

Manna's Backpack Program

When children return to school hungry on Monday morning, it shows. Behavior and concentration issues can be traced back to hunger, and many local children look forward to that first school-provided meal of the day.

In the fall of 2010, Manna Food Project was awarded a \$2,500 grant, including \$1,250 from the Youth Fund, \$1,000 from Circuit Controls Corporation Charitable Fund, and \$250 from the Tom and Susie Carruthers Fund. This funding, in collaboration with several other area funders as well as Manna's own funds, allowed the launch of the Backpack Program in 9 elementary schools in Antrim, Charlevoix and Emmet counties.

This pilot project proved that the backpacks could be helpful to children in schools for a relatively low cost (about \$3.75/per bag/per week). Parents, children, and school personnel all responded positively to the program. Many volunteers have embraced this project, whether filling backpacks or driving them to schools for distribution. From January - May 2011, Manna distributed approximately



Student volunteers assembling food for the Backpack Program.

6,000 backpacks of food for children to take home on Friday and return on Monday. Three schools in Emmet County benefitted from this program, and in the coming school year, Manna will expand the program to all elementary schools in their service area.



Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area
community foundation