



**Kids' Food
Basket**

Sack Supper Sentinel

vol. 14 • Issue 2 • November 2016



A LITTLE BAG OF COMFORT

A Special Letter from Nancy Hamstreet, Social Worker at Ridge Park Charter Academy

Photo: Brooklyn, a student at Ridge Park, decorates Sack Supper bags with Nancy for Brown Bag Decorating Day

Dear Kids' Food Basket supporter:

At my school, 78% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch. What that equals is: **a lot of our students are living in poverty.**

Nourishment and consistent meals are vital in brain development. **Kids not only need – they require – this consistency of breakfast, lunch, and supper.** Many schools, mine included, are able to provide kids with breakfast and lunch.

But if you think about it – lunch ends at noon. Many of these kids – in the middle of the month, especially, because food stamps are not adequate for most families – are going home to little or no food. They go all evening long without food, and we're asking

them to do homework, to get along with their siblings, to maybe babysit for siblings because their parents have to work, and they're unable to sleep.

I asked my students how their Sack Suppers make them feel.

Jayden shared:

"It helps me because my granny doesn't always have much food. When I'm hungry, I just keep walking around the house."

When I look at Kids' Food Basket's Sack Suppers, I see a little bag of comfort. Kids, and their families, can concentrate on other things – academic, social relationships – when they know they will have a meal at the end of the day.

We use the NWEA (Northwestern Evaluation Association) for standardized testing. Test scores are measured between Fall and Spring. The expected growth is 100%. **I looked at the test scores of all the kids who received Sack Suppers last year.**

The average growth [for kids who received Sack Suppers] between Fall to Spring was 139% - that's 39% over the expected.

These kids are making phenomenal growth, and the safety and security Sack Suppers provide is a big part of that. I just want to say: Thank you Kids' Food Basket. Keep it going.

Sincerely,

Nancy Hamstreet, Social Worker
Ridge Park Charter Academy

YOU DID IT, West Michigan!

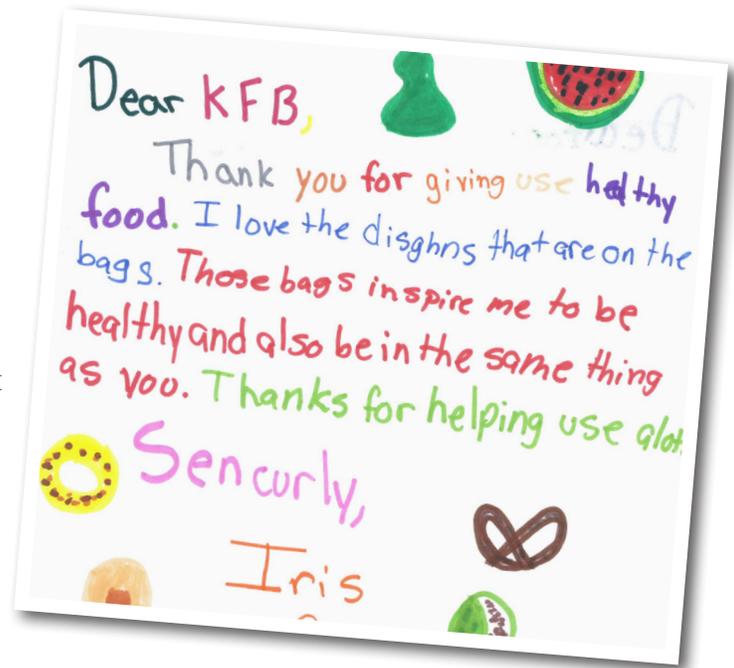
112,268 DECORATED BAGS. 112,268 SMILES.

West Michigan, you are AMAZING. In total, we collected 112,268 bags in celebration of **Brown Bag Decorating Day** at our three locations in Grand Rapids, Muskegon, and Holland! That's enough bags to provide every child we serve with a decorated bag for 15 days.

A teacher shared with us that while she was doing a home visit, a little boy proudly showed her dozens of decorated brown paper bags on the wall above his bed. She recognized them as Sack Supper bags. The teacher asked why he had saved them, and the little boy answered: "Because they are mine."

The teacher shared that this student didn't have much consistency in his life. He had moved around a lot. She realized that decorated Sack Supper bags were more than an evening meal: they were also a source of consistency and comfort to him.

Every decorated Sack Supper makes a difference. Thank you!



SAVE THESE DATES IN 2016-17

NOV. 26

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

Shopping local this holiday season can support Kids' Food Basket! Check out what local businesses are doing by visiting www.KidsFoodBasket.org/ShopAndShare.

NOV. 29

GIVING TUESDAY

Join us as our staff matches every dollar you donate online, up to \$5000. Visit www.KidsFoodBasket.org/GivingTuesdayfor details!

MARCH 24

GO ORANGE

Create awareness about childhood hunger by wearing orange and elevating your voice on social media or in your social circles! Details coming soon.

MAY 3

15TH ANNUAL FEAST FOR KIDS

Annual culinary event to benefit Kids' Food Basket hosted by the American Culinary Federation Greater Grand Rapids Chefs Association.

For more events visit KidsFoodBasket.org/CommunityEvents

Community Partner Shout Out

Kids' Food Basket is so incredibly grateful for our partnership with [Service Express, Inc.](#) and their Feed a School for a Year Golf Classic. Their goal is for their annual golf outing to raise over \$30,000 - enough to feed an entire school for one year.

"Kids' Food Basket is an organization that has been near and dear to the hearts of SEI employees for years."

-Ron Alvesteffer, President & CEO of Service Express, Inc.

Mr. Alvesteffer continues: "A few years ago, we determined that we wanted to help in a greater way and so we decided to combine the incredible talent and resourcefulness of the KFB and SEI teams. Every year the golf classic attracts more people and raises more money for Kids' Food Basket and we're thrilled to be a part of the movement!"

Interested in learning how you can get your company involved?

Contact Ashley.Diersch@KidsFoodBasket.org.

Did you know...

Through our **Kids Helping Kids Program**, we empower youth to make an impact in their community.

- 33% of our volunteers are children under the age of 18
- 70% of the youth we serve have had an opportunity to volunteer
- Our Youth Action Board (9th-12th grade) is 96 members strong, representing more than 20 schools across our three locations. Applications for 2017 will be available in June!
- Our staff has led Civic Engagement Lesson Plans with 321 students in the schools we serve.

To learn more visit KidsFoodBasket.org/KHK.



KUDOS FROM

BRIDGET



Every day, this community comes together to make something awesome happen.

When we first started out 15 years ago, we had about 20 dedicated volunteers that came to help pack Sack Suppers for the three schools we served. I thought that was great! "Look, 20 people care about childhood hunger!" Now, we see over 250 volunteers every single day between our three locations in Grand Rapids, Muskegon, and Holland. Every day, our community comes together to ensure over 7,500 kids have a nutritious evening meal.

Kids' Food Basket is a kindness factory. I love that our volunteer program brings together people of all backgrounds, beliefs, and abilities. On any given day, we might have a faith community volunteering next to a group of financial advisors next to a group of kids from one of the schools we serve. Or a group of coworkers from a restaurant next to a Girl Scout Troop next to a group of differently-abled volunteers. And all of them are getting along and laughing as they make sandwiches, cut veggies, mix trail mix, and pack Sack Suppers, because they are committed to one goal, one great act of kindness: ensuring that our communities' kids have the nutrition they need to thrive - in and beyond the classroom.

As the number of our volunteers and donors grows, it gives me hope. Hope for the 43,930 children in West Michigan that live in food-insecure households. It gives me hope, because West Michigan is a community that cares that 47.5% of its kids receive free/reduced cost meals at school. Hope that we can eradicate childhood hunger.

Behind the scenes, we also have outstanding board and committee members and a very committed and enthusiastic staff. Our team at Kids' Food Basket is deeply passionate about the critical work that we do in West Michigan. The need for our services is tremendous, and we know firsthand the immediate and long-term impact that Sack Suppers can make. Because of this, we are constantly energized and motivated to go above and beyond.

That's why we came together last year as a team to provide a Staff Match for #KFBGivingTuesday of over \$5,000. Giving Tuesday is an international day of giving fueled by social media that was born as a result of well-known shopping days, Black Friday and Cyber Monday. This year Giving Tuesday is November 29, and we're doing our staff match again!

We're doing it for the 34 schools on our waiting list (17 in Kent County, 11 in Muskegon County, and 6 in Ottawa County); for the thousands of children we do not yet serve, who need and deserve good nutrition. We're asking our community to join us in the attack on childhood hunger, so that all children have the nutrition they need to be their best, in school and in life.

Thank you for being the attack on childhood hunger. Together, we can create a more strong and healthy West Michigan, where no child goes to bed hungry.

Peace,

Bridget

Bridget Clark Whitney
Executive Director

Make an impact with us on NOVEMBER 29!

www.KidsFoodBasket.org/GivingTuesday
#KFBStaffMatch #GRgives

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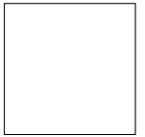
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Join us for #GivingTuesday ♥ Kids' Food Basket Style

We are asking **YOU** to join us in the attack on childhood hunger on Tuesday, November 29, so that every West Michigan child has the good nutrition they need to learn and live well.

OUR GOAL:

Inspire 250 people join the attack, with a gift that's meaningful to them. Every dollar makes a difference.

OUR PROMISE:

Every online gift will be matched by our staff, dollar for dollar, up to \$5,000.

Follow our progress throughout the day on social media using **#KFBStaffMatch**. We'll also be sharing our personal stories, and yours! Share your story with us using **#KFBGivingTuesday**.

Make a gift! www.KidsFoodBasket.org/GivingTuesday

Kids' Food Basket is proud to be a founding community partner of **#GRgives**, a city-wide campaign to raise funds and awareness for local nonprofits. Learn more about **#GRgives** by visiting www.GRgives.com.