



Press Kit

Last Updated: October 4, 2023

Points of Contact

Contact	Email	Phone
Nichelle Hilton Executive Director, Founder	nichelle@backpackbrigade.org	206-495-8983
Board Contact? Title	Email@	#

About Backpack Brigade

Description

Many displaced students rely solely on the free breakfasts and lunches they receive at school, so weekends and breaks leave them without a reliable source of food. Every Thursday during the school year, Backpack Brigade volunteers pack bags of nutritious, easy-to-eat food and deliver them to 84 K-12 schools, where they are distributed to students in need. Powered by volunteers and strengthened through donations and sponsors, Backpack Brigade aims to provide better food to more of King County's hungry children each weekend.

Our Vision

We **END** weekend hunger for kids.

Our Mission

Backpack Brigade partners with local communities to provide weekend hunger bags to school kids in need. We ensure every child is fed all weekend long.

Our Website

www.backpackbrigade.org

Backpack Brigade's Story

In the Fall of 2013, Nichelle Hilton, Backpack Brigade's founder, was running a food bank, and watched a documentary about families not having food for the weekend. One of the children in the documentary said it was hard to focus in class when you picture your teacher as a banana. From that moment, Nichelle knew she needed to address this issue. She gathered several volunteers and went to the closest school and asked if this was indeed a problem there. The answer they received from the family support worker was a resounding YES! Recognizing the serious need, they went back to the food bank and immediately filled backpacks with food for eight kids in the school they visited and Backpack Brigade was born. In 2015, Backpack Brigade became an official non-profit organization.

4111 Madison Street Suite 21
Seattle, Washington 98112



Facts About Hunger in WA and Our Program

The Problem

- 2.5 million American children experience homelessness per year
- 51% of those children are under age 5
- Childhood homelessness has catastrophic effects on learning, health and safety
- King County has roughly 10,000 of the over 40,000 homeless children in Washington State, according to data from the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Quick Facts

- A registered 501 (c)(3) organization since 2015
- Started in 2014 with one school, delivering eight lunch bags weekly
- Three full-time employees, one part-time warehouse employee

Perspectives Videos

A video series we created to help people better understand the impact of weekend hunger.

<https://www.backpackbrigade.org/perspectives>

2022 Statistics

Overall

854,685

meals provided
(94,965 lunch bags)

3,400+

students
benefited

84

schools served
in King County

3,780

volunteer
hours

Over 160 Volunteers Per Week Comprising

18

preppers

49

packers

54

drivers

40

businesses volunteers

ABC Lunch bag program

To meet student's cultural, dietary and religious needs from A to Z, Backpack Brigade offers five nutritiously-balanced menus in addition to the standard lunch. Students can now receive a bag with kid-friendly food from one of the following menus:

Asian
American

Hispanic
Latino

Kosher
Halal

Vegan

Gluten Free

Standard



Our Team and Board

Team



Nichelle Hilton

Executive Director, Founder

Nichelle felt the call to start the program after being moved by the documentary "A Place at the Table". She and several volunteers started by delivering eight bags to a local school and since then have grown the program into what it is now. She has always worked for the benefit of children and always at non-profit. She has five daughters, runs a farm, and loves books and animals.



Kyle Arnold

Program and Operations Manager

Kyle joined Backpack Brigade in the Fall of 2021 and has worked with Nichelle to feed as many kids on as many weekends as humanly possible. Kyle believes that community action is the only path to correcting the vast inequality and hunger crises across the country. He is a New Hampshire native with a B.A. in Journalism and Latin American studies from Ithaca College and grew up hiking, swimming, and playing guitar, all of which he still enjoys.



Michele Valenti

Executive Director, Founder

Michele has spent her development career raising funds to support children's needs and dreams. She loves meeting new people and sharing opportunities to make a difference in our world. She has lived and worked in CA, CO, MA and WA. Seattle is her home as that is where 3 of her 4 daughters live (1 is in Houston), and all 4 grandkids. In her free time, she reads voraciously, takes dance classes, explores new restaurants, and follows all the activities that the Grands are doing.



Nick Stevens

Warehouse Associate

Nick moved to the Seattle area with their partner and two cats looking to start their next chapter. Having worked on food security for the past five years, they were excited for the opportunity to continue that work with Backpack Brigade. In their free time, Nick enjoys going for a hike, reading poetry or philosophy, and exploring the cool music scenes in the city.

Board Members

- Nichelle Hilton, Executive Director
- Sara Call, President
- Bryce Hanson, Vice President
- Mary Ellen Osthus, Secretary
- Bahareh Samanian, Fundraising
- Meghan Barnes, Fundraising
- Marcy MacAdam, Nutritionist
- Mariela LaPosta, Marketing
- Michael Lemieux, Marketing
- Aga Scheurich, Member-At-Large
- Nick Stoner, Member-At-Large

Other Information

Warehouse Address 1729 1st Ave S
Seattle, WA 98134

Website URL <https://www.backpackbrigade.org/>

Phone 206-556-2120

Social Media Account Links [Instagram](#)

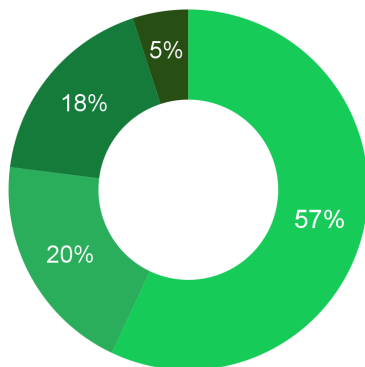


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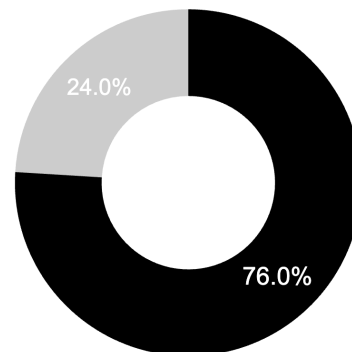
2022 Financials

\$919,634
Support



- 57% from Grants and City Contracts
- 20% from Individual contributions
- 18% from Corporate Partnerships and Matching
- 5% from Events

\$919,314
Expenses



- 76% goes directly to food purchases (\$698,463)