

Services from the Heart, Inc.

The Services from the Heart - Backpack Buddies Program is an all volunteer 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization based in Severna Park that provides nutritious meals, snacks, and beverages to food insecure children attending three Title I Schools within Anne Arundel County. Their mission is to reduce the impact of poverty by providing weekly backpacks of food to children in need and to create volunteer opportunities within the community.

Nutrition plays an important role in the physical development of children. It is also one of the primary components of a child's academic success. Children from food insecure households are more likely to fall behind in terms of academic development when their basic nutritional needs are not being met. Many children living within Anne Arundel County are dependent on receiving breakfast and lunch from school. Backpack Buddies serves children in the free or reduced lunch program who have been identified by the school's Principal or Guidance Counselor as "in need" and have the highest risk of experiencing a food shortage over weekends, holidays, and extended school breaks.

The program was founded by Donna Wilson-Johnston in March 2013 and began by serving 19 children at two schools. Nine academic years later, the program has expanded to serve 105 children at three local elementary schools - Eastport (Annapolis), Hilltop (Glen Burnie), and Belle Grove (Brooklyn Park).

Every Friday, participants in the program receive an assorted bag of food, packed by dedicated volunteers, that contains 6 meals, 3 healthy snacks, 2 beverages and 2 pieces of fresh fruit. The program also covers extended holidays and breaks (an average of 10 days during the academic year), with approximately 17 meal servings and 20 snacks. During the 2020-2021 school year, Backpack Buddies used a grant from the Safeway Foundation to provide additional assorted fresh produce to students, which they hope to continue this upcoming school year.

Your generous funds will be used to support our upcoming 2021-2022 school year serving 105 children with weekly food backpacks September through June 2022 (37 weeks). In addition, donations will help provide our families with Holiday Meal Bags over the Thanksgiving & Christmas Holiday.

The Backpack Buddies program relies entirely on grants, monetary and in-kind donations, and community support from generous organizations such as the DSAC Club and greatly appreciates your consideration to receive member donations.