



THE BACKPACK FRIENDS TRAINING PROGRAM MANUAL A Development Guide

Backpack Friends, Incorporated, LLC

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IS WEEKEND HUNGER AFFECTING YOUR COMMUNITY?

DID YOU KNOW that 1 in 4 children in the State of Texas is food insecure?

And it's on the rise.

What impact does hunger have on a child's life? In addition to causing social and emotional problems, it can impair a child's education and development. None of us can learn when we're hungry... especially children. And when children go hungry over the weekend, they aren't prepared to learn on Monday.

We firmly believe that leadership isn't about being in charge. It's about caring for those *in your charge*. You can make a difference in your community by removing educational barriers created by weekend hunger. By developing a self-sustaining weekend hunger relief program, you'll help provide kids in your community with the food they need in order to learn.

In the Backpack Friends Training Program Manual, you will:

- *Learn about Backpack Friends' story, mission, and method.*
- *Learn how to create your own Backpack Friends program.*
- *Learn how to sustain a weekend-hunger relief program.*
- *Receive the resources and information you need in order to successfully combat weekend hunger.*

Hunger is complicated, but feeding a child isn't. Together we can end weekend hunger in your community.

THE BACKPACK FRIENDS STORY

Hunger is complicated. But feeding a child isn't.

What began with feeding 12 children at a local elementary school has grown into a passion project that's changing lives across central Texas. And because 1 out of every 4 kids in Texas doesn't have enough food to eat while away from their school campus, Backpack Friends has created a community solution to combat a community problem.

Instead of thousands of children each month spending nights and weekends hungry, volunteers across communities join forces to provide weekend meal kits to children. Kids who might otherwise not have food to eat, now have access to healthy, nutritious, kid-friendly, brand name, brand new foods that are lower in sugar and higher in protein than other typical 'backpack' programs.

We believe that leadership isn't about being in charge. It's about caring for those *in your charge*. That's why local partnerships are vital to our mission. We work hard to build community relationships that benefit both businesses and families. Building a community where every child has a chance to succeed is at the heart of what we do. And that begins with the simple act of caring for the most vulnerable among us.

Backpack Friends' vision is to wipe out weekend hunger in our communities. It's a bold vision. But we believe that kids matter, so our #1 focus is on them.



BackpackFriends.com



"Now I know I will get something to eat this weekend."

-Karen
Age 9

And we believe we're stronger together.

Today, Backpack Friends has delivered more than 70,000 bags of healthy, nutritious food to children across Central Texas. Our food items always contain single-serve, brand name, kid friendly food that's higher in protein and 40% lower in sugar than typical backpack programs. And thanks to our generous local partnerships and an outpouring of volunteers, we're making a significant impact in the lives of kids.

At Backpack Friends, we understand how overwhelming and scary it is to create a program to end weekend hunger. That's why we readily share our failures and our insights to help others make an impact in their own community.

Together we win.

HOW BACKPACK FRIENDS WORKS



Every week, our volunteers pack brand new, brand-name, nutritious foods into plastic bags and deliver them to participating schools. At the campus, school staff discreetly distributes them to students each Friday. Students receiving the bags have been identified by school staff (such as counselors, nurses, teachers, or principals) as living in “food-insecure” households, meaning their family doesn’t always know the source of their next meal.

The Backpack Friends program feeds each elementary student and any siblings the student may have. Because food insecurity doesn’t stop at 5th grade, our middle school and high school program provides food to middle school and high school students. This program is unique because, while it is overseen by campus staff, it is operated **by students for students**, and matches adult-sized portions and choices with an anonymous, online shopping experience.

With the upper level program, students use a simple online form to select products to build their own meals from several categories. Students remain anonymous by using their student I.D. number and can choose a pick-up place they feel is safe (i.e., a favorite teacher’s room). Student volunteers assemble the bags and deliver them to their designated places. It gives older students the opportunity to ‘shop’ for their own food – and it teaches their peers the management, business, and leadership skills that make it happen.

Every Backpack Friends program is unique to the community and school it serves. However, it should always be used and thought of as an educational tool that aims to alleviate emotional and psychological stress for kids in the classroom.

BACKPACK



FRIENDS

KEYS TO SUCCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Our priority is to **always** treat kids with the greatest dignity and respect. That's why our bags always include brand new, brand-name products. When kids open a bag with brand-name products they recognize, it reminds them that they are important and that they matter.

Backpack Friends should be referred to as an educational tool, not a feeding or food handout program.

TREATING KIDS WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

We aren't a food pantry or food bank. These terms, in addition to not describing our mission and program, can have negative connotations that could make recipients feel guilty or ashamed. Backpack Friends should never make kids feel like they deserve less.

Our purpose is to create a solution, not to make judgments.

KEEPING KIDS AT THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING

In the same way, the key to success for a weekend hunger relief program *is to keep the kids at the heart of your program.*

We describe the BACKPACK FRIENDS model as a chart with three concentric circles. **The outside circle is the individual or company.** This should be the last thing you consider when creating your program. A hunger relief program should not be designed to bring attention or acknowledgment to a person or an organization.

The middle circle is the community.

Although this is an important factor in creating a program, it shouldn't be the ultimate motivation. Communities often have other agendas that can cause problems within the program – or even affect the kids.

The inner circle is always the kids. They should be the program's sole purpose and drive. Anything and everything done by your program should benefit the students' well-being and education.

THE BACKPACK FRIENDS MODEL

In this manual, we'll outline the six steps to create the framework for a weekend hunger relief program.

1. *Connecting With Community Schools.*
2. *Creating A Simple Administrative Structure.*
3. *Establishing Program Support.*
4. *Ironing Out Logistics and Mechanics.*
5. *Establishing A Thriving Online Presence.*
6. *Evaluating Your Progress.*

Each step plays a vital role in establishing an adaptive, sustainable weekend hunger relief program that will support your community for years to come.



CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Backpack Friends offers a community solution to a community problem. It's our commitment to give our very best effort on behalf of hungry children. Without community involvement and support, your program will not be able to sustain itself. The program should be:

- Designed for the community.
- Run by the community.
- Supported by the community.

It is essential to make sure your community is on board and wants to be a part of the solution. *You will first need to seek the approval of the appropriate school administrator of each district you plan to serve.* Face-to-face communication is invaluable, so meet with the superintendent in person. While you are busy packing and delivering food, there needs to be an appointed School Coordinator at each of the schools you serve who will manage the program at the school level and serve as the lead contact for you and the teachers.

SCHOOL COORDINATOR

School Coordinators are expected to coordinate surveys, distribute referral forms to teachers, distribute food to the correct teachers (or to the students themselves), and more. They need to spread awareness and passion for the program to all teachers at their school.

It is extremely important that you communicate the importance of discretion to each School Coordinator. Surveys show that students **do not** want other students to know they are receiving food. *We suggest using the included form that outlines the specific tasks and responsibilities of a School Coordinator. (You can download all forms at BackpackFriends.com/resources.)*



HOW TO CHOOSE A SCHOOL COORDINATOR

There are many ways to choose a School Coordinator. **First and foremost, they should be equally as passionate as you are.** Keep in mind that this person will be the liaison between the program and an individual school that you serve. A School Coordinator should have exceptional organizational skills and understand the mission. Prospective coordinators could be:

- A school nurse/counselor
- A parent involvement member
- A School Health Advisory Council member



TEACHERS

The School Coordinator should communicate with other staff and faculty in their school. They help build support for your program, ensuring its sustainability.

Teachers, in some cases, may be the final step in getting Backpack Friends food into the hands of a child in need. There are many ways to do this discreetly. The following methods have been highly effective:

- Staff can make a Friday afternoon announcement just before the end of the school day, announcing it's time for the 'Backpack Club' or the 'Rocket Team' to come to the office. Students will then be dismissed to a particular room/office to receive their food and place it in their own backpack.
- If students have lockers, food can be put in the corresponding locker belonging to students in the program.
- While the students are at recess or lunch, a parent or other volunteer can place the food into the appropriate child's backpack. *(It's a good idea to do this towards the end of the day.)

FORMS

We have forms for school officials that ensure the process of implementing the program in schools goes smoothly. Some schools have created a web page with links to these forms so they are readily available to teachers and the School Coordinator. *To view and download all of the following forms, please visit BackpackFriends.com/resources.*

DETERMINING STUDENT HUNGER

Your responsibility is to provide the food. It is the campus' responsibility to determine which kids need assistance. The Backpack Friends Lounge Flyer is a document that will help teachers determine which of their students could benefit from this program.

We encourage you to place copies in the staff lounge and/or in teachers' boxes to provide easy access to the program.

See included form or download all forms at BackpackFriends.com/resources.

REFERRAL FORM

Once a student has been determined food insecure, the teacher needs to then give a referral form to the Backpack Friends School Coordinator. This form allows teachers to refer a student who they have determined as food insecure.

See included form or download all forms at BackpackFriends.com/resources.

PERMISSION FORMS

The next step is the most important. It is crucial not to forget to send out permission forms.

The school using your program must send out permission forms to the parent/guardian asking for their consent in allowing their child to be placed in the Backpack Friends program. This form also addresses any allergies/dietary concerns a child may have.

See included forms (English and Spanish) or download all forms at BackpackFriends.com/resources.

BUILDING A SIMPLE-YET-EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE



Ideally, your program will need a designated group of people to help run and support it. As the Site Coordinator (YOU!), it is your job to determine what kind of group will work best for your community and how it will function.

There is no one-size-fits-all formula for how your group should function. However, your group should be comprised of members from **every** part of the community: schools, Chamber of Commerce, churches, businesses, civic organizations, parents, etc. The Site Coordinator needs to keep their team on track, continually refocus the team in order to grow and maintain the program, and provide an avenue to resolve any problem areas, as well as opportunities to discuss ways to improve its effectiveness.

The group serves to help the Site Coordinator make important decisions about the program. It can also develop the workforce that kick-starts the program. If this is the case, ask your group members what they're good at. Based on their responses, divide them into teams:

- *Inventory Team* — for those who are organized and handle finances well.
- *Prep Team* — for those who have the time and ability to meet with the food truck, unload and open boxes, and set up food for packing.
- *Packing Team* — for those who have the time and ability to pack bags, restock, break down boxes during packing, carry full boxes to the storage area, and help at the assembly line if needed.
- *Delivery Team* — for those with time and a vehicle suitable for delivering to school campuses.
- *Fundraising/Sponsorship Team* — for those who are well-organized and have the ability to share the vision and mission.
- *Events Team* — for those who are skilled at planning events, enlisting volunteers, and coordinating entertainment, etc.
- *Community Relations Team* — for those who are good at building relationships in the community by writing/sending thank-you notes to donors and volunteers, speaking to others in the community about the program, and speaking with local news stations.
- *Technology Team* — for those who have the experience and creativity to run social media accounts and volunteer sign-up tools, email volunteers, or assist with other communications needs.



ESTABLISHING PROGRAM SUPPORT

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are *everything*. They are the hands and feet, the heart and soul, the muscle and the backbone of the Backpack Friends program. They sort, prep, pack, deliver, evangelize, and promote, and help in any other way necessary to make your program a success. Your volunteers will make or break the program. Their positive experience and accomplishments will become your reputation.

Invest in your volunteers. Encourage them. Praise them. Remind them how important they are. Send them holiday cards. Text them on their birthday and anniversary. Help nurture them in their own personal growth.

Volunteer tools like SignUp Genius, BetterUnite, etc. are numerous (and free!). If you are unfamiliar with online volunteer tools, we'd LOVE to walk you through and show you just how easy it is!

Sign-up tools also come in handy if you continue to have an excess of volunteers. (It happens more than you think!) If this becomes a continuous problem, the volunteers with nothing to do may feel unneeded. When this mentality spreads, volunteers stop coming, the community stops engaging with the program, and financial support shrinks.

At volunteer activities, have a welcome table that has sign-in sheets, donation information, and other general information about your program. Those working at the table can direct new volunteers to where they need to go and explain what they will be doing. *All communities can purchase a Backpack Friends banner, which is customized for your community.*



PARTNERS: SHARING YOUR STRENGTHS

While individual volunteers from the community are extremely important, so are partners. The Backpack Friends program needs partners that can help provide reliable, consistent support systems to create *sustainability*. Some of your partners may even host a mini-version of what you would do in your warehouse — sort, pack, and deliver food. In this case, each site acts as an ambassador for your program.

CIVIC GROUPS

Schools, athletic teams, and service organizations have discovered that volunteering for Backpack Friends is a great team-building opportunity. Civic groups can assist your work in a multitude of ways, from financial gifts and logistical support to promotion, and volunteer teams.

CHURCHES

Reach out to your community's religious groups. There are plenty of ways for churches to get involved. Churches can provide financial gifts, volunteers, and logistical support. Many faith groups who don't ordinarily cross denominational or theological lines will actually come together for a common purpose—and feeding children is usually close to the top of that list.

CORPORATIONS

Corporate partners can also assist your work in a variety of ways, including financial gifts, logistical support, and volunteer teams. The vast majority of companies have social responsibility teams and 'give back' programs. A little research can put you in touch with the right person that would be thrilled to get involved!

LOCAL SMALL BUSINESSES

Because Backpack Friends is designed to look like your local community, local small businesses are **essential partners**. Why? Because people don't do business with businesses. People do business with *people*. Local small businesses are a vital part of any community and should be valued as such.

When we meet with *any group* interested in contributing to Backpack Friends, we always ask, "What do you do best?" We operate on the synergistic principle of 'sharing your strengths'.

For more information about our partnership program, please visit www.backpackfriends.com/about.



DONATIONS

MONETARY

It is important to us that Backpack Friends is working hard towards a “100% Model” of operations.

Our ‘**Impactivist Program**’ is made up of individual donors and partners who help underwrite the overhead costs of running the program (any utilities, rent, salaries, etc.), so that all general, unspecified donations will be able to go directly to feeding hungry children. And the community knows this.

Our website provides information on how to donate and gives the donor the option to donate to the general budget or to specific operations costs. You may also direct your community to give online at BackpackFriends.com. By designating their donations to go to your community, the donations we receive via our website can go to support your program.

FOOD

We allow a very limited menu of food donations. All food donations must be (1) in original packaging, (2) packaged as individual servings, (3) within the ‘best use’ date and (4) factory sealed.

However, through our partnerships with companies like Labatt Foods, Hiland Dairy, and Sysco, we can leverage our buying power and stretch our dollars to buy more than others can at retail. The most efficient use of a dollar is typically through our buying power, but we also understand the importance of personally donating actual food items. A current list of foods we accept can be found at BackpackFriends.com/resources.



SUPPLIES

There are many other products you will need. Make your community aware of your need for these supplies. You may be surprised by how helpful they can be. Many of the items below have come from local and corporate donors such as Home Depot, Office Max, Sam's Club, Costco, Walmart, HEB, etc. You will need:

- Tables for assembly line
- Storage Totes
- New/Unused Shopping Bags
- Bag Holders
- Banana Boxes (donated from stores)
- Box Cutters
- Dollies
- Trash Carts
- Dumpsters
- Dedicated Space





GRANTS

Always let the mission of the program fuel your actions. Your program requires funding, but again, if you always include the community, all of your financial needs will be met.

There might come a time when your program will face a large financial need. To secure funding, you may consider submitting a grant. Grants can be a great source of funding for your program. However, do not use them as a primary source of funding, no matter how large the need. We consider grants to be *short-term funding*.

When you turn to grants as a primary source of funding, two potentially negative effects occur. Firstly, you lose the opportunity for the community to help the program. While you and your team are a part of the community, this program only thrives when all parts of the community are involved, whether that is with moral support, donations, or volunteer work. *Never miss an opportunity to increase engagement.*

Secondly, resist the temptation to run your program on an *event-driven basis*. Many nonprofit organizations base a large percentage of their funding on events and fundraisers such as galas, fun runs, auctions, etc. By doing so, you run the risk of a poorly-attended event, bad weather, or worse... a pandemic like the recent 2020 COVID-19 situation, that can completely disable your ability to feed hungry children.

Again, hyper-local support, from both individuals and businesses, is key to sustainability.

SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION

Show your appreciation for the community's support and keep them excited about Backpack Friends! Send thank-you letters to donors. Post pictures and videos to social media. Send updates (emails, phone calls, etc.) to local partners. Close out every volunteer activity by letting them know how much they have accomplished; and, if possible, showcase the donors that have supported your program's efforts.

Bottom line: treat every individual and every business as if they were your ONLY supporter. Treat them as if you couldn't feed hungry kids without them by your side... because you can't.



LOGISTICS & MECHANICS

While you may have different churches and/or civic groups willing to store food and host sorting and packing, having your own 'home' is beneficial. Over the span of six years, we've seen tremendous growth. Our program started by feeding 12 kids out of an empty church workroom. As we grew, our workroom filled to overflowing, as well as Tom and Heather's home studio and living room. Volunteers stored food in spare bedrooms and under their kitchen tables. Thankfully, today we operate out of a small warehouse.

As your program grows, having a designated building ensures there will always be a place to store and sort food, receive food orders, and pack bags. However, depending on how many you serve in your community, you may not need a warehouse. There are many communities that only require a small building, such as a school classroom or a storage unit.

HOW TO SECURE A STORAGE FACILITY

Go out into your community and look for them. Talk to community members and see if they can help, including them in every step of your program. In many communities, word of mouth has proven to be a successful way to get what you need. Your partners and donors can also provide a helping hand in acquiring the financial support you need to get a facility.

TRANSPORTATION

Many wholesale companies like Labatt or Sysco will deliver food directly to you. In most other respects, transportation will need to be provided by you, a volunteer, or many volunteers.

Once food has been packed and placed in banana boxes, it is ready to be transported to the schools.



ORDERING FOOD

Wholesale suppliers provide us with brand new, brand-name food.

Partners like Labatt Foods are a billion-dollar company with more than 100 years of history in our state. Once your community becomes a part of the Backpack Friends community, you have access to purchasing power. Together, we can provide food for children in our communities for pennies on the dollar vs. buying retail at your local grocery stores.

Though your community's needs may differ, we have a list of foods that should be the basis of what you put in the weekend backpacks. Typically, our weekend delivery consists of an assortment of foods such as Goldfish crackers, Cheez-Itz, cereals, Kraft Mac and Cheese cup, peanut butter crackers, Gatorade Zero, applesauce, Hiland Dairy chocolate milk, beef sticks and Jif To Go peanut butter cup. (70g protein and 35% less sugar than typical programs.)

SCHOOL DELIVERY PROCEDURE

Ultimately, each community's schedule will differ. However, we've included an example of our schedule for reference.

We ask our volunteers to bring their own vehicle to our facility at 9am every Thursday morning during the school year to deliver 30-35lb banana boxes (filled with 10 meal kits per box). We need dedicated and reliable volunteers willing to work in all types of weather. Volunteers unload boxes with the School Coordinator and have no contact with the students.

Though we usually deliver on Thursdays, drop-off days are subject to change based on the school calendar, which the School Coordinator should update you on.





SORTING & ASSEMBLY LINE PREP

Sorting is the process of organizing the different foods you have to make assembly as efficient and error-free as possible. Labeling clear totes is a great way to keep your food organized. Prepare food for the bag assembly process by opening boxes, unwrapping packaging, stocking shelves, removing plastic and emptying trash from your storage/packing facility.

Once the food has been organized, make sure all food products are at least six inches off of the ground. You may choose to sort when you receive food orders, right before packing, right before and after packing, or all of the above.

To prep the assembly line, food items will need to be placed on the tables that you assemble the 'meal kits' on. The assembly line will have each item in a specific order—beginning with the bags placed at the front, food should be arranged by heaviest to lightest. (You never want to place heavier items last— it will crush anything light and fragile inside the bag.)

BACKUP FOOD SUPPLY for each food item is placed UNDER the table at its corresponding point in the assembly chain.

Banana boxes are placed at the end of the table where the lightest items are. Our boxes are filled with TEN bags per box and stacked in an alternating criss-cross pattern to create stability.

If possible, label your tables/shelves according to where each food item goes from heaviest to lightest, starting from where the bags and bag holders are. If you are unable to label the tables, make a layout or list that shows the order that the food items need to go in. Make multiple copies so you can distribute them to volunteers that are helping to set up food items. We also suggest making some tables that are “kid friendly” or at kid height. Remember, Backpack Friends is also a place where the entire community, including kids, comes out to help!





PACKING

It's time for trick-or-treat!

After multitudes of packing parties, and trying lots of different combinations of ways to get food in the bags the truth is that simple is best. By far the quickest, most efficient way to complete the job is the way we learned as kids on Halloween night!

Volunteers begin with taking an empty bag (ideally set up on a stand like you'd find at the checkout of your local Wal-Mart or grocery store). With all the items laid out on tables (heaviest to lightest), each volunteer can quickly walk along the items and place ONE of each food item in the bag. After the last item is in the bag, they should hand it off to a volunteer for it to be tied, placed in a box, and counted.

This SECOND volunteer can quickly squeeze out as much air as possible, tie the bag as if it were a balloon (as opposed to tying it with 'bunny ears' like a pair of sneakers), and place it in the box. When the box has TEN bags in it, a THIRD volunteer can move the box to the storage area. This process keeps the assembly line moving quickly and easily, and allows the original volunteer to return to the process of filling bags.

As the food items on the top of the table run out, additional volunteer help may be needed. The backup food items, which correspond to the food items that were above them, will be pulled from under the table and put in place to keep things running smoothly.





BUILDING AN ONLINE PRESENCE

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a great way to establish your program's online presence. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok and other social media platforms are free, easy to keep updated, and can quickly reach a large number of people.

Make sure to appoint someone who thoroughly understands the Backpack Friends mission, is able to consistently update it, and has a good grasp of social media tools in order to maintain an engaging online presence.

APPS

Some communities take advantage of the technology the schools they serve already use. Some schools have created apps to facilitate announcements to faculty and students, along with providing similar functions as those on their school website. Incorporating Backpack Friends updates and volunteer needs to this app could increase your program's audience.

WEBSITE

We encourage all new communities to use our Backpack Friends official website to host a web page for your community. This is an easy way to make sure your web presence corresponds with and maintains the Backpack Friends brand.

These pages are meant to be a resource that allows people to find you, help with search engine entries (SEO and SIO), and also give your community credibility by demonstrating that it is part of a larger organization. This established credibility makes people feel safe about giving and volunteering.

If you are interested in having your own community page in our website, please email admin@backpackfriends.com to get started!



EVALUATING YOUR SUCCESS

REPORTS

Monthly reports are mandatory for all communities and are due no later than the fifth day after the reported month. They can be accessed at BackpackFriends.com/resources.

These reports are used to keep Backpack Friends accountable to investors, ensure donors continue to provide funding, and assess volume data to better understand issues and evaluate success. We ask all our Site Coordinators to report monthly totals, success stories and any concerns or needs through this 2-minute survey.

END-OF-YEAR SURVEYS

Each May, we send out student and teacher surveys to all campuses we serve. We use this data to evaluate our impact and continue to provide the best food for kids over the weekend. This is a good way to see how your program is working as well as how it is received by teachers and students in the schools you serve.

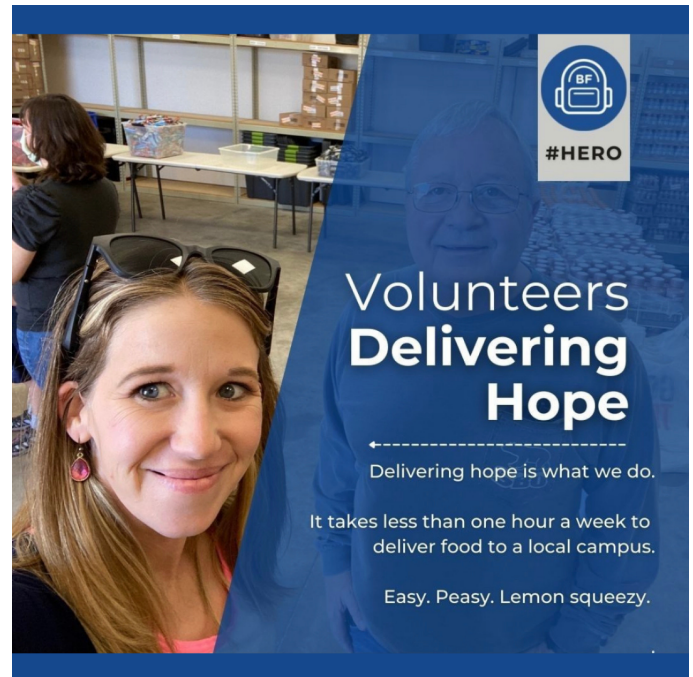




SCHOOL COORDINATOR TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Identify operation procedures for your specific site
 - Where will you store the food?
 - How will the students receive their backpacks in a discrete manner?
 - Who will distribute should you be absent on a Friday?
- Coordinate annual survey efforts with students in May and ensure they are returned to Backpack Friends
 - This is crucial. It helps us to know if we're on the right track with the snacks we're offering and the process in which we deliver them. It also helps to make sure we're serving the right kids.
- Present the Backpack Friends program to all faculty/staff at your site
 - Explain chronic hunger signs/symptoms and referral process. We suggest you have a meeting with the entire staff at the beginning of each school year, and reference the documents regarding chronic hunger (lounge flyer and Identifying Hungry Children).
 - All school forms can be found at www.backpackfriends.com/resources.
 - If you need assistance with presenting this to your staff, email at admin@backpackfriends.com or call 512-965-3052.
 - Let your faculty/staff members know that identification of needy students is a team effort. They can add/remove a student at any time. The relationship between the student and the teacher is the best way to identify a need.
- Place blank Child Referral forms in a convenient location for faculty/staff
- Begin receiving child referrals from faculty/staff

- Place completed and approved referrals in a binder. *****Ask the nurse or child about any food allergies.***
- Send home notification letters/parent permission forms to parents of referred children
 - Backpack Friends requires permission from parents, but make sure to ***follow your school procedures and policies.*** All permission forms remain in the possession of the school district.
- Meet with referred children individually to explain the Backpack Friends program.
- Contact your Backpack Friends contact by email with number of bags you will need.
 - Heather Cottar - heathercottar@gmail.com
 - Numbers need to be emailed each week no later than **Monday at noon** so we can ensure no kids are missed. If no new numbers are sent, the same amount will be sent as the previous week.
 - Be sure to include numbers of allergy bags.
- Prepare Distribution Record with names of children referred into the program.
- Distribute sacks to children on Friday and record numbers on Distribution Record.
- Submit the Monthly Report by the 5th of the month for the previous month online at BackpackFriends.com/resources.
*****Takes less than two minutes!***





Backpack Friends Student Referral Form

Child's Name: _____

Age: _____ **Grade:** _____ **Class** _____

Behavior that demonstrated Food Insecurity (Referral MUST include at least one item in this category)

- ☐ Rushing food lines
- ☐ Extreme hunger on Monday morning
- ☐ Eating all of the food served
- ☐ Lingering around for or asking for seconds
- ☐ Comments about not having enough food at home
- ☐ Other _____

Check any other factors that apply to this child: Physical Appearance

- ☐ Extreme thinness
- ☐ Puffy, swollen skin
- ☐ Chronically dry cracked lips
- ☐ Chronically dry itchy eyes
- ☐ Brittle, spoon-shaped nails
- ☐ Other _____

School Performance

- ☐ Excessive absences and/or tardiness
 - ☐ Repetition of a grade
 - ☐ Chronic sickness
 - ☐ Short attention span/inability to concentrate
 - ☐ Chronic behavior leading to disciplinary action (hyperactive, aggressive, irritable, anxious, withdrawn, distressed, passive/aggressive)
 - ☐ Other _____
-

Home Environment

- ☐ Often cooks own meal, or have another sibling who does
 - ☐ Moves frequently
 - ☐ Often spends the night away from home (primary residence)
- ☐ ☐ Loss of income
 - ☐ Family crisis
 - ☐ Other _____

If this child needs to receive extra food, please explain why:

Name/title of person referring the student: _____

Date of referral: _____

Date approved: _____

Approved by: _____

BACKPACK FRIENDS

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Area donors are proud to offer Backpack Friends, a weekend child-feeding program. This “backpack” program is designed to send child-friendly food home to **hungry children over the weekends that have little or no food at home**. Many of these children are on the free school lunch program and their parents rely on the school cafeteria as their main source of food for their child.

If you are struggling and need assistance feeding your child on weekends, we would like to give your child the opportunity to participate in our new “**Backpack Friends**” program that will be available beginning _____.

On Fridays, or the last day of each school week, the school coordinator will see that your child discretely receives a **free bag of food** items in his or her backpack before the school day ends. The food items will be for them to take home and eat over the weekend.

Research suggests that adequate nutrition has a positive impact for your child’s learning capabilities. If you feel like your child or family would benefit from this, **please sign the bottom of this letter and return it to the school office** and we will make sure your child’s name is on our distribution list. Your response will be kept confidential.

Thank you,

BACKPACK



FRIENDS

Please fill out the following information if you would like your child to participate in our “Backpack Friends” program, and then return it to your child’s school office.

Child’s Name _____

School _____ Class _____

List any food allergies that your child may have _____.

List of other children in the house and their ages:

Your child’s school and Backpack Friends are not responsible for any allergic reaction my child may have to the food items supplied. **It is your responsibility to look through the food items received before giving them to your child to avoid any allergic reaction.**

Therefore, by signing below, I release _____ (school campus), Backpack Friends, and _____ (school district) harmless against all liabilities, damages, losses, or claims resulting from the food.

Parent/Guardian **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

PRINT Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Participants are not discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age or disability.

BACKPACK FRIENDS

Para Querido padre/guardián de _____

Donadores de nuestra área están orgullosos de poder proveer el programa de “Backpack Friends”, un programa de alimentación de fin de semana. Este programa está diseñado para proveer alimentos para niños que padecen hambre en los fines de semana o que tienen poco o ningún alimento en el hogar. Muchos de estos niños están en el programa de almuerzos escolares gratuitos y sus padres se basan en el alimento de la cafetería de la escuela como su principal fuente de comida para sus hijos.

Si usted necesita ayuda alimentando a sus hijos los fines de semana, nos gustaría darle a su hijo(a) la oportunidad de participar en nuestro nuevo programa “Backpack Friends”. El programa estará disponible a partir del viernes _____.

Los estudios sugieren que una nutrición adecuada tiene una relación positiva en las capacidades de aprendizaje de su hijo(a). Si usted siente que su niño(a) o familia se beneficiaría de este programa, favor de firmar la parte inferior de esta carta y devuélvala a la oficina escolar de su hijo(a). El nombre de su hijo(a) se añadirá a la lista de distribución de alimentos. Su participación en este programa será confidencial.

Gracias.

BACKPACK FRIENDS

Los viernes, o el último día de cada semana escolar, el coordinador de la escuela se asegurará que su niño(a) reciba discretamente una bolsa de alimentos. Los alimentos se colocarán en sus mochilas para que se los puedan llevar a casa y comer durante el fin de semana.

Favor de llenar la siguiente información si desea que su hijo(a) participe en el programa “Backpack Friends”. Debe regresar la forma a la oficina escolar de su hijo(a).

Nombre del niño(a) _____

Escuela _____ Clase _____

Lista de alergias a los alimentos que su hijo(a) tenga: _____

Lista de otros niños en la casa y sus edades:

La Escuela Primaria _____ y ‘Backpack Friends’ no es responsable de cualquier reacción alérgica que sus hijo(a) puede tener a los alimentos suministrados. Es su responsabilidad revisar los alimentos recibidos antes de dárselos a su niño(a) para evitar cualquier reacción alérgica.

Por lo tanto, al firmar a continuación, libero a la **Escuela Primaria _____** y al Distrito Escolar de Pflugerville de todas las responsabilidades, daños, pérdidas o reclamaciones derivadas de los alimentos donados.

Firma del padre/guardián: _____ Fecha: _____

Nombre de padre/guardián (escrito): _____

Los participantes no son objeto a discriminación por motivos de raza, sexo, color, origen nacional, edad o discapacidad.



ARE YOUR STUDENTS HUNGRY?

Do they...

- Rush food lines?
- Have extreme hunger on Monday mornings?
- Eat all their food?
- Ask for seconds?
- Eat others' food?
- Tell you that they are hungry?

Are they...

- Extremely thin or obese?

Do they exhibit...

- Puffy or swollen skin?
- Chronically dry/cracked lips?
- Chronically dry/itchy eyes?
- Hyperactive, irritable, withdrawn, aggressive?
- Having problems getting along with others?
- Excessively sick or absent from school?
- Excessively visit the school nurse?

If these signs occur on a regular and consistent basis,