

The BackPack Program at Whitehall Elementary School



**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

- The BackPack program partners with 220 schools across 20 counties.
- Over 186,000 bags were distributed during the school year, the equivalent of 1.1 million meals.
- Over 125,000 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.
- Students return to school each Monday with more energy and more focus to allow them to be ready to learn.
- Helps participating children learn, thrive and grow.

WHITEHALL BACKPACK

- During the 2017-18 school year, the BackPack program at Whitehall Elementary School distributed 1,350 BackPacks. The bags included:
- 13,921 pounds of food
- 418 pounds of fresh produce
- The equivalent of 8,100 meals
- Each bag weighed an average of 10 pounds
- Community and school based fundraisers help financially support the program.

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
- Fruit (fresh whenever possible)
- 2 snacks (cookies, popcorn, pudding)
- Milk card for a gallon of milk (every other week)
- Egg card for a dozen eggs (every other week)
- Canned vegetables (once a month)

HOW WHITEHALL BACKPACK HELPS

- "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

Why I Like The Backpack Club!

I like the backpack club because there is good foods, healthy foods, and something new every week. It helps Mom not have to worry about food.

PARTNERING WITH THE FOOD BANK

The Food Bank partners with Whitehall Elementary School to distribute bags to needy students. The Food Bank draws from its large inventory to provide nourishing foods at a low cost, creates weekly menus for each school and provides administrative structure and support for the program. Staff from the school and volunteers pick up the food, pack and distribute the bags to students, and coordinates efforts to support the program financially. Local businesses, community and school based organizations, and individuals financially sustain the program.

Funds earmarked for Whitehall Elementary School's BackPack program are used exclusively for Whitehall Elementary School's BackPack program.

HOW YOU CAN HELP WHITEHALL'S BACKPACK

\$183 Cost to support 1 child for an entire school year

\$2,750 Cost to support 15 children for an entire school year

\$8,235 Cost per year to serve 45 students

Yes, I will support WHITEHALL'S BackPack Program and help provide a hungry child with nutritious meals during the weekend.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Donation Amount: \$ _____

Please mail to: Whitehall Central School, Post Office Box 29, Whitehall, NY 12887

