



Fact Sheet

Contact:

Barry Segal: 416-216-4861

Adam Markwell: 416-369-7674

What We Do:

- The idea of feeding children on the weekend was conceptualized in 2004 by American Stan Curtis who founded Blessings in a Backpack in the U.S.A. together with pop singer Hilary Duff.
- Blessings in a Backpack launched in Canada in 2008, with two Toronto schools in its pilot program.
- Now serving school children in 10 schools throughout cities like Toronto, Vancouver, Sault Ste Marie and rapidly expanding nationwide .
- Better test scores, improved reading skills, positive behavior, improved health and increased attendance have all been attributed to the success of this program.
- There is no other food relief program in Canada that assists hungry children on weekends.

Statistics on Childhood Hunger:

- One in five children in Canada goes to school hungry every day.
- 40% of food bank users in Canada are single parent families with school-age children.
- Canada has no national free or reduced meal program in schools.
- Childhood hunger has lead to a weaker immune system and increased hospitalization rates.
- Poor nutrition early in life can impair neural development, leading to lower IQs.
- Unmet nutritional needs make it very difficult for children to learn and pay attention in class.
- Data shows that hungry children are sick more often, and have lower academic achievement.

How it works:

- \$100 feeds a child in the program for an entire school year.
- \$10,000 allows us to feed enough kids in a single school all year.
- 100% of all funds donated are used to support hungry kids.
- Following a donation, a school is chosen through liaison with local school boards; food and backpacks are provided. The assembly of backpacks weekly is coordinated by volunteers based in each school.
- Every Friday, students receive their backpacks with staples that require little to no preparation. They return with their backpacks on Monday ready to learn.

Funding:

- The program is a hybrid of private sector funding and public partnership carried out in public schools.
- We are a registered non-profit organization. This makes all donations eligible for tax credit.

Blessings in Backpack program goals:

- Help meet the nutritional needs of Canada's school children on the weekend, ultimately enabling improved well-being and success in school life.
- Generate public awareness on the issue of child hunger in Canada.
- Work to expand the program nationally, 'feeding the future of Canada™'.

Countries currently served:

USA, Canada and Columbia