



BackSacks: Weekend Food for Kids

Hunger is a real and present danger to children across America and right here in Indiana. A recent report estimates that one in six Hoosier children do not have enough to eat to be healthy. Teachers know this is true, as some of their students come to school on Monday morning too hungry to learn.

These are the children who miss too much school, hoard food, and rely on their school's breakfast and lunch to feed them throughout the week. **It's a big problem, and it calls for a big response.**

Schools do a good job of providing meals to at-risk children. But what about the weekend? That's where the *BackSacks Program* comes in. Gleaners provides a supply of healthy food to young children each Friday that is perfect for the weekend:

- Shelf stable---never needs refrigeration
- Nutritious---checked by a dietitian and taste-tested by a panel of kids
- Easy open, kid friendly containers---easy and safe for the child to open themselves
- 8 items---7 food items + 1 bonus item

As I was putting some BackSacks in lockers last week, a young lady came out of the classroom and was walking to the bathroom down the hall. She is in the nutrition club and walked past my boxes on the cart as I was putting the bags in the lockers. I usually do this after school on Thursday or before school on Friday, but I had been running late. She came back and was walking slowly down the hall looking at me. I turned and smiled as she stopped. She looked at the sacks and mesmerized said, 'Oh you put those in my locker!' I have known this student since kindergarten, but she had no idea that I was the link. She hugged me and said she really thought it was magic because she never saw anyone putting them in the lockers but they always arrived ready to take home and eat!

– Staff member at Hattie B. Stokes Elementary

Here's a snapshot of *BackSacks* for the 2018-2019 school year:

- More than 240 schools
- 21 Indiana counties
- Serving more than 7,600 kids weekly



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