



Summer 2023

Let me introduce you to the Kittson County School Backpack Program!

One in six Americans struggle with hunger, which includes neighbors and friends in Kittson County. Some people are worried about how they may be affected by the current economy, while others have already experienced major change in lifestyle and are trying to deal with it. Now on top of this, imagine having to figure out where your next meal will come from.

The Backpack Program concept was developed in 1995 at a Food Bank in Little Rock, Arkansas, by an inner city school nurse. The nurse began a partnership with the local Food Bank and began handing out the food to students. The Backpack Program is now a registered Feeding America program.

The mission of the Backpack Program is to help alleviate child hunger in America by providing children with nutritious and easy-to-prepare food at times when other resources are not available, such as weekends. The program provides food that is child friendly, nonperishable and easily consumed.

Schools offer the most consistent access to program participants. School personnel also often have first-hand knowledge of children in need. Children with adequate nutrition are more successful at school, are absent less school days and have overall improved health.

The Kittson County School Backpack Program is a partnership established between Kittson County Schools, Cornerstone Food Pantry, North Country Food Back and facilitated by the school nurse.

We need your help to fund this program! The estimated cost of running this program in Kittson County during the school year is based upon the number of kids enrolled multiplied by the number of distributions each month multiplied by \$4.50 per meal pack. In January of 2021, there were approximately 90 students that participated by receiving a meal pack each week. There couldn't be a more meaningful time than now to take a stand against hunger. No child should have to worry about whether or not they are going to be able to eat when they are not in school. Any contribution you can make will help ensure that no child in our community goes hungry.

To make a financial contribution to the Kittson County Backpack Program, please write BACKPACK PROGRAM in the memo and send your donation to the Cornerstone Food Pantry at: PO Box 489, Hallock, MN 56728. If you have any questions or need additional information, reach out to me by calling the Kittson Healthcare Homecare & Public Health Department at 218-843-3662 or by email at shunay.soliah@kmhc.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Shunay Soliah, RN, BSN, PHN'.

Shunay Soliah, RN, BSN, PHN

Kittson Healthcare Public Health