

North Dakota BackPack Program



Childhood Hunger and Its Impact on Our Community

During the 2016-2017 school year, 36,192 children in North Dakota qualify for, and greatly rely on the free and reduced school lunch program to meet their daily nutritional needs. But on the weekends, many of these children struggle with hunger.

Hunger amongst our children can have lifelong and extremely costly consequences. Hungry children suffer physical, emotional and developmental impairment. They are sick and hospitalized more often. Hungry children don't learn as well at school, which in turn, limits their potential and productivity as adults. Adults who experienced hunger as children are often not as well prepared mentally, emotionally, physically or socially to perform in today's work environment.

An Effective Solution

Designed to meet the needs of hungry children at times when other resources are not available, such as weekends and school vacations, the BackPack Program is tested and proven effective in alleviating childhood hunger. The program is simple:



- Students are recommended for the program by teachers or principals who see first-hand their nutritional needs
- Backpacks are filled with food that children take home on weekends or school vacations
- The food is child-friendly, nonperishable, easily consumed
- Backpacks are discreetly given to children on the last day before the weekend, holiday vacation or summer break

The result: Children who participate in the BackPack Program are more attentive in class and show improvement in health, concentration, behavior and performance. *This program makes sense!*

The impact:

86% of teachers reported their students did not complain about hunger.

82% of teachers reported the students are ready to learn and participate when they arrive on Monday mornings.

69% of teachers reported improvements in students' relationship with school personnel.

64% of parents reported the BackPack Program has improved their child's health.

95% of students reported they are either very happy, excited, a little happy, or proud to receive their bag each week.

Great Plains Food Bank Role

The BackPack Program is an official program of Feeding America – the nation's food bank network. As the food bank for North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota, the Great Plains Food Bank is excited to share and coordinate this program in the Cass-Clay community. Our role is to secure the food, provide warehouse space to store the product, coordinate volunteers to fill the backpacks, and deliver the backpacks to the schools. Then, in collaboration with school personnel, the backpacks are distributed to participating students. Program oversight is provided by a community-based steering committee.

Participating Schools Fargo/Moorhead/West Fargo Academic Year 2017-18

- Aurora Elementary, West Fargo
- Ben Franklin Middle School, Fargo
- Bennett Elementary, Fargo
- Brooks Harbor Elementary, West Fargo
- Carl Ben Eielson Middle School, Fargo
- Cheney Middle School, West Fargo
- C.A. Lodoen Kindergarten Center, West Fargo
- Discovery Middle School, Fargo
- Dorothy Dodds Elementary, Moorhead
- Eastwood Elementary, West Fargo
- Ed Clapp Elementary, Fargo
- Ellen Hopkins Elementary, Moorhead
- Freedom Elementary, West Fargo
- Harwood Elementary, Harwood
- Head Start, Fargo and West Fargo
- Horace Elementary, Horace
- Horace Mann Elementary, Fargo
- Independence Elementary, West Fargo
- Jefferson Elementary, Fargo
- Kennedy Elementary, Fargo
- LE Berger Elementary, West Fargo
- Legacy Elementary, West Fargo
- Lewis and Clark Elementary, Fargo
- Liberty Middle School, West Fargo
- Lincoln Elementary, Fargo
- Madison Elementary, Fargo
- McKinley Elementary, Fargo
- Nativity Elementary, Fargo
- Osgood Elementary, Fargo
- Red River Area Learning Center, Moorhead
- Robert Asp Elementary, Moorhead
- Roosevelt Elementary, Fargo
- Sheyenne High School, West Fargo
- S.G. Reinertsen Elementary, Moorhead
- South Elementary, West Fargo
- Washington Elementary, Fargo
- West Fargo High School, West Fargo
- Westside Elementary School, West Fargo

Participating Locations Statewide Academic Year 2017-2018

- Barnesville
- Beulah
- Buffalo/Oriska
- Burlington
- Cando
- Casselton
- Dickinson
- Dilworth
- Dunseith
- Hatton
- Hazen
- Hettinger
- Hunter/Arthur/Gardner/Argusville
- Grafton/Park River
- Grand Forks
- Jamestown
- Kindred
- Lakota
- LaMoure
- Langdon
- Larimore
- Linton
- Mayville
- Mapleton
- Minot
- New Rockford
- Northwood
- Petersburg
- Steele
- Turtle Lake
- Valley City
- Wahpeton/Breckenridge/Fairmount/Campbell/Rothsay/Wyndmere/Lidgerwood/Richland/Hankinson
- Watford City

Current Costs

With the support of volunteers, donated kid-friendly food and purchased food acquired through the Great Plains Food Bank at a reduced price, it currently costs just \$5 to feed a child over the weekend which includes a juice, milk, fruit, 3 meals plus snacks. The cost to support one child throughout the school year (38 weeks) is \$190.

We believe with your support, we don't just change lives for a weekend, we change lives forever. For when a child is fed, they are equipped to learn, grow and dream of a future filled with opportunity.

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