



MEDIA RELEASE

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Second Harvest begins new Backpack program to benefit Central Elementary Students

Franklin, Pa., January 6 – Students in Franklin will have additional resources to help tide them over their weekends, as the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania has announced an expansion of the Backpack program to Central Elementary School. The first distribution will occur next Friday, January 17th, and provide backpacks of food for up to 50 students each week through the end of the 2019-20 academic year.

“Data shows that hunger among children in Franklin is significant, as nearly 3 out of every 4 of students at Central Elementary receive free or reduced lunches,” said Karen Seggi, CEO of Second Harvest. “We want to make sure every child has enough food so that hunger is not a distraction to them, and the Backpack Program helps us address their needs.”

The Backpack Program provides children in poverty with nutritious, child-friendly food necessary for overall growth, physical and cognitive development when other resources, such as school lunches and after-school meals or snacks, are not available. Eligible students who sign up for the Backpack Program will receive enough food for multiple breakfasts, lunches, dinners and snacks. A donation of \$120 sponsors a Backpack for a child for one academic year.

Media Information

What: Photo opportunity - food for Backpacks will be delivered for assembly to St. Johns Episcopal Church
Where: 1145 Buffalo St, Franklin, PA 16323
When: Thursday, January 9th, approximately 9am

According to Map the Meal Gap data from Feeding America, one out of every eight individuals in Venango County is considered food insecure. An unfortunate reality is that number increases to one out of every five for those under the age of 18. Many students rely on school resources such as free or reduced-priced school breakfast and lunch to meet their hunger needs, and these children face unique challenges when they are sent home for the weekend.

Initial funding for the Second Harvest Backpack program at Central Elementary has been provided by St. John's Episcopal Church, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church and several private individual donations. Second Harvest operates 42 Backpack sites across 13 school districts within 8 counties of northwest Pennsylvania. Each week, 2,435 children receive Backpacks across the service area. In total, Second Harvest anticipates distributing nearly 80,000 backpacks during the 2019-20 academic year.

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About the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania

The mission of the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania is to provide food to those in need within 11 counties of northwest Pennsylvania while creating awareness and educating the community on the realities of hunger. Last year, Second Harvest distributed 9.6 million meals through an anti-hunger network of 399 partner organizations. Second Harvest serves the following 11 counties in northwest Pennsylvania: Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, McKean, Venango and Warren.