2014 to 2015

ANNUAL report

FOC

Feeding Our Communities Partners

When the BackPack Food Program rolled out to serve an additional five schools in the 2014-15 school year, it reached a major milestone. This accomplishment provided weekend hunger relief for students at *all* eleven public elementary schools in the Mankato Area School District.

Adding new schools, along with plans to bring on the four elementary schools in outlying districts of Blue Earth County in the 2015-16 school year, meant that our move to a larger facility couldn't have come at a better time. In February 2015, staff moved into the newly leased space on Howard Drive in North Mankato. With increased space there has been increased efficiency in overall operations and flexibility to handle the additional school districts. (See page 7 for more details about the new facility.) We are extremely grateful to Taylor Corporation for donating the use of our previous space for four years and for the many community businesses that donated to our new facility; especially Ridley, Inc., ISG Architects and Engineers, Alliance Contracting, Cherry Creek Inc., and Office Space Design.

The BackPack Food Program continues to meet the goals of FOCP by filling the service gap in hunger assistance for elementary-aged students. With this first initiative established in the community and strategically progressing toward roll-out completion, the FOCP board, along with a Programming Committee composed of community partners and stakeholders have begun planning the organization's next steps that focus on the local middle school population. This process of gathering community input, assessing what we know about how the BackPack Food Program operates within the schools, and thinking about the needs of middle-school aged students is shaping FOCP's next potential initiative. (See page 8 for a closer look at FOCP's future plans.) It will be exciting to see the development of a new program that is youth driven and firmly based in community collaboration.

In FY15, we transferred fiscal responsibility of the Blue Earth County Community Farm to the BEC government and the farm is continuing its mission with the help of other nonprofits. This move allows FOCP to focus on its mission – serving the needs of hungry youth.

The following pages summarize a year's worth of work. Organizations which are agile in response to their community and growing to serve a greater number of clients require capacity in staff and facilities in order to meet needs. FOCP has been serving in this capacity since its inception in 2010 and, with a full year of added staff and a facility build out, our fiscal year 2015 financials reflect the investment.

Kristin Weeks-Duncanson
Board Chair

Melinda Wedzina
Executive Director

our MISSION

Engaging our community in providing youth hunger relief & inspiring nutrition learning.

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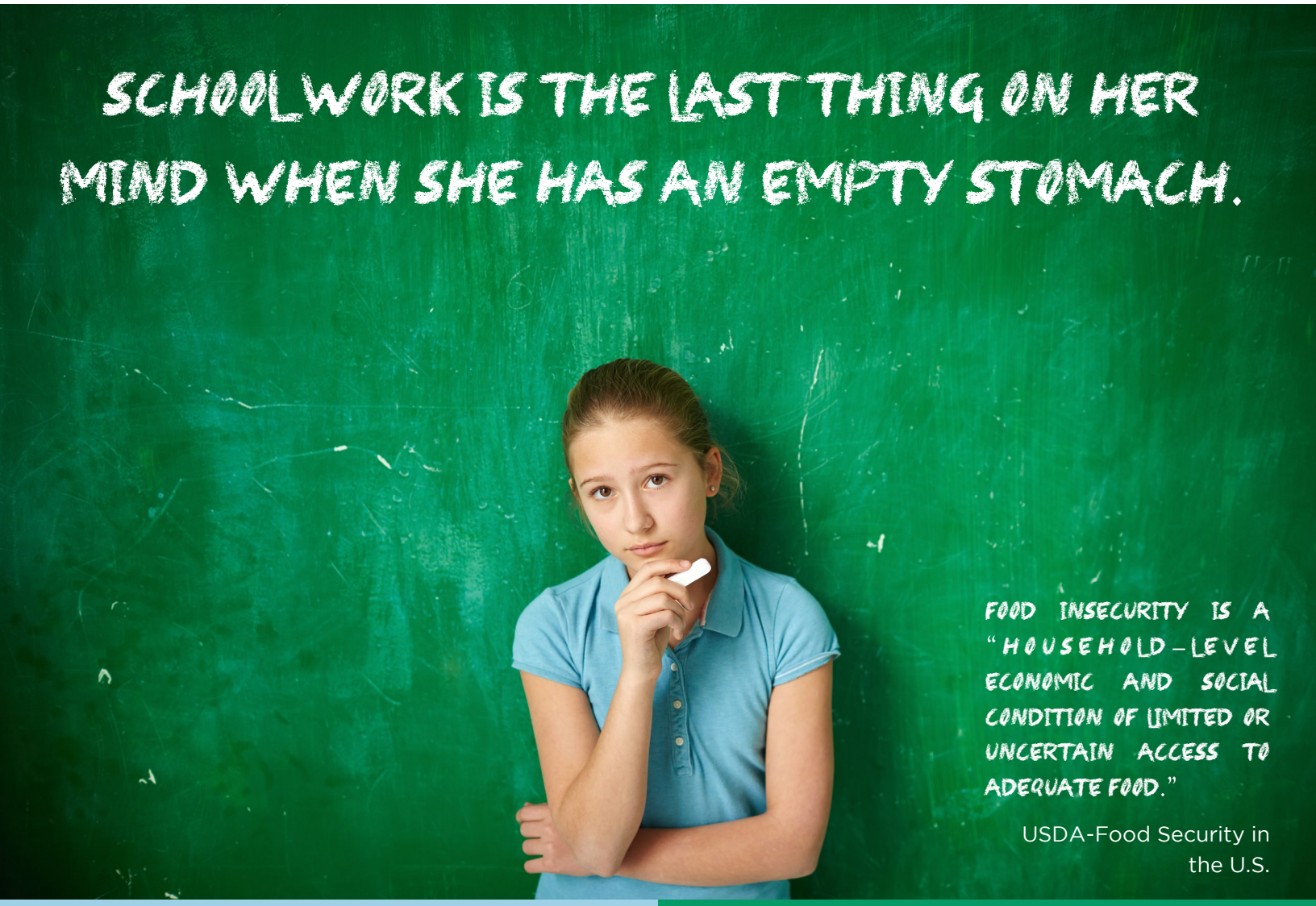
Sarah Dickhudt
BackPack Food Program Assistant

interns

Tierney Hanna
Katlyn LeVang
Courtney Munson
Alexandra Simonieg
Kasi Wolf

In our hometowns...

Parents in the Mankato area struggle to feed everyone in their household. When school is in session, their children receive breakfast and lunch through the Free & Reduced Lunch program. But when school dismisses for the weekend or extended school breaks, access to regular, well-balanced meals diminishes.



"We live paycheck to paycheck to pay our bills. We can only get groceries with what is left after the bills and gas for vehicles. Often times there is no money for groceries. We need vehicles running to get to work to make money to pay bills and it's sad to say gas comes before groceries."

— Parent of student enrolled in BackPack Food Program

More than 2,000 children in Blue Earth County, MN live in households that are food-insecure.

Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap

a great deal of families struggle.

Data from our survey of parents with children enrolled in the BackPack Food Program during the 2014-15 school year.

87% of households with children enrolled in the BackPack Food Program have **incomes of less than $40K per year**.

80% of parents report that it is always or sometimes **difficult to feed everyone in their household**.

average number of people in household = **5** (3 children + 2 adults)

88% of parents report that at least one adult in the household **works full- or part-time**.

Communities care. Help exists.

In the 2014-15 school year, the BackPack Food Program, with its army of volunteers, fed hungry elementary students in the Mankato Area Public Elementary Schools on weekends and scheduled school breaks.

During the school year, **130,000+ meals** were *discreetly* served to **750+ elementary students** who may not otherwise have had access to food.

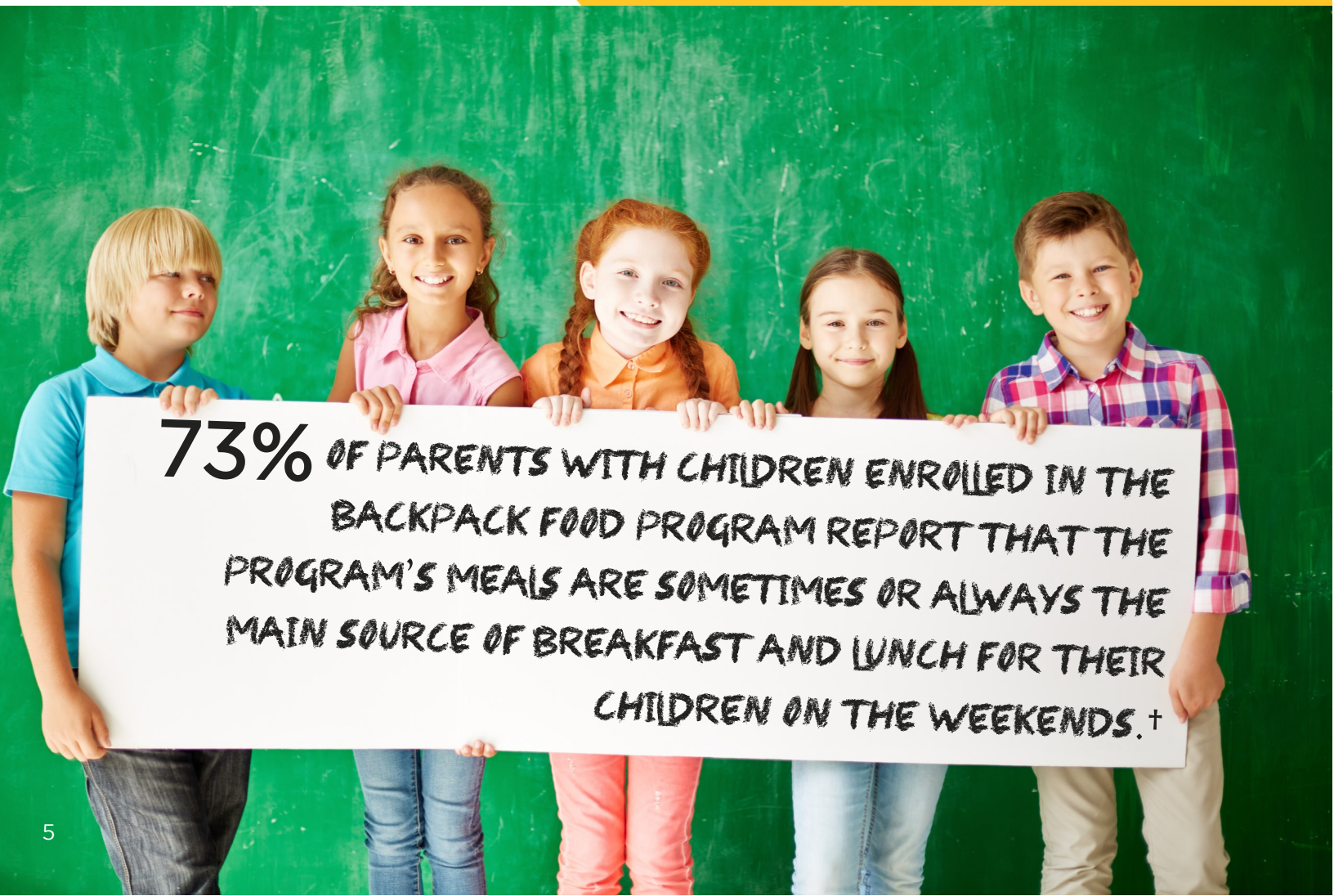
The program rolled out to **5 additional elementary schools** during the school year to serve all 11 public elementary schools in Mankato ISD77.

Added September 2014

Garfield Elementary
Roosevelt Elementary
Eagle Lake Elementary

Added January 2015

Hoover Elementary
Bridges Elementary



An impact is made.

I'm so thrilled that fewer kids are going hungry. I used to worry about kids over the weekend and breaks being hungry. I didn't have to this year because of the program.
Teacher of 2nd-grade students enrolled in program

The food program has helped relieve the stress of not knowing what to feed my children when we can't afford groceries. Thank you!
Parent of child enrolled in program

I feel happy about the program because I don't have that much food at my house.
3rd-grade student enrolled in program

†From 2015 surveys of parents & classroom teachers with students enrolled in the BackPack Food Program.

Their Voices

With implementation of the BackPack Food Program, **teachers** report increased energy in students, better relationships between students and school personnel, and improvement in students' ability to concentrate in the classroom. †

The foundation for action continues.

Program growth and expansion = a new home for BackPack Central.

The increase in the number of students being served puts greater demand on the amount of food that needs to be stored and the number of volunteers needed to assemble food packs. In an extreme act of generosity, donors stepped up to fund the build out of a new space that better serves the needs of the growing program.

INCREASED SPACE = INCREASED EFFICIENCY

old assembly space
2 packing lines

The new building has increased space by approximately 2,000 sq. ft. It provides separate spaces for assembly and office which is helpful for productivity of both volunteers and staff. The warehouse space and dock doors allow for convenient storage, delivery, and distribution of food. An increase from two to three assembly lines in the volunteer area increases efficiency and flexibility during packing sessions.

new assembly space
3 packing lines
Photo: Dean Riggott Photography.

Hunger doesn't end with elementary school.

defining the NEXT STEPS

As the BackPack Food Program approaches the 2015-16 school year and the final steps of its expansion plan to include the four remaining elementary schools in outlying communities of Blue Earth County, sights are set on area youth who still struggle with access to consistent meals: **middle school students.**

Discussions, which include the voices of local middle school students, are in-progress to determine what Feeding Our Communities Partners' next program might look like. As community networks are defined and partnerships are built, the FOCP Programming Committee charges forward to establish its role in providing services beyond the elementary classroom.

Advocates

"We believe that beyond our role of assisting food-insecure youth, we also have a responsibility to build community awareness about their struggles. In that process, it is important that the thoughts and opinions of the children are included. This organization and its supporters are charged with bringing what we learn to the community in an effort to build awareness and to create a shared vision and well-informed programming."

—Melinda Wedzina, FOCP Executive Director

winter BREAK

Boxes of food for Winter Break are now easily distributed directly to families from the new warehouse space of BackPack Central in North Mankato. With the help of free rides from Blue Earth County Taxi service, parents who did not otherwise have access to transportation were able to pick up their child's box.

Included in boxes were enough meal and snack items to sustain students over the 12-day winter break. In addition to the single-serving, non-perishable items that students usually receive in their weekly food packs, the boxes were also supplied with some perishable food items such as bread, fresh fruits and vegetables, and several frozen items. Each family also received a milk voucher.

	2014	2013
boxes distributed	494	364
meals supplied	11,856	8,736
volunteers	137	44

The 2013 and 2014 Winter Break time frames each spanned twelve days.

Advocates

"As our holiday excitement begins to happen in the community, students of struggling families sometimes fear that they will be left out. It becomes even more important that these families have those nutritional necessities each and every day. "

LES KOPENDRAYER
Retired Principal, Franklin Elementary

A community-based program is only as good as its volunteers.

Winter Break FEED and READ

KEYC's Colin Oraskovich volunteered his time to read to children who accompanied their parents for Winter Break box pick up. Colin read from a selection of books, including those donated through the *Winter Break Feed and Read* program. This book program is organized by the Mankato Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma Society (DKG), and it supplies each child in the BackPack Food Program with new, high-quality books that are age- and reading-level appropriate.

VOLUNTEERS

742 volunteers

2,865 hours

Volunteers are the backbone of this organization. Without the support of companies, organizations and individuals who share their time, the task of administering the BackPack Food Program would deplete resources.

"We could not provide the BackPack Food Program with the consistency and excellence that we do if it were not for the support we've received from our generous volunteers."

Nicole Swanson
BackPack Food Program Manager

STATEMENT of ACTIVITIES

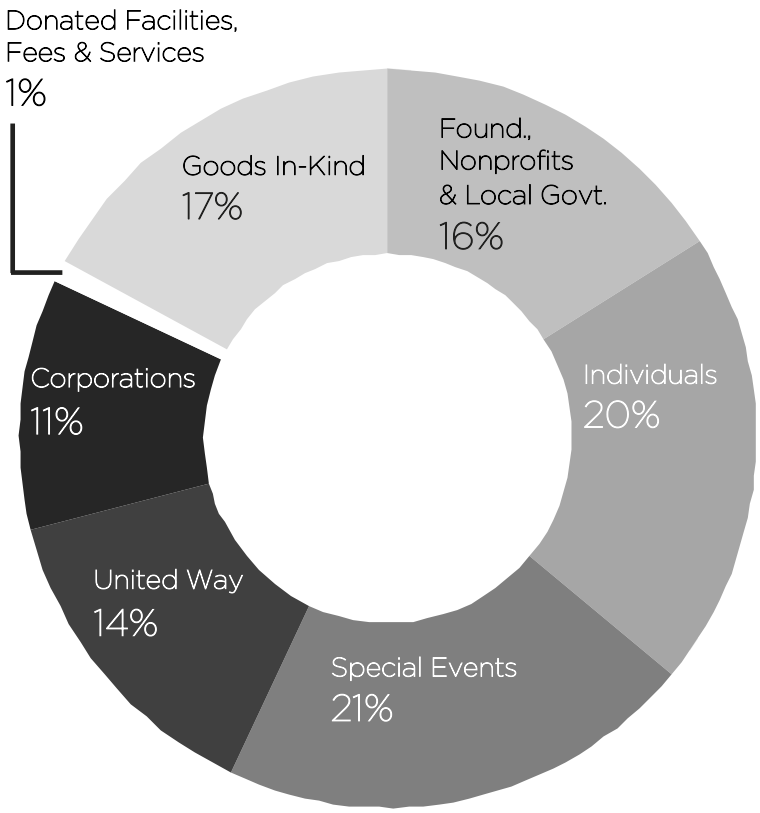
for year ended June 30, 2015 with comparative figures for year ended June 30, 2014

PUBLIC REVENUE & SUPPORT

$483,340
2015 TOTAL REVENUE

$446,489
2014 TOTAL REVENUE

	2015	2014
Foundations, Nonprofits & Local Govt.	$76,322	$139,727
Individuals •	$94,698	$91,376
Special Events ••	$103,194	$76,336
United Way	$70,000	$60,000
Corporations	$52,140	$49,129
Donated Facilities, Fees & Services	$2,744	$16,650
Goods In-Kind	$84,242	$13,271



• includes donations from Hy-$5 for BackPack, Delta Kappa Gamma, and Mankato Marathon
•• includes Climb 2 Feed Kids and Circle of Friends fundraising events

EXPENSES

$408,704
2015 TOTAL EXPENSES

$278,052
2014 TOTAL EXPENSES

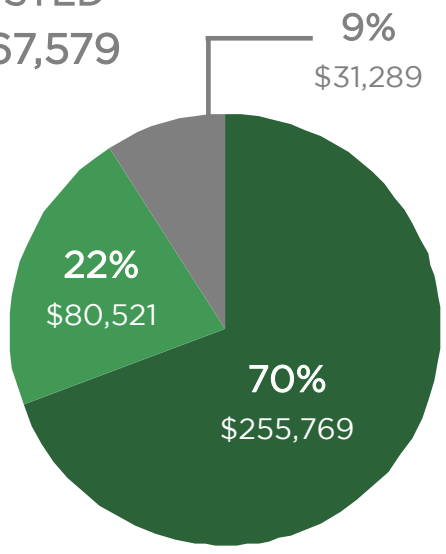
	2015	2014
Donated Facilities, Fees, & Services	$4,703	$16,650
Development	$48,151	$37,186
Administrative & General	$90,899	$45,843
Program Services	$264,951	$178,373

STATEMENT of FINANCIAL POSITION

for year ended June 30, 2015

	2015	2014
Assets		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	$221,447	$ 221,930
Cash Restricted for Capital Purchase	$3,000	$ 5,000
Pledges Receivable	$ 92,440	$ 143,734
Fixed Assets, Net	$ 126,777	$ 4,077
Other Assets	$9,165	$ 3,117
Total Assets	**$ 452,829**	**$377,858**
Liabilities & Net Assets		
Accounts Payable		$ 349
Other Current Liabilities	$3,489	$ 2,805
Total Liabilities	**$ 3,489**	**$ 3,154**
Net Assets		
Unrestricted		
Undesignated	$364,840	$ 229,882
Board Designated-Operating Reserves	$ 56,500	$ 56,500
Temporarily Restricted	$ 28,000	$ 88, 322
Total Net Assets	**$ 449,340**	**$ 374,704**
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	**$ 452,829**	**$ 377,858**

FY 2015 CASH EXPENDITURES ADJUSTED* = $367,579



Program Services
Administrative & General
Development

Total Expense (per Statement of Activities)	$ 408,704
Less: donated food/ supplies	- $19,560
Less: donated facilities/services	- $ 3,443
Less: special event support	- $ 18,122
Cash Expenditure	**$ 367,579**

*Represents cash expenditures; drills down from total expenses to remove in-kind services and direct fundraising expenses (as included per IRS 990) and then removes in-kind goods (donated food & supplies) and depreciation to show actual cash expenditures. FOCP's goal is for 70% or more of cash disbursement to represent payment for direct program support: food, supplies, delivery, staff, etc.

We couldn't do it without you!

"To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded."

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Skistad Family

WHY THEY GIVE

For my wife and me, the Backpack Program is really just an easy way to love people. And I think that's what we're challenged to do. One of my sons attends a Mankato school which happens to have the highest number of students enrolled in the program. These are his peers. These are kids he has the opportunity to leave an impact on, and be impacted by, on a daily basis.

It's an investment. I want to see kids have the opportunity to leave a positive mark on our community and be able to write their own story someday. To me, the Backpack Program simply says, "We see, and we care". We understand the challenge of raising and providing for kids. We understand temporary setbacks. And we understand sometimes families just need a lift.

So we invest in the BackPack Program because we can. And having my boys participate in an upcoming packing event is just another small step towards "It's not about me" for them.

Jeff Skistad

FY 15 Donors

DISTRICT LEVEL PARTNERS $10,000+*

Consolidated Communications Community Fund
L & N Andreas Foundation
Otto Bremer Foundation
Robert E. Fraser Foundation
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SCHOOL LEVEL PARTNERS $5,000 -$9,999*

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Kaye Corporation
Mayo Clinic Health System

CLASSROOM LEVEL PARTNERS $2,500 - $4,999*

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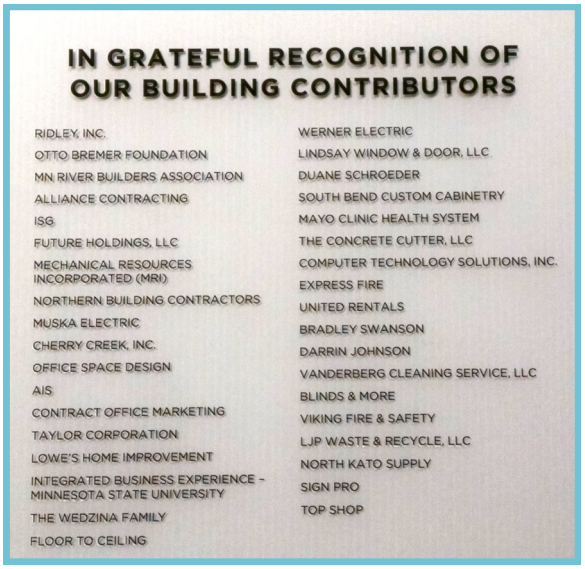
For a full list of donors, visit our website.



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