

12/30/10

To the Friends of the Food Bank BackPack Program:

We wanted to drop you all a note to thank you for another outstanding (calendar) year for the BackPack Program. When second semester rolls around, we will be distributing 2,668 food-filled backpacks to families in 18 communities in over 50 schools. None of this would be possible without each and every one of you who have lent a hand to this family feeding effort, so thanks.

So far this school year, we have distributed 42,831 backpacks. Using the conservatively estimated 5 meals per backpack, we have helped families put a whopping 214,155 meals on their tables. We have also distributed roughly 6,800 vouchers for gallons of milk, and over 27,000 pieces of fresh fruit. This is an astounding amount of food that we have collectively shared with our neighbors in southeast Nebraska.

We will be adding two new communities to the BackPack fold this coming semester, with a startup of 14 BackPacks per week in Pawnee City, and 40 per week in David City. Unfortunately as you would expect, the need is at its greatest of any time in the short history of the BP program. LPS has compiled their statistics and have found that 50% of the children in our elementary schools in Lincoln are in the free or reduced lunch program.

The Food Bank uses Census figures to determine the need in our 16 county service area. Nebraska is fortunate in that our poverty rates are some of the lowest in the county, but we have seen some significant spikes. Based on 2009 Census estimates we know that we have 55,631 people living in poverty in our service area, and that 14,186 of those people are under the age of 18. Those numbers reflect a 30% increase in our poverty population, and a 23% increase in our "under-18" poverty population over 2008 figures. There is much work to do.

Our BackPack Coordinator, Alynn Sampson has been working hard this fall with some existing partners, and some potential new partners to help us build our summer BackPack Program. We should be hearing about some of these opportunities in early 2011.

The New Year will be filled with significant challenges, and terrific opportunities. We hope you will continue to join us in this hard, important, gratifying work.

Thanks.

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Thanks, and Happy New Year.

Best,
Scott Young

