



McBackpack 2020-2021 – What a Year for us all!



It is hard to imagine where we all were a year ago with the realities of the pandemic continually causing us all to adjust, reschedule, worry, and wonder when it would all end... Although it is not completely behind us, as we look towards the fall, I am so very grateful to say we are moving in the right direction!



For the school year of 2020/2021 McBackpack continued to provide food to families in need across the Poudre School District. We delivered more than 12,000 bags which in turn translates to more than 36,000 meals! All of the bags we delivered this past year were family bags, unlike years past where we delivered individual, special, high school, and family bags. Our ability to keep things moving in the right direction was due in great part to the amazing organization and dedication of Susan Lind, our Director of Operations, Craig and Diana Chastain making sure all the deliveries were planned out, Nancy Sturtevant maintaining all our communications and referrals with PSD, our Treasurer, Dave Randall, who made sure all the finances were tracked and our taxes, insurance, donations, and invoices from the Food Bank were addressed in a timely manner, and a smaller group of volunteers (both in-person and remote) who made everything come together each week! New systems were put in place, many of which we will continue to implement post-COVID, such as packing and delivering food bags on Tuesday afternoons (directly following when the Food Bank delivers our food). This new system allows us to move and handle the food and bags much less, creating a much more efficient system for everyone involved.



Throughout the past year and a half or three semesters of school (which is how us McBackpackers measure time) our Partners and Donors have not forgotten about us! Please read on for more information about how so many wonderful people and entities have been supporting McBackpack over the years!



Ann Randall—Co-Founder and President

First Presbyterian Church (FPC) through the efforts of Don Genson, Cory Nelson, Kimberly Shober, groups such as the Mission and Outreach Center, and many others from within the Church Community has continued to work with us and find ways for us to safely and effectively continue our work! From adjusting our numbers initially to a small group of eight volunteers who were distanced, masked, gloved, and extremely cautious with the early stages of the pandemic, to a somewhat larger group, as we learned more about the pandemic and how we could manage to bring more people together and still maintain safety protocols, the leadership at FPC were supportive and dedicated every step of the way! We could not have managed this challenging time without their willingness to help us find a safe way to continue our outreach to the community. Don Genson often would tell us how much FPC values the work we do and is committed to making sure we could find a way to keep going! **Thank You First Presbyterian Church!!!**



The Food Bank for Larimer County (FBLC) is another partner that made these difficult times possible for McBackpack! The needs of our community have increased significantly and FBLC was under a great amount of pressure to meet those needs. Their dedication to McBackpack and helping us secure the most appropriate/affordable food possible and making sure their trucks full of pallets of food arrived each Tuesday were critical to making everything come together for our families in need. **Thank You, Food Bank for Larimer County!!!**

Poudre School District (PSD) and our McKinney Contacts continued to keep the communication loops working between McBackpack, PSD, and our recipients. Referrals continued to come in, and even when PSD moved to entirely remote learning and the District had to bring in drivers and take the food to the communities who needed our support the most – John McKay (Director of Language, Culture, and Equity), Whitney Reid (McKinney-Vento Program Specialist), and our McKinney Contacts throughout the schools, made all of this come together while securing unique resources such as a large bin to move food bags, and providing a cadre of drivers and PSD vehicles to make it all happen each week! **Thank you, PSD and McKinney!!!**



Medical Center of the Rockies has been working diligently and creatively for many years to support McBackpack efforts through food drives. Marybeth Hritsick and her colleagues, even in the midst of the kinds of demands that were being placed on our medical community during the pandemic, found a way to generate funds and purchase large quantities of our most-needed foods for McBackpack this past year! **Thank you, Marybeth and Medical Center of the Rockies!!!**

Larimer County's Department of Human Services also had immense demands during this challenging time, however, they continued to reach out to us and find ways to support our efforts through COVID-related grant funds, City Block Funds, and other related support for non-profits serving our community in the areas of hunger and food insecurity. **Thank you, Larimer County's Department of Human Services!!!**



Rotary – Foodie and Ale Trail – A few years ago, Jacque and Scott Niedringhaus helped McBackpack become a member of their Rotary organization's Food and Ale Trail Program – a program that Jacque and Scott were seminal in creating! Although COVID had a significant impact on these programs, they still provided a wonderful way for community members to contribute to their favorite non-profits and brought in awesome donations to McBackpack! **Thank you, Scott and Jacque, and the numerous Rotary groups across Fort Collins and Loveland!!!**

Cleon Kimberling – celebrated his 90th! In the summer of 2020, Cleon Kimberling found an amazing way to celebrate his special day while supporting some of his favorite organizations. He and his family coordinated a fun and creative drive-by birthday celebration with pictures and information about Cleon's awesome accomplishments and life events, treats to be handed in your car window, and a donation drop box that resulted in wonderful donations for McBackpack which Cleon then proceeded to match! Some of you may not know that Cleon has been involved with McBackpack almost from its inception and has served on the Board; provided weekly snacks, juice, and coffee for all our volunteers; and helped to purchase McBackpack t-shirts for all our volunteers a few years ago! **We can never, thank YOU enough, Cleon – but we will keep trying!!!**

Mission and Outreach Center (MOC) of First Presbyterian Church has been a part of our support team from the very early days of McBackpack – helping us to find a location in which to work, providing funds to support the purchase of food and supplies, and encouraging us to come talk to the congregation of First Presbyterian which brought to us amazing volunteers, increased community awareness of our efforts, and new sources of donations! **Thank you MOC for your ongoing support of McBackpack!!!**

Nutrien – an agricultural company whose mission is “feeding the future”, was also very generous to McBackpack this past year due to the work of Dale Lake and Dave Randall. They made the connections and wrote the grant that was successful in bringing in funds for the purchase of food. This company has continued to reach out to us to offer support – **thank you, Nutrien for your commitment to our youth and community!!!**

Timnath Presbyterian Church has also been a wonderful source of support for McBackpack over the years. This relationship began through the dedication of Sue Siferd – an amazing woman, long-term McBackpack volunteer, and former Board member, who recently passed away. Sue will be dearly missed! Timnath Presbyterian has continued Sue’s legacy of support by sending us regular donations and food! **Thank you Sue and Timnath Presbyterian!!!**

Girl Scout Troop 76085 elected McBackpack as the recipient of their Hometown Heroes Cookie Donation. These cookies were shared with our wonderful volunteers during packing days. **Many thanks to Carrie Lamanna and her Troop!!!**

Beef Sticks for Backpacks (formerly Beef Bank Colorado) – In 2020 we were contacted by Dan Byers and the Beef Bank of Colorado – later to become Beef Sticks for Backpacks to see if we would be interested in their providing beef sticks for our food bags each week. After several meetings, Dan and his colleagues committed to providing at least two beef sticks each week for each of our food bags. In collaboration with JBS, this organization is providing these protein-rich food items to programs similar to McBackpack across the state – what an awesome program! **Many thanks to Dan and the Beef Sticks for Backpacks Program for their support of our community!!!** For more information, please see their website at: <https://www.beefsticks.org/>



Bob Fulton, one of our long-time volunteers, had a connection to a designer who works for JanSport in Denver. The company wanted to make a sizable donation of its popular backpacks to a worthy cause and was impressed with how the McBackpack program in Fort Collins is working to provide nutritious food for students and their families throughout the school district.

JanSport donated 150 full-sized backpacks, in a variety of outstanding designs, plus 10 smaller bags for younger students to be distributed to those in need. Bob’s efforts resulted in our being able to support one of our highest needs schools with brand new backpacks that carry our food bags home to families in need! **Thank you, Bob and JanSport!!!**

And to the many, many other donors from within our McBackpack family and across our Community who volunteer and donate time, effort, and/or funds to McBackpack , it is your efforts and dedication that are the heart and soul of this Program!!!

A note from Susan Lind, our Director of Operations:

Despite Covid and our inability to meet in larger groups last year, there were still around 40 volunteers involved in our operation in one way or another, and we are grateful for every one of you!

As you might know, it is always with great affection that I call the volunteers who double and count bags the Bag Ladies (and Gentlemen). They have managed to keep us well supplied with bags ever since the pandemic hit!

Next come the drivers! They stuck to the schedule to pick up and deliver bags throughout Fort Collins and sometimes beyond (and never complained on the days we were running late)!

And last but not least, the crew of volunteers who showed up every week with mask (and vaccine, as soon as that was available) to unload the truck and pack bags.

I do want to single out just a few more indispensable volunteers — Dave Randall took over as our finance guy (Treasurer) this year and has done great work. We are fortunate that having recently retired, he didn't have a clear vision of what that meant! Then we have Ann Randall and Gerry Lake. It was Ann and Gerry who walked into the Title I office at Poudre School District so many years ago and asked what they could do to help homeless kids. Little did they know what they were getting themselves into, nor did Dale Lake realize he would soon have a new part-time job as well! 14 years later we are still going strong thanks to all they have done and continue to do!

We know that there are many others of you who had to curtail your work with McBackpack out of health concerns during the pandemic. We truly missed you, and we're looking forward to the time we can all work together again to help feed kids and families in our community. Many thanks to and for all of you! *Susan*

For the fall semester we will be packing and making most deliveries on Tuesday afternoons starting at noon in Shep Hall of First Presbyterian Church.

FALL 2021 Schedule

SEPTEMBER

Tuesday Sept.7, 14, 21, 28

OCTOBER

Tuesday Oct. 5, 12, 26

Thursday Oct.21 noon*

NOVEMBER

Tuesday Nov. 2, 9, 16, 30

Thanksgiving Nov. 24-26**

DECEMBER

Tuesday Dec. 7, 14

Winter Break Dec. 20 - Jan 3

**Church is not available on Tuesday

**No packing Thanksgiving week or Winter Break.