



P.O. Box 943  
Helena, MT 59624

## Pantry Times

- This issue is all about Kid Packs
- Learn from a 4th Grade Teacher the Difference Kid Packs Make
- Meet John & Wayne Kid Pack Volunteers Extraordinaire
- Helena Food Share Garden Update

## You Provide Pineapple Power

Two little boys, ages 5 and 7, shopping with their mom at Helena Food Share got to pick an extra fruit from the cooler. They picked a pineapple. The oldest looked at his little brother and said, "It's just for you and me!" They did a little dance and hung on to each other in a big hug.



**FAST FACTS**

About Kid Packs



**1,100+ Students Receive Kid Packs Every Week**



**Each Kid Pack costs \$3.25**

**19**

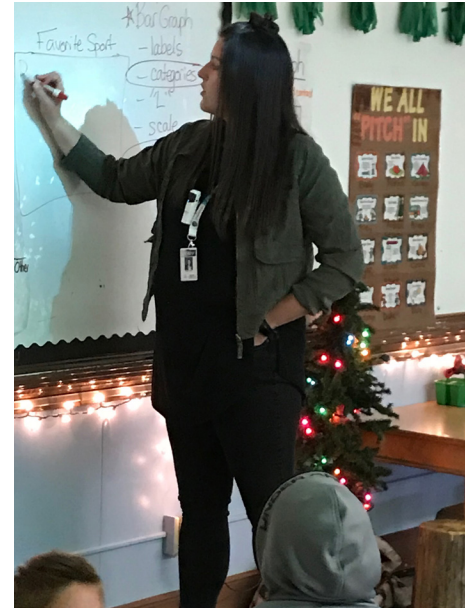
Nineteen Local Schools & Head Start Students Receive Kid Packs



# Pantry Times

helenafoodshare.org | AUGUST 2019

## Kid Packs: A Teacher's Story



Kayla Ryan teaches 4th grade just down the street from Helena Food Share at Bryant Elementary School. Kayla is a young, energetic teacher and when speaking with her it's apparent that her students hold a special place in her heart.

Ms. Ryan began her teaching career in Whitefish. At the school there, she experienced the excitement and anticipation that both weekends and holidays would bring to her classroom. Kids would be buzzing with thoughts of fun weekend trips. Ms. Ryan jokes that over winter and spring break, kids would be off to Italy, Mexico or Belize while Ms. Ryan would stay in Whitefish!

Kayla shares that both weekends and holiday breaks bring a

different mood to her classroom at Bryant. When the weekend is coming, kids become more anxious and often act out. As 4th graders, many of her students are responsible for younger siblings over the weekend as their single moms or dads work to provide for their families. When these children can bring home a Helena Food Share Kid Pack with a variety of nutritional foods, they have a predictable source of food.

In Kayla's class last year more than half the students received Kid Packs on Fridays. At the end of the week, as the students are packing up their gear, Kayla reminds them all to grab a Kid Pack. Some are allowed to take an extra Kid Pack if they have younger siblings at home who also needs food. The students are very proud to be able to provide food for their younger brothers and sisters.

In Ms. Ryan's class, she makes sure that there are always snacks available. If a child is hungry, the student has an open invitation to eat when he or she needs to. Kayla sees the difference that this makes in the classroom and she knows that during the weekend her students will be able to eat as well and she feels better knowing that they have something.

Your generous donations provide more than 1,100 Kid Packs that are distributed to area schools every week. Ms. Ryan and countless educators experience the difference that food makes to growing, learning children. As Ms. Ryan observes, the kids don't really know who provides the Kid Packs, but it's obvious from their reactions that they appreciate them. Thank you. ●



**Make a difference in the life of a child right here in the Helena area. Your donation will go directly to supplying a child at risk of hunger with a Kid Pack.**

## Kid Packs: Because of You

Volunteers Wayne Gabbert and John Lyndes are serious men - serious about making sure that local school kids have the food that they need to thrive over the weekends.

Once school is in session, Helena Food Share sets up an assembly line that produces more than 1,100 Kid Packs every week. Items like oatmeal, fruit cups, granola bars and mac and cheese are set up in the assembly line and volunteers walk down the line filling bags with the nutrition that will sustain a child over the weekend. The bags then go into crates and are stacked for delivery.

When a food item on the assembly line is running low, when the juice needs to be restocked, when the cheese is about gone, there's Wayne! As Wayne tells it, he showed up at the Helena Food Share Pantry six and a half years ago and hasn't left. Those six and a half years of experience come in handy. Need to know how to best open a box of shelf-stable milk? Wayne has a trick for that and he can cut the plastic and box in one swipe of his pocket knife.

The other essential Kid Pack volunteer, John Lyndes, is beginning his third year of volunteering this fall. John is on the other end of the Kid Packs. Once the Kid Packs are complete, John makes sure these bags are packed eight to a crate, 150 crates, 21 per pallet. Can you tell John has this down to a science? He sure does! With John at the end of the Kid Pack assembly



John Lyndes, Helena Food Share's Kim Dale and Wayne Gabbert, left to right

line, there are certain to be enough Kid Packs.

When asked what brought them to Helena Food Share, Wayne shares that when he and his wife retired they had planned to volunteer. Then Wayne's wife passed, but he wanted to be sure to do what they had discussed. John ended up giving his time to Helena Food Share after a friend asked him to help with a Kid Pack build. John notes that having experienced volunteers there helps everything run smoothly. These two men have become integral parts of Kid Packs and it's fair to say that every item of food - all 2,872 pounds of Kid Pack food that go out every week - pass through Wayne's and John's hands at some point.

Because of Wayne. Because of John. Because of all the volunteers and *because of you*, we have banded together as a community to ensure that our children who experience hunger insecurity have the food they need. Together we are defeating the childhood hunger that exists in our neighborhoods. 🍓

## TOP NEED

### A New Kid Pack Delivery Van

Holy smokes, you should see the one that we have now! We're lucky to make it to all the schools - especially in the winter. We've been window shopping and have found the perfect van. We are hoping a generous donor or business might be able to help.

- Heavy-duty paper cutter
- Clorox cleaning wipes
- Tall kitchen garbage bags
- Dandelion Weeder
- Drill/Driver/Circular Saw
- Avery Labels #5963 and #5160

If you can help with any of these items, please call Heidi 406-443-3663 x. 105 or email [heidi@helenafoodshare.org](mailto:heidi@helenafoodshare.org).

## Symphony Under the Stars: Thank you Helena!

On Saturday, July 21 our community gathered at the Carroll College Campus for the Intrepid Credit Union Symphony of the Stars.

To claim spots and weigh blankets down, concert attendees use canned food that is then donated to Helena Food Share. This year a record 19,700 pounds of food were collected at the Symphony. We are lucky to live in such a generous community where world-class music, beautiful skies and giving people converge to create memorable evenings. 🍓

WISH LIST WISH LIST WISH

## Garden Growth: Helena Food Share Garden Update

In our May newsletter, we shared with you the hard work of the Gerald Schafer's Carroll College students who prepped the Helena Food Share garden for the growing season. The snap peas that the students planted when there was still snow on the ground are now thriving and falling under the weight of all the peas.

As anyone who has a garden knows, planting is just part of the equation. And, we are lucky to have a force of volunteers who are continuing the efforts in maintaining the garden.



A volunteer group from the Well Church came out in force on a recent Friday.

Weeds got pulled. Peas got picked. Strawberries were harvested and a couple were sampled too!

Pastor Greg Bibeau and the volunteers from The Well Church shared that they were excited to come to Helena Food Share to help with the garden project. Annually the church looks for ways in the community where they can make a difference. And, they made a really big difference. The weeds have been tamed and the cooler at the Lewis Street Pantry has been stocked with food that cannot get any fresher.

Because of those who give financially and those who give of their time, the Helena Food Share Garden can exist to educate and provide nutrition to those who need it. The garden is a great place where the Helena Community can work together to positively impact those with food insecurity. 🍓



**WELCOME**  
Helena Food Share Garden



**Pick a snack. Pick what you can use.**

Customers at Helena Food Share are invited to pick what they can use from the garden. Thanks to Greg Painter of Fast Signs, soon all our customers know they are welcome and can more easily find fresh, healthy food for themselves or their families.

**Come Visit the Helena Food Share Garden.**



**Pick a snack. Pick what you can use.**

**Follow the arrows to the garden.**

## Combating Food Waste

Food waste is a huge problem in our nation. The most recent numbers indicate that over 133 billion pounds of food are wasted in our nation annually.

Here at Helena Food Share, we are combating that terrible waste. In 2018, Helena Food Share rescued 1,667,972 pounds of food from local grocery stores.

Sometimes that food is not fit for human consumption. It may be expired or opened. In that case, we give this food to local farmers who in turn feed their animals. No waste here!

