

November 5, 2019

Dr. Nancy Dishner
Executive Vice-President
Niswonger Foundation
P.O. Box 1508
Greeneville, TN 37745

Dear Dr. Dishner,

Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee thanks the Niswonger Foundation for your partnership in working to eliminate childhood hunger in our region. The Niswonger Foundation's donation of \$13,000 last year helped supply the Food for Kids (FFK) Backpack program for children in Hancock and Hawkins counties. Your contribution also helped us gain support from other partners like Ballard Health that made a donation in the amount of \$5,000 for the Hancock and Hawkins Counties FFK program last year. This is an example of how community problems can be solved when organizations work together.

The need to supply the Food for Kids (FFK) Backpack Program is high in Hancock and Hawkins counties again this year and we are asking for your help. In these two counties the FFK Backpack Program serves 20 public schools and these schools have asked us to supply the FFK program for over 440 children for the current 2019-2020 school year. The food bank's cost of providing the FFK program in these counties is \$42,038. On behalf of the children who need our help, we respectfully request your consideration of an \$18,000 grant to support the Food for Kids Backpack Program for the 2019-2020 school year.

The FFK Program reduces not only hunger itself but the problems children encounter due to hunger such as delayed physical or cognitive development, behavioral concerns, and lower academic achievement. This program is a vital component to combating childhood hunger throughout the food bank's eight-county service area. By providing economically disadvantaged and at-risk children with wholesome meals to take home on weekends and school breaks, hungry children are given the opportunity to be nourished rather than go without food. Your support enables them to focus on growing and learning rather than having to worry about having enough to eat. The Niswonger Foundation's support of the Food for Kids Backpack Program invests in the future and creates a stronger community by helping hungry children who are unable to provide for themselves.

Studies show that proper nutrition is linked to brain development and the ability to learn. Adequate nutrition aids in academic achievement, higher test scores and better attendance and this program has demonstrated improvements in all of those indicators among the participating children. Furthermore, it eases the stress on the parents who report skipping meals themselves to ensure that the children eat first. According to a survey we conducted last year, the majority of parents reported that the backpacks reduced their financial stress and they noticed that their children seemed happier and less stressed.



FEEDING THE HUNGRY IN NORTHEAST TENNESSEE SINCE 1986

Serving Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, and Washington Counties

Our close working relationships with the 136 participating schools in the 8-county region enables us to reach the children who are most vulnerable to hunger. Our staff members train school personnel about safe food handling practices to ensure that the food is handled correctly and provide them with the eligibility guidelines to enroll children into the program. Children must be eligible to receive federal free or reduced meals at school in order to qualify to receive the FFK Backpack Program. School personnel are in close contact with children and know the behaviors often associated with hunger such as hoarding food or eating to excess when they have access to food. These, as well as others, are indicators that a child is struggling with hunger and these students are the highest priority to serve.

Designed to assist the most economically disadvantaged children with chronic hunger and food insecurity, the Food for Kids Backpack plans to serve 4,500 children in 13 school districts throughout our 8 county service area during the 2019-20 school year. These are children who are eligible for federal free and reduced (FFR) meal programs and who school personnel have identified as being at high-risk of hunger. Funding provided by the Niswonger Foundation is crucial to provide hungry children in our community with healthy meals and snacks for the weekends and school breaks. The Food for Kids Backpack Program Coordinator has developed a very cost effective program; the bulk of the expense is comprised of purchasing healthy food and distributing the backpacks to area schools. Funders such as the Niswonger Foundation, Ballad Health and others enable us to provide these meals and snacks at no cost to the participating child or the school system.

We are grateful for the financial support and partnership that the Niswonger Foundation has provided to Second Harvest in our efforts to feed hungry children. These funds will have a substantial impact in the lives of these children who suffer from chronic hunger. Thank you for your consideration of our request. If you have any questions about the program or this request, please contact me by email at executivedirector@netfoodbank.org or by phone at 423-279-0430.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rhonda Chafin', written over a light blue circular stamp.

Rhonda Chafin
Executive Director