

The Lasting Impact of a Kid Pack



Caden welcoming customers to the Market.

Caden attends high school and volunteers at Helena Food Share in his spare time. But before he was helping customers in the Market, he was one of many young students who relied on Kid Packs each weekend. *"My family qualified for the free and reduced lunch program at school, but Kid Packs really helped me over the weekends,"* Caden recalls. *"I felt lucky to have something like that."*

Like many children facing food insecurity, Caden's family didn't always have enough food for full meals when school wasn't in session. The Kid Pack he brought home each Friday provided nutritious, kid-friendly foods he could prepare himself and count on when food was limited at home.

"It was the extra food that got me through the weekend," he says. *"I want everyone to know what a big deal it is that Kid Packs are available to help those who need them."*

Just as important as the food was the dignity and acceptance he experienced through the program. *"There's no judgment,"* he says. *"I always felt comfortable and grateful to have food to take home."*

Today, Caden volunteers at Helena Food Share to give back to the place that made a difference in his life. *"I want anyone who needs food support to know how easy it is and that there's no judgment or stigma; it's OK to get help when you need it."*

For Caden, Kid Packs provided security, independence, and reassurance that he wasn't facing hunger alone. Now, through his volunteer service, he provides that same encouragement and support to others.

Kid Packs are crucial for over a thousand children in the Helena area each weekend. Helena Public Schools Superintendent Rex Weltz recognizes the importance of this program. He

stated, *"Students learn best when their basic needs are met. Kid Packs help ensure children return to school on Monday nourished, ready to learn, and ready to thrive. This program reflects the incredible way our community supports its children, and we are grateful for the contributions that make this vital resource possible."*

Ways to Help

Do you know someone who could benefit from a weekly Kid Pack during the school year?

Let the child's parent or guardian know they can sign up with their school counselor or principal. They will make sure a Kid Pack is available for them to bring home every Friday.

Set up Helena's kids for a strong, nourished start to the school year—together!

We rely on area businesses, churches, civic organizations, and individuals to ensure that every child in our community has access to weekend nutrition during the school year. Why not have fun while supporting Kid Packs? Rally your team, engage your customers, mobilize your members, or inspire your congregation by fundraising together. Contact Maddie (maddie@helenafoodshare.org) to create your own online fundraiser.

Kicking Off Summer Together

The Summer Lot Party, held each year on the Friday after school ends, brings Helena Food Share families together for food, fun, music, and connections to community resources.

This year's celebration featured Mountain Berry Bowls and Rockstarr BBQ, summer treats, live music from Tyler Torgrimson and the Moonshiner Band, cooking demonstrations, and activities hosted by local organizations.

As Mackenzie from Gardenwerks shared, *"I love coming to the Lot Party each year to share plants that people can grow at home for nutritious food to fill their bellies."*

For one couple, a fun afternoon at the Lot Party became the first step toward accessing food support. Encouraged by a longtime friend and volunteer to visit, they attended the Lot Party, experienced the welcoming atmosphere, and decided to sign up to shop in the Market.



Enjoying snow cones from the concession stand.



Helena National Forest staff invited visitors to spin the wheel and learn about wildfire prevention.



The Montana Historical Society brought household tools from early Montana and shared information about summer programs.



The Moonshiner Band provided live music throughout the event.



Rocky Mountain Head Start engaged partygoers with bubbles and giant bubble wands.



The Bikemobile brought library services to the party to help visitors find good summer reads and learn about summer activities at the Lewis & Clark Library.

Your financial support is needed now more than ever:

Each summer, the Market sees a noticeable increase in families requiring food assistance. With children home from school, the costs of food and childcare rise, leading to an even greater need for support. Your contributions of food and funds truly make a significant difference for many of our neighbors. Here are some ways to make supporting Helena Food Share even easier.

New Tax Benefit for Charitable Giving Begins in 2026

Beginning with the 2026 tax year, many donors will be able to claim a charitable deduction even if they take the standard deduction and do not itemize. Individuals may deduct up to **\$1,000** in cash donations to qualified charities, while married couples filing jointly may deduct up to **\$2,000**. This new deduction allows more taxpayers to receive a tax benefit for supporting organizations like Helena Food Share while helping ensure our neighbors have access to the food they need. *As always, consult your tax advisor for specific guidance on how to claim this deduction on your return.*

Become a Hunger Hero



Monthly giving provides a reliable source of support, ensuring that food is available every day for local families, children, and seniors. As you plan your charitable giving for 2026, consider making a monthly gift that will help you meet your giving goals while contributing to a hunger-free community.

Donating Food is Always Needed

Join us for Symphony Under the Stars on July 18, held on the Carroll College hillside. If you're attending the concert, please only bring canned



food. Cans are perfect for weighing down blankets and are less likely to be damaged during collection compared to jars or boxes. Even if you're not bringing a blanket to the concert, you can still help by dropping off cans at the collection crates and trucks located throughout the concert area. *Thank you for supporting our neighbors in need while enjoying a memorable summer evening of music.*

Do You Have Extra Garden Produce?

Stop by our donation door on Boulder Ave (Monday/Thursday 9 A.M.–6 P.M. or Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday 9 A.M.–3 P.M.) with your fresh garden items to donate. Every tomato, zucchini, cucumber, carrot, pepper, berry, and leafy green you share helps ensure our neighbors have access to nutritious, locally grown food. *Thank you for your generosity!*



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Contact Us:

(406) 443-3663

To Volunteer: ext. 106

To Donate: ext. 103

To Get Help: ext. 110

Grocery Share Market:

1280 Boulder Avenue, Helena

East Helena Mobile Pantry:

50 Prickley Pear, East Helena

Office: 1280 Boulder Avenue, Helena



HelenaFoodShare.org



*Creating a Hunger-Free
Community*

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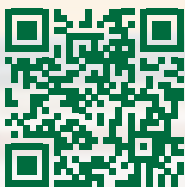
Community Food Quarterly



*We believe access to food
is a basic human right.*

Kid Packs provide nutritious, kid-friendly foods so kids can stay healthy, nourished, and ready to learn—every week.

*With your help, we can
make sure no child
starts the year hungry.*



(Scan to Donate)

