

Food Bank of East Alabama

Serving East Central Alabama



Visit our website:

www.foodbankofeastalabama.com

Since its founding in 1993, the Food Bank has distributed more than 46 million pounds of food to emergency food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and other non-profit organizations across the seven counties it serves.

The Food Bank of East Alabama is an equal opportunity provider



How can a child focus on solving a math problem or memorizing a new word when she or he is trying to ignore the persistent pangs of hunger?

Across the country, teachers and school nurses have found that in some instances, Monday morning comes and they are forced to compete against hunger for the attention of their students. More than 18 million children qualify for free or reduced price meals through the National School Lunch Program, the fuel that they need to get them through the week. What happens to these children when they go home over the weekend?



ABOUT THE BACKPACK PROGRAM

The mission of the Backpack Program is to meet the needs of chronically hungry children. We meet this need by providing easy-to-prepare food for children to take home on weekends and school vacations when other resources are not available.

The Food Bank's Backpack Program is targeted toward children in need. Students are referred to the program by teachers and counselors.



Each backpack site distributes a pack of food to each participating child on Friday afternoon at no cost to the children or the

school. The Backpack Program is not federally funded, therefore we rely on donations from corporate/community sponsors, individuals and grants for the program.

WHAT'S IN A BACKPACK?

The typical backpack contains a variety of easy-to-prepare food usually including protein, grains,



and fruit. A bag of food is placed discreetly in each child's backpack to carry food home for themselves and their siblings. The weight of the food bank is less than five pounds. A typical weekend supply of food for one child could include the following items:

- Individual cereal or oatmeal packs
- Pop-top meals (such as beef ravioli, macaroni and cheese or chili)
- Pudding cups
- Fruit cups or applesauce
- Miscellaneous snacks (granola bar, peanut butter crackers, etc.)

THE BACKPACK CONCEPT

The Backpack Program concept was developed at the Arkansas Rice Depot in Little Rock after a school nurse asked for help because hungry students were coming to her with stomach aches and dizziness. The local food bank began to provide the school children with groceries in non-descript backpacks to carry home.

The Food Bank of East Alabama connected with the program in 2012 in partnership with the Junior League of Lee County.

BACKPACK TESTIMONIALS

"I feel happy because it gives my family food. Without it, we'd be hungry." - Student

"As I give them their bag, they have a big smile on their face and my heart is smiling too. They are so grateful for the snacks. I just had to let you know the impact it is having on the students. We are all appreciative." - School Counselor

CHILDHOOD HUNGER FACTS

Research indicates that even mild under-nutrition experienced by young children during critical periods of growth impacts the behavior of children, their school performance and their overall cognitive development.

(Links Between Nutrition and Cognitive Development of Children, 1998, Tufts University School of Nutrition Science and Policy)



HELP SUPPORT THE BACKPACK PROGRAM

Is your business or organization looking for a way to help your community? Sponsoring a school's Backpack Program is a great way to help fight hunger by providing children in need in your area with a bag of food to take home on weekends. With \$3.50 per week or a one-time contribution of \$122.50, you can provide one child with one bag of food each weekend for the entire school year. No matter the size of your contribution, your gift will allow the food bank to feed children who may have little to eat on weekends.

HELP PACK BAGS

Your business or organization can also help fill the bags of food for the backpack program at the Food Bank's warehouse.

For more information or to sponsor a Backpack Program, contact the Food Bank at 334-821-9006 or by email at foodbank@foodbankofeastalabama.com