

Backpack Buddies

Our prayer is that God's love is revealed to each child we serve and the nourishment we provide will help fulfill his purpose for that child.

"and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday." Isaiah 58:2



Each backpack is filled with breakfast, lunch and dinner entrees as well as fruit and snacks.

Thank you for your tax-deductible donations to Backpack Buddies!

I would like to help further the mission of Backpack Buddies through my financial support:

My pledge is \$_____.

- monthly
- annually
- one time offering

Please make checks payable to:

St. Paul U. M. C.

Memo: Backpack Buddies

Backpack Buddies

St. Paul United Methodist Church

P.O. Box 909

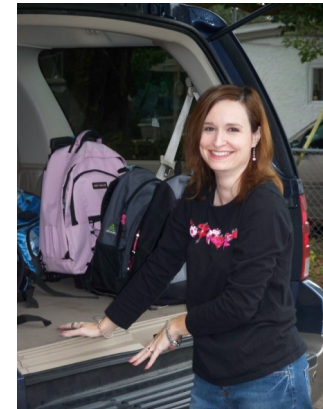
Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0909

Phone: 228-875-5278

Make Checks Payable to:

St. Paul U.M.C. memo: Backpack Buddies

Backpack Buddies



A Local Mission of
St. Paul United
Methodist Church
Ocean Springs,
MS

*P.O. Box 909
Ocean Springs, MS
39566-0909*

Tel: 228-875-5278

What is Backpack Buddies?



A sample of some of the foods we are providing.

Backpack Buddies is a local mission of St. Paul United Methodist Church, Ocean Springs, Mississippi. We provide backpacks full of food for hungry children in the Ocean Springs School District. We pack foods for breakfast, lunch and dinner meals as well as snacks to sustain a child for the weekend. Our goal is to fill the gap from Friday to Monday for school-aged children who receive free breakfast and lunch at school, but are not getting adequate nutrition on the weekends. We feed the siblings of the identified child as well. We work closely with school counselors who identify the children and coordinate their enrollment in the program. To protect the privacy of the individual families, we do not know the names of participants in our program only the number of children served. **We are currently feeding 80 children.**

How did we get started?

In the July of 2005, a group of members from St. Paul started the prep work to identify children within the community who were going hungry. We had learned of a similar program in a neighboring community. Ocean Springs is not considered a poor community and so we suspected our numbers would be rather small (around **10-20** children).

Then, on August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina came ashore and displaced thousands of families along the Mississippi Gulf Coast including Ocean Springs. St. Paul, like most churches along the coast, became a distribution site for food, clothing and other donations from across the country.

When the children of Ocean Springs returned to school in October of 2005, it became apparent that the need in our community had changed. We identified over **50** children in need for our assistance. As the school year progressed teachers and counselors began to identify more and we served as many as **100** children during the first school year following Katrina.



St. Paul members pack extra food for long holiday breaks such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Spring Break and Easter.

Who are we serving?

Backpack Buddies currently provides backpacks to children at Magnolia Park Elementary, Pecan Park Elementary, Oak Park Elementary, and Taconi Elementary. We are currently feeding around **80** children within the Ocean Springs School District. We are also feeding **8** children in the Gautier School District as well. Our hope is to expand our program through other churches to reach children in other school districts in our area.

How can you help?

Backpack buddies is completely supported by donations and volunteer manpower. St. Paul members volunteer every Thursday during the school year to pack and deliver backpacks to the schools. St. Paul volunteers shop for food and maintain the food pantry for Backpack Buddies. 100% of all donations are spent on food and backpacks, as there are no administrative expense. Your gifts of time, prayer, and money are all greatly appreciated.

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