190 schools in 20 counties, serving over 5,500 children each week.
- Over 153,000 bags were distributed during the 2016-17 school year, the equivalent of 920,000 meals.
- Over 125,000 pounds of fresh produce was distributed to Backpack students throughout 2016-17.
- Research has shown the Backpack Program helps improve attendance and academic performance and reduce disciplinary actions for participating students.
- Backpack food is typically shared with the family, which enables the program to meet the nutritional need of the entire household.
- Kids love the fresh fruit because many of them have limited opportunities to enjoy such fresh food.



PROGRAM AT-A- GLANCE

- Is designed to tackle the weekend meal gap, when school breakfasts and lunches are not available
- Provides students with child-friendly, shelf-stable, and easy to prepare foods
- Provides students with the equivalent of six meals over the weekend
- Operates for 30 weeks during the academic year (October-mid June)
- Serves the children most in need as determined by school staff who know them best
- Is flexible in design based on each school's capacities and limitations
- Is locally supported by schools, their partners, and generous community members

ABOUT THE MEALS

Each week, participating students receive:

- 2 breakfast items (cereal, oatmeal packets, graham crackers, granola bars)
- 3 entrees (mac & cheese, PB & J, Spaghetti Os, tuna, soup), etc.
- Loaf of bread or shelf-stable grain option
- 2 juice boxes (100% juice whenever possible)
- Fruit (fresh whenever possible)
- 2 snacks (cookies, popcorn, pudding)
- Milk card for a gallon of milk every other week
- Canned vegetables once a month



- "It helps with extra food between paychecks when we are low on food." -A parent
- "This is a lifeline for many families." -A teacher
- "I am a single mom of two and work a lot of hours and do not qualify for food stamps, every little bit helps." - A parent
- "Students in my classroom have anxiety about weekends and I think this program helps to alleviate some of that stress because they know they will have food to eat." -A teacher

PARTNERING WITH THE FOOD BANK

Partnering with the Regional Food Bank helps schools provide additional meals to their neediest students.

The Food Bank draws from its large inventory to provide nourishing foods at a low cost. The Food Bank also creates the menus and provides administrative structure and support for the program.

Partner schools work with the Food Bank to establish pick-up times for food, pack the bags, distribute to students, and locally support the program. Partner schools work with businesses, individuals, and community and religious organizations to financially sustain the program.

Through these partnerships, the Regional Food Bank is able to meet the needs of children facing chronic hunger and food insecurity and advance its mission of **alleviating hunger... together.**

\$183 - *Cost of supporting one child for an entire year of meals*

\$2,750 - *Cost per year to serve 15 students*

\$5,500 - *Cost per year to serve 30 students*

For additional information about the Backpack program contact:

518-786-3691

BackPackinformation@regionalfoodbank.net



**Regional
Food Bank**
OF NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK

