

Individual Project Report

Backpacks for Kids

Project Description

1. Describe the project. What was done, when, and where did the project activities take place? The project, Backpacks for Kids, was designed to help First United Method Church expand their program to middle schools, going from 6 to 7 schools. The program identifies approximately 25 students in 6 (now 7) schools that suffer from food insecurity, and provide a backpack filled with nutritious food for the students to take home on weekends. Our role in the program began on August 30, 2019, and helped serve 175 Harlingen Consolidated School District students until March 13, 2020. The project involved purchasing extra shelves to hold the additional food items, extra backpacks to replace those lost, worn out, or additional ones for the additional students. We were also responsible for the purchase of the extra food that the expanded project would require. We estimated that, by purchasing the "heavy" items--drinks, canned sausages, peanut butter, etc.--our expenses would be the same as if we pro-rated every food order from Sam's Club. The routine went like this. Every three weeks, two of our club members would pick up groceries from Sam's and deliver to First United Methodist Church. Every Wednesday, volunteers from FUMC, Paradise Park Mobile Home Park, Sunburst Rotarians and friends would clean and fill approximately 175 backpacks. Volunteers, including Rotarians, would deliver to the appointed schools, where the counselors would distribute backpacks, respecting the anonymity of the students, who would take them home on Fridays. Volunteers would pick up the backpack on the following Tuesday or Wednesday, and the process would begin again. The program was intended to last the entire school year, but was terminated in March, when the State of Texas closed the schools. Remaining funds were spent to replace lost or damaged backpacks and replacement shelves and totes. Funds that were not spent on the Backpacks program were donated to non-profit organizations whose status had been harmed by the COVID-19 virus. With the advice and consent of the Sunburst Board, the remaining balance of \$1037.72 was distributed among four non-profits in May, 2020, at the end of the District Grant's year.

2. How many people benefited from this project? At least the 175 students who receive backpacks benefitted directly from the project. It is likely that many of them shared their food with siblings, thus adding to the number of direct beneficiaries. I believe that our 25 member club benefitted by their increased awareness of hunger/food issues, and they took pride in doing something positive about the problem.

3. Who were the beneficiaries, how were they impacted by this project, and what humanitarian need was met? The humanitarian need is food insecurity. The primary beneficiaries were the 175 elementary and middle school students identified as suffering from food insecurity. Because we know that not all food-insecure children come from willfully negligent parents, it is likely that many parents in poverty benefitted as well. From anecdotes, we know that many students share their food backpacks with siblings or adults in the house. Besides alleviating hunger in the homes, the Backpack for Kids program enabled many--if not all--of the kids to come to school on Monday morning eager to learn, thanks to a nutritious weekend.

4. How many Rotarians participated in this project? Including two spouses of Sunburst Rotarians, eleven of our 25 members were involved at some time or other.

5. What did they do? Please give at least two examples, not including financial support provided to the project. Jim Wooten and Lynn Law picked up and delivered the heavy merchandise from Sam' Club approximately every three weeks. Vince Marino, Jane Boling, Charlie Palmer, Jim Birschbach, Rodney Kitten (spouse) and John Hand helped set up the stores and fill backpacks. Israel Aguilar was John's backup on delivery and pickup at Coakley Middle School. Sylvia Sanchez and Brandi Nelson (spouse) worked at the Pumpkin Patch fundraiser, the proceeds of which go to the Backpack program.

6. If a cooperating organization was involved, what was its role? The project was begun by First United Methodist Church about five years ago, and they are the major actor. Sunburst Rotary's role was to provide additional funding and manpower to allow the program to expand into the middle schools. It is likely that the program will add at least one more school next year. The ability to expand this program depends on the physical and financial support of organizations like Sunburst Rotary..

Financial Report

Date	Description	Funding Source	Amount	%
Aug 16, 2019	Harlingen Sunburst Grant	District Grant	\$2,535.00	50.35 %
Jun 24, 2019	Fund for supplies and food to expand the Backpack for Kids program to Coakley Middle School	Club/Other	\$2,500.00	49.65 %
Total:			\$5,035.00	100.00 %

Description	Supplier	Local Amount	Currency	Tax	Total	Amount
160 Replacement Backpacks for Covid,19 losses	Victory Authority Corporation	\$727.48	USD	\$0.00	\$727.48	\$727.48
Drinks and other food items for Backpacks	Sam's Club, Harlingen	\$716.70	USD	\$0.00	\$716.70	\$716.70
Drinks and other food items for Backpacks	Sam's Club, Harlingen	\$603.94	USD	\$0.00	\$603.94	\$603.94
Drinks and other food items for Backpacks	Sam's Club, Harlingen	\$500.14	USD	\$0.00	\$500.14	\$500.14
Drinks and other food items for Backpacks	Sam's Club, Harlingen	\$474.18	USD	\$0.00	\$474.18	\$474.18
Drinks and other food items for Backpacks	Sam's Club, Harlingen	\$472.18	USD	\$0.00	\$472.18	\$472.18
Total:					\$5,035.00	

Description	Supplier	Local Amount	Currency	Tax	Total	Amount
Rio Grande State Center	RGSC Citizens Volunteer Council to set up COVID ward in Mental Health Unit	\$259.43	USD	\$0.00	\$259.43	\$259.43
REd Nose Day	Walgreens /Comic Relief fundraiser for children in poverty	\$259.43	USD	\$0.00	\$259.43	\$259.43
Culture of Life Ministries COVID		\$259.43	USD	\$0.00	\$259.43	\$259.43
Harlingen Food Pantry		\$259.43	USD	\$0.00	\$259.43	\$259.43
Heavy Duty Rack Four Shelves for additional food items	Sam's Club (reimbursed FUMC) Purchased online, and required credit card.	\$199.98	USD	\$16.50	\$216.48	\$216.48
Heavy Duty Rack Four Shelves for additional food items	Sam's Club (Reimbursed FUMC) Only available on line and required credit card.	\$169.98	USD	\$0.00	\$169.98	\$169.98
Gift Cards for Backpack Kids, Coakley	Target Stores, Harlingen	\$60.00	USD	\$0.00	\$60.00	\$60.00
Additional totes for replacing damaged and new totes for next year.	Wal Mart San Benito, TX	\$51.92	USD	\$4.28	\$56.20	\$56.20
Total:						\$5,035.00