



*Because kids shouldn't go hungry on the weekends*

## Annual Report for 2019-20

To say that 2019-20 was a challenging year is an understatement due to the Covid 19 pandemic that closed schools, disrupted the economy and created havoc in the daily lives of students and families. Low income families were especially hard hit as some parents found themselves out of work, struggling harder than ever to make ends meet. Backpack Meals not only continued, but increased efforts to feed hungry kids from low income families during trying times.



Volunteers of all ages stepped up to fight hunger during the pandemic. Olivia above collected food. Below, her brother Sam helped deliver to schools.

With the closure of schools in March and throughout the rest of the school year Backpack Meals continued delivering regular weekly backpack meals for families to pick up at the school district's Family Connections Centers.

With the end of the school year in June, Backpack Meals launched new strategies for reaching hungry families, stocking and opening a summer food pantry at the school district warehouse, buying and distributing grocery store vouchers, and working with other groups to set up a voucher system for free food truck meals.



### 2019-20 Program highlights

- Focus on homelessness** – The Board addressed the critical hunger issues of homelessness by providing winter break food vouchers for homeless high school students and unaccompanied minors.
- Breakfast at Big Picture** – Backpack Meals began delivering breakfast foods for students at Big Picture School, one of the 15 Bellevue schools without a breakfast program. Other schools may follow.
- Fresh fruit for high schools** – Backpack Meals provided fresh fruit to backpack recipients at Interlake and other high schools, part of a pilot program requested by students and funded by Sunrise Rotary.
- Mission statement revision** – The Board revised the Backpack Meals mission statement to provide a more accurate picture of the organization's range of activity: *Provide food to improve the health and learning readiness of Bellevue School District students from low income families.*

### Volunteers made it all happen

For the past nine years Backpack Meals has operated as an all-volunteer organization. All donations go to feeding kids, not to staffing. In 2019-20 volunteer hours totalled more than 1,000 hours. The efforts of 25 regular volunteers were bolstered by dozens of individuals and groups who helped with packing, hosted special events, and conducted food drives and fund raising activities.

## With a lot of help from our friends

Generous donors, recognizing the serious hunger implications of Covid 19, provided special funding to support Backpack Meals' various feeding strategies. Some significant donations were made anonymously. The year's gifts included:

**Year at a Glance**

13,411 K-12 food packs  
2,635 preschool packs  
29 schools served  
25 regular volunteers

- ✚ **Grace Lutheran Church Congregation** -- \$34,000 second gift from sale of property
- ✚ **Windermere Foundation** -- \$12,000 grant plus \$8,000 for pandemic relief
- ✚ **Bellevue Sunrise Rotary** – annual gift in the amount of \$3,500 plus \$2,000 for pandemic relief
- ✚ **Muslim Community Resource Center, Muslim Association of Puget Sound, Islamic Center of the Eastside Preschool** -- Significant ongoing cash, in-kind and volunteer contributions
- ✚ **Bellevue PTSA, Bellevue Firefighters, Aldersgate United Methodist, St. Madeleine Sophie, St. Louise Catholic Church and many other faithful donors**
- ✚ **In-kind donations** added significant resources to Backpack Meals feeding programs. Below left, third graders from B'nai Torah Synagogue packed their donations. At right, volunteers from the Microsoft Gaming group donated and packed donated food. Microsoft then matched their efforts with a donation of \$10,000.



## Looking ahead to 2020-21

Backpack Meals for Kids will begin its tenth year of operation as local families continue their struggle with quarantine, online schooling and other Covid 19 issues. Our feeding programs will continue throughout the school year regardless of obstacles. Backpack Meals and our many community supporters are prepared to deliver weekly food packs, seek out and feed homeless students, and offer help where needed. If you would like to part of these efforts, or increase the role you're already playing, we welcome you wholeheartedly.

**Year-end financial**

\$ 155,086	Total income
- 135,892	Expense
\$ 19,194	Net income
\$ 154,965	Cash on hand

**2019-20 Donors**

27%	38%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: blue;">■</span> Business, organizations</li> <li><span style="color: red;">■</span> Families, individuals</li> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> Faith based</li> </ul>
35%		

*Backpack Meals for Kids is a community-based, all-volunteer, non-profit and tax-exempt organization. federal tax ID 82-4296441. We welcome and appreciate your interest and active participation. Contact us at [jdstars@gmail.com](mailto:jdstars@gmail.com), see our website [www.backpackmeals.org](http://www.backpackmeals.org), and like us on Facebook.*