



Pack the 'Pack: Fighting Childhood Hunger, Fueling Hope

August 13, 2025

Back-to-school season is approaching, and for many local families, the pressures amount to much more than checking off school supply lists. This time around, it's about making sure every child starts the school year strong. That strength begins with the community coming together. Once again, we're leading the charge through our Pack the 'Pack campaign, a key initiative of [The BCTCares Foundation](#).



What is Pack the 'Pack?

Each year, our community comes together to address a growing epidemic that hides in plain sight: food insecurity among local children.

During the school year, students can typically rely on school breakfast and lunch. But on weekends, school breaks, and throughout the summer, those meals disappear, leaving many children wondering where their next one will come from.

That's where Pack the 'Pack comes in.

Every year, generous support from friends like you helps us provide nutritious meal packs to children throughout our region. These meals stretch household budgets, ease difficult choices between groceries and bills, and reassure children that their next meal is guaranteed. For many, it's the highlight of their week. It's a powerful reminder that access to something as basic as food shouldn't depend on the school calendar. Nutritious meals shouldn't be limited to school hours. They're a daily need, not a weekday service.

Powered by a collective of local churches, nonprofits, schools, and caring citizens, thousands of students in our service areas are supported through financial and in-kind donations and volunteerism. School staff identify students in need and ensure that packed food is tailored to any allergies or household circumstances (down to whether children have access to a microwave or a can opener).

"Food insecurity looks different in many households across our region," explained Kathy Powderly, Executive Director of the Hagerstown Area Religious Council (HARC), which administers the [Micah's Backpack](#) program in Washington County, Maryland. Last year, Micah's Backpack served over 1,350 children each week, and that number has only grown as local needs have risen.

Powderly continued, "Many children may be skipping meals, not receiving nutritious meals, or completely going hungry. Even when children receive free breakfast and lunch during the school year, they may go home to empty cupboards after school and on weekends, which is why Pack the 'Pack fills a critical need."

A Campaign Fueled by Community

The **2025 Pack the 'Pack** campaign runs from July 1st through August 31st, and the support from our community makes all the difference.

We engage our workplace team to participate through fun and meaningful fundraising activities such as jeans-wearing Fridays, bake sales, and ice cream sundae sales: small efforts that create a big impact. We also take our mission into the community, hosting a booth at the local farmers' market every Saturday during the campaign months to spread awareness and raise funds.

And it's not just our team stepping up; our vendors and clients are key supporters, too. Together, we're building a network of care and action.

Thanks to your generosity last year, we raised \$90,000, and we're aiming even higher this summer. All donations are distributed among the four regional groups where our branches are located, ensuring that support stays local and reaches the children who need it most.

How You Can Help

Donations of any amount make a real and local difference. You can contribute at any BCT branch or online at www.mybct.bank/bctcares.

While funding is critical, hands-on efforts are equally important. If your organization is interested in becoming a partner—whether you want to pack, sponsor a child, or support a school—your help is not only welcome, but also needed. The more hands we have, the more children we can reach.

At its core, Pack the 'Pack isn't just about food. It's about dignity, stability, and the chance to thrive. The program ensures that a child enters the classroom not distracted by hunger, but ready to learn, engage, and grow.

"We strive to create a community where essential needs aren't conditional. We want every child to have what they need to focus and feel secure, regardless of what's available at home," shared Emma Pedraza, BCT Wealth Advisor and program advocate.

Let's make this **the** year we Pack the 'Pack bigger and better than ever!

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