



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.

Overview of the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York

The Regional Food Bank of NENY works to alleviate hunger by collecting large donations of food from the food industry and distributing it to charitable agencies including food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and other programs serving hungry and disadvantaged people. In 2008, the Food Bank provided nearly 20 million pounds of food to more than 1,000 charitable agencies in 23 counties of New York State. The Regional Food Bank is one of eight food banks in the state and is a member of Feeding America, the Nation's Food Bank Network.

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 at sites at the following schools:

- Arbor Hill Elementary (Albany County)
- Ark Community Charter School (Rensselaer County)
- Brighter Choice School for Boys (Albany County)
- Brighter Choice School for Girls (Albany County)
- Sheridan Preparatory Academy (Albany County)
- Schoharie Elementary School (Schoharie County)
- Warrensburg Elementary (Warren County)

BackPack Program Success Stories

- “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 liked 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.”
– Parent of BackPack Recipient
- “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 things 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 knowing we can count on this. We’re just above the Food Stamp income. Thanks for thinking of us!”
–Parent of BackPack Recipient

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