

Ways to Help

Raise Money

The Backpack Program relies on financial donations for basic operating costs, i.e. food purchase and food storage items.

\$100 sponsors a child to receive a backpack every weekend for an entire school year!

- **Coordinate a Benefit Event**
 - Please see the Ideas & Inspiration page
- **Donate by check or cash**
 - All donors that provide contact information will receive a letter of acknowledgement and tax receipt for their donation.
 - All checks should be made payable to:
Catawba County DSS and be mailed to PO BOX 669 Newton, NC 28658
Please make sure donations are clearly labeled 'Backpack Program.'

Raise Food

Community food drives are an excellent source of quality food to be used in the backpacks.

- Keeping food barrels in your location reminds people to support the drive. Even if your primary goal is raising money, giving food makes many people feel more connected to the mission to feed hungry children.

What foods meet guidelines for donation?

The **Shopping List Flyer** contains our most needed food items. Some general guidelines:

- Only donate items that *you* would eat.
- Check that items are still within their "Use before" date.
- No glass items, they break easily in the backpacks and can become very dangerous.
- We can only accept unopened items. We *can* accept opened packages if the internal packaging is still intact. (For example, oatmeal sold in boxes but wrapped in individual sized packets)

Volunteer

Volunteering for the Backpack Program is a great way to become partners in the fight against childhood hunger in Catawba County. Drives that include volunteerism are much more successful. Volunteers provide critical support to the Backpack Program by sorting, shelving, and distributing donated food.

Another way to contribute is to become a part of the team that packs and delivers backpacks throughout the school year. If your group is interested in a particular participating school, you may be interested in assisting on a particular week. If you have the space, you may be interested in becoming a Packing Site throughout the school year.

Please contact Amanda Freeland at afreeland@catawbacountync.gov or (828) 695-5648 to get started.

Ideas & Inspiration

Check out these ways that other organizations have energized their drives:

Hold a Competition

One company challenged all staff to contribute to their drive by challenging departments to compete against one another with the winning department getting an ice cream social during their lunch hour. They raised several thousand dollars.

Matching Gifts

Your organization may choose to challenge individuals to give, pledging to match up to a certain amount donated. This encourages individuals to get involved knowing that their organization is a part of it as well!

Food/Fund Drive Event

At their annual holiday party, employees of a national bank were asked to bring a food donation or a financial contribution as the price of admission. An organization could also host a Zumbathon, Dance-a-thon, Lock-in, or sporting event, such as a golf tournament, to raise money and/or food. People will participate *if* it is fun!

Jeans for Justice Day

Employees pay \$5 to wear jeans on a designated day in order to raise money, and awareness, of child hunger in Catawba County. It allows the opportunity for employees to wear jeans while explain to inquiring customers why their business is wearing jeans that day which helps spread awareness.

Skip a Meal, "Feed a Child"

On one day of a company's food drive, staff was asked to donate the money that they would have spent on lunch to feed a hungry child. This also gave participants perspective on how hunger impacts their daily activities.

"Going Shopping" Food Drive

Volunteers can hand out the "Shopping List" listing needed items to customers entering a grocery store asking that they consider purchasing any item listed and leaving it on their way out the door. Retailers can also encourage customers to support by allowing them to make a donation at checkout. This could be a great group activity for youth or children.

Dimes Make a Difference

One water bottle filled with dimes = \$100. Which happens to be the amount it costs to sponsor one child with a backpack every weekend of the school year. What a great project for kids at church or employees in the work place, those dimes add up and help provide food to a child in need!

Be Creative!

Do your church members, friends, or employees have other skills or interests? Be creative! The more creative you are, the more fun it will be! Call us at (828) 695-5648; we can help you plan your event!