

# THE BACKPACK PROGRAM



**Regional  
Food Bank**  
OF NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK

## PROGRAM GOALS AND MISSION

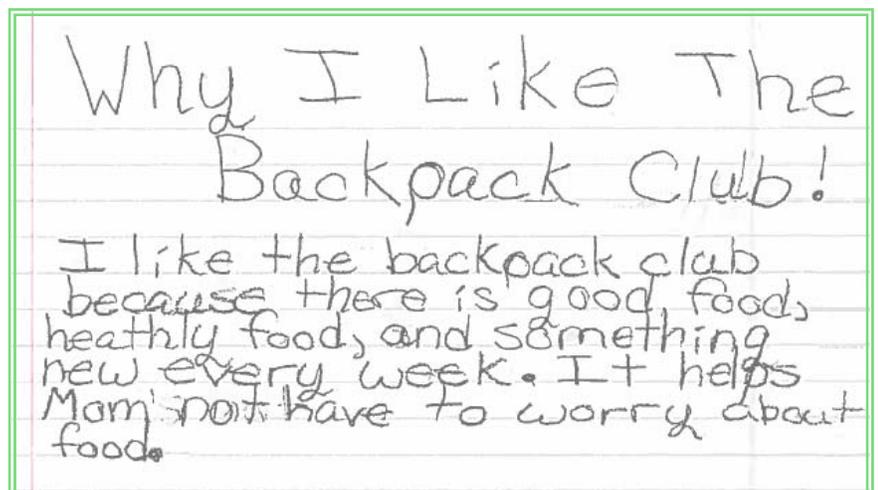
The BackPack Program is designed to meet the needs of hungry children on weekends when school breakfasts and lunches aren't available. The program provides bags filled with food that is child-friendly, nonperishable and easily-consumed. Bags are packed each week by school staff and discreetly distributed to participating children every Friday afternoon.

## PROGRAM IMPACT

- BackPack partners with 220 schools in 20 counties, serving over 6,500 children each week.
- Over 186,000 bags were distributed during the 2016-17 school year, the equivalent of 1.1 million meals.
- Over 128,000 pounds of fresh produce was distributed to BackPack students throughout 2017-18.
- 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.
- Helps participating children learn, thrive and grow.

## PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

- Provides children with child-friendly, non-perishable, and easy to prepare foods
- Provides students with the equivalent of six meals each weekend
- Operates for 30 weeks during the academic year (October - 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.)
- Milk card for a gallon of milk (every other week)
- Egg card for a dozen eggs (every other week)
- Loaf of bread or shelf-stable grain option
- Fruit (fresh whenever possible)
- Canned vegetables once a month
- 2 snacks (cookies, popcorn, pudding)



## PARTNERING WITH THE FOOD BANK

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

The Food Bank creates weekly menus for each school and provides administrative structure and support for the program.

The Food Bank draws from its large inventory to provide nourishing foods at a low cost.

Schools partner with the Food Bank to establish pick-up times for food, pack the bags, distribute bags 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.**

- **"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**

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

**\$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:**

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