



Creating a Hunger-Free Community

Pantry Times

July 2022

Kid Packs: More Important than Ever

As August approaches, the start of school looms large for many Helena-area families. A few questions facing students might be: "Will I like my new teacher? Will I make new friends?" One question a child should never need to ask is: "Will I have enough to eat?"

Weekend nutrition is critical to a good week ahead for every child. Yet, too many kids in our community miss one or more meals over the weekend, and the challenges of the past two years have made things even tighter.

One parent shared this with us recently, "My family would not have survived the pandemic if the food was not available from the school and Food Share. We needed the help and you were there to help us with this basic need."

Not getting enough food for even one day creates challenges for young, developing bodies. Getting up and ready for school is difficult if they've gone to bed hungry. In the classroom, attention, focus, and attitude take a back seat to hunger – especially in a growing body. Bryant Principal, Trish Klock, knows too well the strain for

many families. "As we navigate through this post-pandemic world, the need for food security is at an all-time high. It is so important for each child to start the school day with a full belly in order to be as focused as possible. It is also beyond necessary for all kids in our community to have access to food on the weekends as well. Thank you so much to the Helena Food Share for providing these meals for my students and students of the community. It truly does make a huge difference!"

Since 2013, Helena Food Share has worked to address this need by providing Kid Packs to students at all 19 local Pre-K, Elementary, and Middle Schools in Helena and East Helena. Providing easy-to-fix food for weekend meals or snacks, Kid Packs support nutrition for over 1,000 area children each weekend.

With rising food costs, your support to ensure that Helena-area children have weekend nutrition has become even more urgent. More families in Helena



Helena students serious about learning.
(Photo courtesy of Helena Public Schools)

have had to rely on Helena Food Share in recent months, and we expect the need for Kid Packs will also increase this fall. **The food costs of items in a Kid Pack have risen from \$4.34 in 2021 to \$5.35 for the 2022-23 school year.** Will you help meet the demand so this vital program can continue to help children in our community?

A Gift of Minds & Hearts at Work: The Hunters Pointe Quilters

Visit room 124 just off the lobby at Hunters Pointe retirement community on a Tuesday afternoon, and you will

of colorful patterns. Once completed, it too will become much more than a cozy blanket for the fortunate recipient.

the women crochet, making dishcloths, which are also sold for donations.



Many of the quilts are sold, with proceeds donated to Helena Food Share. Some quilts are given to Project Linus—an organization that provides quilts and blankets to kids facing trauma. Some projects, with patriotic designs, are created especially for those who have served our country.

The group has extended their creative pursuits to paper quilling and crochet. The intricate quilling projects are framed and displayed at Hunters Pointe or sold to support Helena Food Share or purchase

Lively conversation, enthusiasm for a new project, and a desire to brighten other people's lives can also be found in room 124. The women share with a mirthful grin, "Quilting keeps us off the streets and keeps our minds and hearts working."

Their creations support Kid Packs and Helena Food Share, making a difference for many in our community—a very special gift indeed.

likely see a group of women creating quilts of hope. Quilts that become cherished blankets or banners and, in turn, provide nourishment for the body and soul.

The light-filled room is lined with bins of donated fabric from former quilters. Their most recently completed project waits for its recipient on the worktable in the middle of the room. A quilt in progress hangs on the wall, showcasing an assortment

new supplies. Smaller pieces become gift cards and tags sold at craft fairs. Some of

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Pantry Times is a publication of Helena Food Share.

Contact Us: (406) 443-3663

To Volunteer: ext. 106

To Donate: ext. 103

To Get Help: ext. 110

Our Pantries:

1616 Lewis Street, Helena
50 Prickley Pear, East Helena

Office: 1437 Helena Avenue



[HelenaFoodShare.org](https://www.HelenaFoodShare.org)

Partnering for a Hunger-Free Community

The root cause of hunger is multi-faceted, and so are the solutions for addressing food insecurity. This May, Helena Food Share's Grocery Share program provided 2,431 services

and served 1,384 households. This and other programs are bolstered by a broad coalition in our community, enabling food support to extend well beyond weekly grocery assistance in the

Pantry. Working with entities throughout Helena ensures hunger is addressed when and where it best serves those in need. Here are just a few highlights.

CHURCHES

Churches across Helena provide financial support, volunteer to build **Kid Packs** and **Emergency Food Packs**, and/or provide nutritious produce from their gardens.



Our Redeemers Lutheran Church



Rocky Head Start

ROCKY MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Through a grant administered by RMDC, we distribute **Senior Commodities** every other month. We also provide over 150 **Kid Packs** weekly to preschoolers in the **Rocky Head Start** program.

ST. PETERS HEALTH

Food is Care and **Food Farmacy** provides food for patients facing food insecurity to meet their nutritional needs. Low-fat, -sodium, and -sugar dry goods are available twice a month. We also collaborate on Harvest of the Month activities, and they support our Healthy Foods Initiative yearly.



Food Is Care Box



Robert Peccia & Associates

BUSINESSES

Numerous local businesses give generously, participate in **Kid Pack** and **Turkey Challenges**, and volunteer for events and building food packs.

GOD'S LOVE, OUR PLACE, WOLF CREEK PANTRY, WESTMONT, CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH, SALVATION ARMY, GOOD SAMARITAN

Bulk food or **personal care** products, rescued daily or weekly by Helena Food Share from grocery stores, is distributed by these agencies to the people they serve.



Products rescued daily from local stores



Sixth Ward Garden Park Community Garden

6TH WARD GARDEN & HELENA COMMUNITY GARDENS

We help with volunteers for ongoing Sixth Ward Garden maintenance and serve on the Helena Community Gardens Board. These 10 area gardens provided over **11,000 pounds** of fresh produce last year.

PUREVIEW HEALTH CENTER

This long-standing partnership has grown into a food distribution program, with **Farmers to Family** food boxes during the pandemic and now they transport much-needed food assistance weekly to the Lincoln community.



USDA Farmers to Families Food Box



Supplying food in an emergency.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We are members of **Elkhorn Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD)** to ensure food is available for those affected during an emergency, and the **Kid's Nutrition Collation** to address hunger/nutrition initiatives for children in our community.



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Community*

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Pantry Times
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Kids Need YOU. Join the Challenge!

In Helena, 1 in 5 kids struggles with food insecurity.

Simply put, these children don't always know where their next meal is coming from. ***Kid Packs are helping.***



Helena Food Share seeks community partners to help ensure children in the Helena area have food during the weekend. **Talk to your employer, church, or group today about becoming a Kid Pack Challenger!**

It's a fun way to engage staff, colleagues, members, and customers in raising money to help local kids. Your support will help them have enough to eat every weekend.

For more information on how you can join the challenge—

Visit: HelenaFoodShare.org/kid-pack-challenge/

Email: tim@helenafoodshare.org

Call: (406) 443-3663, ext.104

Together, we can provide our local kids with the nutrition and peace of mind they need to learn, grow, and play—you know, kid stuff.



**\$5.35/
Kid Pack**

Help school kids take home healthy food:

- Milk | Juice | Cheese
- Hummus | Cereal
- Oatmeal | Kamut
- Low-Sugar Granola Bars
- Pretzels | Sunbutter
- Fruit Cups | Easy Mac
- Beef Sticks