



Metropolis: Detroit

Chapter: St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

760 West Wattles Road

Troy, Michigan 48098

Project: Blessings in a Backpack

Objective: This program is designed to help meet the weekend nutritional needs of certain *elementary school children*; to aid in their educational success; to generate public awareness on the issue of child hunger in the United States, and working to expand the program across the nation. Better test scores, improved reading skills, positive behavior, improved health and increased attendance have all been attributed to the success of this program.

Recipients of this project:

Elementary school children whose families qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Meal Program, and may not have any or enough food on the weekends.

In executing this project, the activities included:

A member of the North Woodward Community Foundation contacted Philoptochos in order to establish this program in its parish. The entire parish, GOYA, Catechism School, parishioners and other Philoptochos chapters have engaged in volunteering their time weekly packing backpacks with non-perishable foods such as tuna, peanut butter, macaroni and cheese, fruit juices, pastas, oatmeal, fruit bars, crackers. This is enough food for six meals over a two day weekend. Children receive the backpacks on Friday which are returned on Monday to be refilled.

Food is provided at reduced costs through special arrangements with the Meijer grocery chain. Philoptochos sponsors fund raisers and many individuals support by giving donations and monetary gifts.

It has been proven from November 2008, through the school year ending June of 2009, that students in the Avondale (Michigan) program saw the following results: test scores increased 45%; behavioral issues reduced 35%; class atmosphere improved 55%; attendance improved 45%; attention span increased 40%. These results are similar to other results found across the country.

For additional information contact: Blessings in a Backpack National Office at

1.800.872.4366 or [www.blessingsinabackpack.org](http://www.blessingsinabackpack.org).

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