



Dear Local School Leaders,

Backpack Buddies program is a ministry and outreach of the First United Methodist Church of Brewton. Backpack Buddies will begin this school year (2016-2017) to begin at Brewton and East Brewton schools and is dedicated to improving the lives of children and their families. Between 60-70% of the children who attend our local schools receive free/reduced lunch and many of those also struggle with food insecurity at home throughout the week.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines food insecurity as *households that are uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet basic needs of all their members because of insufficient money or other resources*. When the guardian of a child has to choose between food and other necessities, e.g., having electricity shut off because they don't have enough money, it is an indicator of food insecurity.

This ministry will provide a weekly, free bag of kid-friendly, shelf-stable foods for each child to eat over the weekend. Each Friday, a bag of food will be discreetly placed in each child's backpack for him/her to bring home while providing anonymity. Upon the recommendation of the elementary school teachers and administration, the number of children served each week is expected to around 150 once fully operational.

In partnership and advisement with the administration at local elementary schools, Backpack Buddies program will provide a weekend supply of nutritious food for children, commonly from low-income families, to replace the school meals that children miss during the weekend. The bag of food will contain shelf-stable food that can be easily prepared by a child, such as oatmeal packets, fruit cups, granola bars, Easy Mac-n-Cheese, and various pop-top items that do not require a can opener.

This is a volunteer-driven ministry and all donated, tax-deductible funds will go directly into purchasing food for children who receive the bags each week. It is estimated, based on model programs studied during the evaluation and creation phases of this ministry, it will cost between \$4-\$5/student/week to provide an adequate amount of food in each backpack.

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration for this outreach effort to support and care for children throughout our community!

Thank you,

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