

Annual Report 2014

Fuel Up at Perry Harrison School



A backpack food program at Perry Harrison School in Pittsboro, NC

About Fuel Up at Perry Harrison School

In an effort spearheaded by Board of Education member Holly Duncan in 2007, Chatham County Schools teamed with school and community partners to ensure that students in need have food at times when school is not in session.

During the 2007-2008 school year, a program called “Fuel Up” began in three Chatham County Schools: Siler City Elementary, Moncure School and Virginia Cross School. In the spring of 2008, a small group of Perry Harrison School parents decided to bring this program to Perry Harrison School as well.

The Fuel Up food program was created to provide bags of food to students (anonymously and discreetly) to meet their nutritional needs during weekends and breaks in the regular school year months. For a regular weekend, the backpacks contain three dinners, two lunches, two breakfasts and two snacks. (Additional food is provided for long weekends and extended breaks from school.) With the exception of the fresh fruit that is provided each week, the food is shelf-stable; and a child would be able to prepare most of, if not all, the items him- or herself.

Food provided to program participants is either donated by members of the community or is purchased using grant money or grocery store gift cards and funds donated by members of the community.

How the program works:

1. Students are chosen to participate in the program by the school Guidance Counselor based on self-reporting, recommendations by teachers and/or recommendations from the school Social Worker.
2. Food donations and monetary contributions are collected from Perry Harrison School families and from the community. (Monetary contributions purchase food to supplement what is donated by the community)
3. Each Wednesday, the bags are packed by volunteers and given to homeroom teachers. They discreetly place bags in the students’ backpacks, which the students take home on Thursday afternoons (allowing an extra day if a child is absent).
4. Students return their bags to school on Mondays so that they may be re-packed.

Cost to feed a child each weekend:

One weekend = \$15

One month = \$60

One quarter = \$125

One semester = \$250

One school year = \$500

A Message From the Director

Seven Years as Part of a Very Special Community

2014-2015 was the sixth year of Fuel Up at Perry Harrison School, and the organization is as strong as ever in its seventh year thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers and a generous and supportive community!

As my family and I prepare to move away, I am feeling especially reflective as I look back on the years I've been fortunate enough to volunteer with this organization. It doesn't seem as long ago as it actually was that Michelle Morehouse and I were hatching a plan to feed the hungry children at Perry Harrison School, and working to secure the permissions and funding it would take to do so.

I remember developing the budget for the first time, and worrying about whether we would ever be able to raise the funds we'd need to make a meaningful impact on the children at PHS who live in food-insecure homes...After all, \$500 per child per school year is a lot of money when you looked at the number of children at PHS who qualified for Free & Reduced Lunch! I remember each time Administration changed worrying about whether the school's new principal would allow us to continue to use school resources (Storage space, a place to pack bags, the School Counselor and Social Worker's time, the time the teachers and front office staff would need to contribute to keep the program anonymous, etc.) I remember worrying about whether people would continue to support the program on an ongoing basis, especially during a Recession...OK, I remember worrying a lot.

It turns out that I didn't need to worry so much. People in Pittsboro and Chapel Hill are some of the most civic-minded and generous people you'll ever know. They're generous with their time, they're generous with their money, and they're generous with their talents. Fuel Up at PHS has grown in ways that I never expected thanks to the generosity of this community, and it turns out that I have too.

Many thanks to all of the PHS principals who have so generously "let us do our thing" at PHS, from Valgean Mitchell to Janice Frazier to Freda Hicks. Thanks to School Counselors Nancy Fahrback and Leann Muñoz, and Social Worker Rachael Norris, who have helped facilitate our program (and who have made tough decisions on our behalf). Thanks to the Carolina Meadows Community Grants Program, whose generous financial support over the years has made many of our food purchases possible; the Chapel of the Cross ABC Subcommittee, whose grant allowed us to provide fresh food for participants in our Summer Gap programs; to CORA, who has facilitated bulk orders for all area weekend backpack programs from the Project Preserve Food Bank, allowing us to stretch donated funds further; to the Galloway Ridge Community Fund, who has partnered with us for the last two years, and to all of the private donors and volunteers whose support we are so fortunate to have. Most of all, thanks to new Executive Director Jennifer Buckmire and our amazing volunteers, who will continue to do great things with Fuel Up at PHS.

Sarah Blake Finigan

Executive Director, Fuel Up at Perry Harrison School

2014 Events and Summer Gap Program

Spring Break "Adopt-a-Bag" Project

Because families who participated in our Summer Gap program had such a meaningful experience and asked for more opportunities to help, we began asking volunteers to "adopt" boxes for Spring Break and Winter Break as well. We appreciate everyone who shopped for (or provided funds for our committee to shop for) each of the children for Spring Break 2014 -- You outdid yourselves! The bags were literally overflowing with great food, and many even included fun surprises and activity kits to make the break more fun for these children.

As we were collecting the bags that were "adopted" for the 9-day spring break, our Guidance Counselor approached us about serving a new child in need. Because we had generous monetary donations for Spring Break in addition to the bags sponsored by community members, we were happy to be able to add a 46th participant to the program. Thanks to all of you for making it easy to say "yes!"

Spring Food Drive and CanStruction Contest

During the Spring Food Drive, a little more than 900 items were donated to Fuel Up at PHS! Since they collected more cans than any other grade during this Food Drive, Third Grade classes won the privilege of building a CanStruction in the school's lobby. After enjoying a snack and talking a little bit about volunteerism, Third Graders rotated around to different activities: One rotation learned about Spring veggies that grow locally, then tested their knowledge in a round of Local Veggie Jeopardy; the next did crossword and word search puzzles with Fuel Up-related words; the next rotation sorted cans by color/size and shuttled them up to the builders; then the final rotation involved the actual building with cans, including getting to make a link for the anchor's chain. All of the children had the opportunity to participate in each of the activities. As usual, it was a lot of activity to pack into an hour and fifteen minutes, but volunteers and students all had a great time! The end result of the controlled chaos was this super-cool CanStruction:



Summer Gap Program

2014 was the fifth year of our Summer Gap program. This special project allows us to continue to provide food for our program's participants in the Summer months, when school meal assistance programs are not available, and when many participants find our program most beneficial.

Families in the community "adopt" a bag for the summer, and drop off bags of prescribed food items at school each week. As in the previous year's of our Summer Gap program, funds generously granted by the Chapel of the Cross Episcopal Church allowed us to purchase milk, fruit and other fresh foods for our participants each week of the summer break; while the Farmer FoodShare Pop Market at Fearington provided fresh vegetables on alternate weeks. Not only was a week's worth of food available for each of the program's 32 participants every Wednesday of the Summer Break, but the offerings included lots of the fresh, healthy foods that are typically out of reach for kids who live in poverty. We were thrilled to be able to provide these items, and are so grateful to Chapel of the Cross and Farmer FoodShare for their continued support of our Summer Gap program!

Feedback from the 32 Summer Gap participants' parents was overwhelmingly positive, as was feedback for the 31 families who "adopted" bags for the summer. It's hard to say who appreciated the program more: The people who made this a special family project for the summer, or the children who received the bags each week. Either way, we're glad it was a positive experience for both the recipients and the providers!



Fall Food Drive

The Fall Food Drive for Fuel Up at Perry Harrison School was held at the school from October 15-22nd. PHS students contributed about 375 food items; and \$525 was also donated during this Food Drive.

So, how good was this? Enough items to pack almost 30 children's weekend bags, and enough money to add two students to the program for the second semester. Thanks, Mariners! We appreciate all that you do to help support Fuel Up at PHS.

Chapel Hill Giving Party

In December, Fuel Up at PHS was honored to be selected again to be a designated charity at the Chapel Hill Giving Party. The Giving Party is an amazing event: The hostesses invite their friends to come and meet representatives from local charities that resonate with them, and ask everyone to "Give Until it Feels Good." It felt great for Fuel Up at PHS, not just to collect \$2125 for our organization, but to talk with so many people who care so much about our community, and want to make a difference in it. Thanks Mary Beth, Perri, Casey and Sue for hosting this incredible event and allowing us to be part of it! Thanks to everyone who talked to us, shared ideas with us, and made contributions to help support our efforts to reduce the number of hungry kids in our community.

Caroling Event

Volunteer Vivian Quimbaya-Winship had a really cool idea: a caroling event to benefit Fuel Up at PHS! It was held at Guanajuato, where members of the Perry Harrison School Chorus (led by Keith Davis and Kim Vickers) showcased their talents with three holiday songs. Chorus members then led the crowd in some holiday favorites, accompanied by our new friend Deborah...and Santa even made a special appearance! The event was loads of fun, and raised \$275 for our program!

Special thanks to Gabino, Manuel, and the Guanajuato staff for being such gracious hosts.

Holiday Box Project

As in past years, volunteers for the Holiday Box Project were given a child's grade and gender, then asked to shop for a list of prescribed food items for that child. Between the shelf-stable items "adoptive families" were asked to purchase, fresh food and milk purchase with granted funds, and all the "bonus items" people so generously donated, there was ample food for the entire Winter Break for each of the 36 program participants! Many of these boxes were given in honor of some very special people:

Debbie Kay, in honor of **Maggie Borum**

Wayland and Judy Ramage, in honor of **William & Norma Ramage**

Sarah and Ben Birken, in honor of **Mel & Les Birken, Mary Ann & R. Laurence Berkowitz, and Rhoda & Roger Berkowitz**

Kristen Reece, in honor of **Bonnie Harrington**

Lisa & Scott Hartman, in honor of **Jim & Carolyn Hartman, Ron & Sarah Boardman and Barry & Diane Hensley**

Kristen Reece, in honor of **Jane Reece**

Kori Flower, in honor of **Bob & Joanne Flower**

Anne & Josh Taylor, in honor of **Donna O'Rourke**

Eric Brantley and Debbie Meyer, each in honor of the other

Rebekah Vaisey, in honor of **the Vaisey Kids**

Stacey Yusko, in honor of **Mary Beth Grealey**

Andy & Rachel Ruvo, in honor of **David Frost, Deb Sacco, Adam Serlo and Brian Vandersea**

The Impact of Fuel Up at PHS

Since Fuel Up at PHS began in 2008 through the end of 2014, the organization has been able to provide weekend food and food during breaks from school for well over 300 children in our community who live in food-insecure homes. This has all been done without any paid staff, and without any other overhead expenses. For its benefactors, that means that every dollar they donate to Fuel Up at PHS is used to purchase nutritious food, milk and 100% juice for the program's participants. What it means to the beneficiaries is probably best expressed by one of them (Excerpt from an actual letter from a participant's parent):

Dear Fuel Up Committee:

Today my child came home and said, "My book bag is really heavy!" I didn't know what to expect and I don't think my child did either. When I pulled out the backpack and began pulling out the contents, I had to just sit down and cry! I need you to know what weight was being lifted off my shoulders. PLUS I thought that my child was not aware of the need we recently acquired but I was overwhelmed to see the joy on my child's face when my child found out this was all for them. We were so humbled and honored to know that there are people who care. We'd like to thank each and every person who had a hand in this gift and please know that this is truly an answer to prayer."

2014 Financial Report

2014 Revenues	
Chapel of the Cross ABC Fund	\$1500
Carolina Meadows Community Grants Program	\$7000
Galloway Ridge Community Foundation	\$1500
Chapel Hill Giving Party (private donations)	\$2125
Other Private Donations	\$9781.95
TOTAL REVENUE	\$20,406.95
Expenditures (food purchases)	\$16,736.62
Operating Surplus	\$3670.33

Fuel Up at Perry Harrison School is a non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status granted by the IRS. With grants, personal monetary contributions and donated food and gift cards, Fuel Up at Perry Harrison School was able to provide delicious and nutritious food throughout 2014 without gaps due to holidays or breaks from school.

Fuel Up at Perry Harrison School Organization

Executive Director

Sarah Blake Finigan

Officers

Jennifer Buckmire

Terri Fannin

Nancy Fahrbach

Mary Beth Grealey

Board of Directors

Dan Barnwell

Kim Kylstra

DebbieMcKenzie

SallyMaslansky

Volunteers

Jennifer Adams, Ashley Barnes, Avis Bell, Kristina Berly, Heather Benjamin, Maggie Borum, Mandy Bowen, Jennifer Bowman, Meredith & Alyse Buckmire, Chandra Cowell, Michelle California-Aguiar, Frank & Chesley Cuicchi, Jaime Detzi, Jason Dell, Pam Dominick, Amy & John Dowden, Catherine Ellis, Sabrina Evans, Linda Fearington, William Finigan, Jimmy & Christina Ford, Ashley Frost, Emily Geizer, Doris & Ronnie Gilmore, John & Kat Godehn, Eddie & Sarah Goyea, Missy Hagan, Lisa & Scott Hartman, Fred & Granville Hill, Cate House, Kay Irish, Mattias Jonsson, Fiona Kapilovic, Vanessa Kennedy, Perri Kersh, Dave Klein, Cee Koehler, Tammy Lee, Charlie & Martha Lewis, Tonya Lippard, Karen Luken, Connie & Ed McCraw, Becket McGough, Michael McGregor, Joy McKeon, Debbie Meyer, Krista Millard, Heather Millis, Amy Mitchell, Leann Muñoz, Karrie Porco, Judy & Wayland Ramage, Liz Reece, Courtney Ritter, Tara & Pete Rubinas, Rachel Ruvo, David & Casey Saussy, Katie Schectman, The Singletary Family, Jamie & Erick Swaine,, Jennifer Sipe, Lisa Skumpija, Betsy Szczypinski, Anne Tayloe, Carol Terrell, Tracy Vernon-Platt, Vivian Quimbaya-Winship, Amy Wiley, Christine Williams, Amy Wilson, Yeu-li Yeung

Perry Harrison School

Freda Hicks - Principal

Leann Muñoz and Dawn Williams - Intake Coordinators

Please Contact

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