

# THE BACKPACK PROGRAM



**Regional  
Food Bank**  
OF NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK

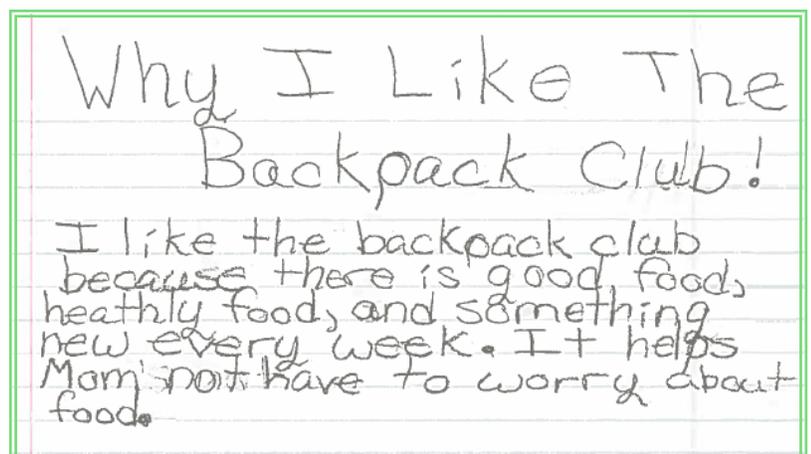
The BackPack Program is designed to meet the needs of hungry children on weekends when school breakfasts and lunches aren't available. The program provides bags filled with food that is child-friendly, non-perishable and easily consumed. Bags are packed each week by school staff and discreetly distributed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

## PROGRAM IMPACT

- BackPack partners with 241 schools in 22 counties, serving nearly 7,000 children each week.
- Over 171,000 bags were distributed during the 2020-21 school year, the equivalent of over 2 million meals. Feeding America estimates the value of the food distributed at \$4.3 Million dollars.
- Bags include nonperishable foods as well as fresh bread and produce. Last school year, over 83,000 loaves of bread were provided to students. Lined up end to end, they would stretch for over 13 miles!
- Over the 2020-21 academic year, nearly 150,000 pounds of fresh produce was included in BackPacks, equaling the weight of six full-size school buses. Kids love the fresh fruit as many of them have limited opportunities to enjoy such fresh food.
- Research has shown that a student's participation in the BackPack program helps improve attendance and academic performance while reducing disciplinary actions.
- BackPack food is typically shared with the family, which helps meet the nutritional needs of the entire household.
- The BackPack program helps participating children learn, thrive and grow.

## PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

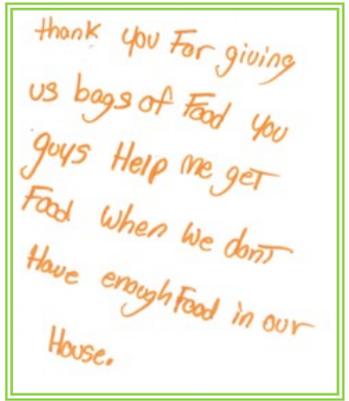
- Provides food that is easy for children to recognize and easy to prepare
- The average bag weighs over 14 pounds, containing food for 12 meals.
- Operates for at least 30 weeks during the academic year (October - June)
- Serves the children most in need as determined by school staff who know them best
- 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, 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 non-perishable 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 nourishing meals to their neediest students.

The Food Bank creates weekly menus for each school and provides administrative structure and support for the program. Menus are drawn from the Food Bank's large inventory to provide diverse foods at a low cost.

Schools partner with the Food Bank to pick up the 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.**

**\$183 Cost of supporting one child for a year**

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

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

For additional information about the Backpack program contact:

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